



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MEETING PROCEDURES and  
RULES OF BUSINESS**

Revised February 25, 2025

Welcome to this meeting of the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners. We are extremely pleased that you have shown your interest in Aitkin County affairs by attending this meeting. It is the wish of the Board of Commissioners that interested citizens participate in the deliberations of its meetings and that residents of the county become aware of the procedures to be followed.

This pamphlet has been prepared to familiarize you with the function and the organization of the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners and to outline for you the procedures that must be followed if you wish to actively participate in the meeting. We are pleased that you have decided to attend a meeting and we wish to invite you to attend our future meetings.

The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners

### **Board Members**

Your Board of Commissioners is composed of five members elected to serve over-lapping terms. The County Administrator serves as the recording clerk to the Board and prepares the agendas for consideration. The election of the Board members takes place on the first Tuesday in November of even numbered years and all members are elected by district. New Board members take office on the first Monday in January.

Your Board members this year are:

District I	J. Mark Wedel, Chair	(218) 927-6500
District II	Laurie Westerlund	(320) 684-2652
District III	Travis Leiviska	(218)-513-8613
District IV	Bret Sample	(218)-839-1376
District V	Michael Kearney, Vice Chair	(218)-839-1329

## **Board Meeting**

The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting dates, places and times are subject to change. Changes will be posted at least three business days prior to the Board meeting, as required by statute.

Each Tuesday meeting begins at 9:00 a.m., at the Government Center Board Room.

The Chair or three members of the County Board may call special meetings. Such meetings shall be called with a twelve-hour advance notice to all available County Board members and members of the news media. If time will allow, published notice in the official newspaper shall also be given to the public. Notwithstanding any other requirements, notice shall be posted next to the County Boardroom on the third floor of the Government Center, along with the County's website, [www.co.aitkin.mn.us](http://www.co.aitkin.mn.us). Notices shall specify 1) the specific item or items to be considered at the special meeting, and (2) the date, times, and places of the meeting. Special meetings of the County Board shall be held in the Government Center Board Room unless the County Board has determined that other facilities are to be used. All special meetings of the County Board shall be limited to the specific item or items set forth in the notice.

In the event that an emergency meeting is needed, the Board will make a good faith effort to provide notice of the meeting to the media, as required by M.S. 13D.04, Subd. 3.

All meetings of the full Board, including Committee of the Whole Meetings (regular, special, emergency and adjourned) are open to the public. In fact, the public is urged to attend.

Meetings may periodically be closed to the public in accordance with MN Statute 13D.05 without liability or penalty if it relates to a matter within the scope of the Board's authority and is reasonably necessary to conduct the business or agenda item before the Board. Before holding a closed meeting under this statute, the Board must identify the reason for the closed meeting.

### **Board Actions**

A majority of the members of the County Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The Chair shall be a member of the County Board and shall have the right to vote on all matters coming before it, but shall have no veto power. If the vote of the Chair creates a tie, the motion shall fail.

The Board of Commissioners has complete and final control over County matters subject only to the limitation imposed by law, and of course, ultimately the will of the local residents.

### **Public Participation at Board Meetings**

Meetings of the Board of Commissioners will follow a standard agenda. Items not placed on the agenda may be considered at the meeting upon agreement of the members of the Board present. To place an item on the agenda, the following procedures should be used:

The applicant should file a written request with the County Administrator's Office at least seven days prior to the scheduled meeting. The request should include the name, address and telephone number of the person or persons making the request; a statement describing the action the applicant wishes the Board to take and background information outlining the reasons for the request. The County Administrator shall enter the item on the County Board agenda in a work summary adequate to alert the public as to

the nature of the matter to be discussed. If the County Administrator is unable to prepare a summary from the information received, the County Administrator may refuse to place the matter on the agenda.

The Board of Commissioners desires public participation at its meetings but at the same time has the responsibility for conducting its business in an orderly fashion. The Board Chair will provide the audience with an opportunity to provide their comments or propose an agenda item for future consideration. This will be done at the beginning of the meeting.

After presentation of the comments, the Board may discuss the comments. After Board discussion, members of the audience shall have an opportunity to be heard prior to Board action.

Each speaker will be allowed 5 minutes for his/her presentation unless the time limit is waived by a majority of the Board members present. When there are a large number of speakers to be heard, the Board of Commissioners may shorten this time. Interruption or other interference with the orderly conduct of Board of Commissioners' business will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. The presiding officer (Chair) may terminate the speaker's privilege of address, if after being called to order, he/she persists in improper conduct or remarks.

At a public meeting of the Board, no person shall orally initiate charges or complaints against individual employees of the County (due to laws governing data practices) or debate any subjects under jurisdiction of the courts. All such charges, if presented to the Board directly, shall be referred to the County Administrator's Office for investigation and report.

No action will be taken on any item not considered a part of the agenda on the same day it is presented unless action is considered necessary by a majority of the Board.

## **AITKIN COUNTY BOARD RULES OF BUSINESS**

### **Rule 1. Presiding Officer. Roll Call.**

The Chair, or in the Chair's absence, the Vice Chair of the County Board shall take the chair at the time appointed for the meeting and call the County Board to order.

### **Rule 2. Quorum.**

A majority of the members of the County Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

### **Rule 3. Minutes.**

The County Administrator shall prepare written copies of the minutes of the preceding session or sessions of the County Board and distribute them to its members no later than the start of its current session, unless otherwise notified. One or more copies of the minutes shall be available in the Office of the County Administrator for examination by members of the public. Upon the appearance of a quorum at a County Board meeting, the Chair shall inquire of the County Board whether they wish to approve, disapprove, or amend the minutes of the previous session or sessions of the County Board as prepared by the County Administrator. Any mistake or omission in the minutes may then be corrected by the County Board. Meetings may be recorded, and if so, recordings will be kept securely by the office of the County Administrator.

**Rule 4. Order of Business.**

The Chair or presiding officer of the County Board shall preserve order and decorum. Upon the appearance of a quorum at a County Board meeting, the Chair shall inquire of the County Board whether they wish to approve, disapprove, or amend the agenda as prepared by the County Administrator.

**Agenda Preparation:** The County Administrator shall prepare a written agenda in advance of all regular County Board meetings in consultation with the Board Chair and shall place Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Approval of Agenda, and Citizens' Public Comment as the first four items; thereafter, other items of business shall be presented in the order deemed best by the County Administrator or as directed by the County Board.

**Rule 5. Recognition by Chair.**

Every County Board member or member of the public shall respectfully address the Chair by the appellation of "Chair" followed by the Chair's surname, and shall not speak further until recognized by the Chair. Once a member of the audience has been recognized by the Chair as requesting to address the County Board, the Chair shall require the individual to identify themselves by stating their name and address.

**Rule 6. Designation by Chair.**

When two or more members request to speak, the Chair or presiding officer shall designate who is first to speak, but in all cases the member who shall first address the Chair shall speak first.

**Rule 7. Presentment of Petitions and Communication.**

Petitions and communications on the agenda may be presented by a member of the County Board or by either the Secretary or County Administrator.

**Rule 8. Voting. Excuse. Failure.**

When a question is put by the Chair, every member present shall vote; unless the County Board, for special reason, shall excuse a member prior to the calling of the roll or a legal conflict of interest prohibits a member from voting. Any member, who being present when his or her name is called, fails to vote upon any then pending proposition, unless previously excused by the County Board, shall be counted as having voted in the positive. The Chair will conduct a roll call vote at the request of any member of the Board.

**Rule 9. Calling Vote.**

The ayes and nays shall be called upon the passage of ordinances. Unless a member requests, or is designated by Statute, other items will be by voice vote. When a vote is called for and a County Board member is silent, the County Board will be recorded as voting in the affirmative on the question. A member may demand a roll call vote at any time prior to the assumption of other business.

**Rule 10. Public Hearing Procedure.**

Prior to any public hearing, the Chair or presiding officer shall establish the following rules as part of their introduction to the hearing:

- 1) The Chair will remind all parties of the County Board Rules of Business.
- 2) The presenter of the issue/item/proposal will present the entire issue/item/proposal and any proposed



amendments prior to taking any testimony by the citizens or the County Board.

- 3) The County Board shall have the opportunity to discuss the issue/item/proposal and ask any questions they may have of the presenter immediately after the presentation of the issue/item/proposal.
- 4) There will be a public comment period where the audience will have the opportunity to provide comments or questions on the issue/item/proposal after the County Board has discussed the issue/item/proposal. Time limits may be set as to allow for appropriate public comment. Repetitive comments will be discouraged.
- 5) After the public comment period the County Board will discuss the issue/item/proposal and select the appropriate action for the issue/item/proposal.

**Rule 11. Ordinances. Procedure.**

Every proposed ordinance shall be considered at two separate regular sessions of the County Board. Amendments may be offered at either meeting when the ordinance is under consideration. Amendment to any section may be made and acted upon at any time up to the final passage. If amendments are made, the sections of the ordinance amended shall be read as amended before the question of its passage is taken. Approval of the second reading of the ordinance shall constitute final adoption of said ordinance. When a proposed ordinance fails to pass, a motion to reconsider the same may be made, but such motion must be made at the session at

which the same failed to pass and action thereupon shall be postponed to the next regular session.

**Rule 12. Absent Member.**

Every member of the County Board who anticipates being absent during a County Board meeting shall notify the County Administrator.

**Rule 13. Journal.**

It shall be the duty of the County Administrator to serve as Clerk to the County Board, and as such keep the journal of the proceedings of the County Board and perform such duties as may be required by Minnesota Statutes. The County Administrator shall not allow the official journal of the County to be taken from the custody of the County Administrator without the knowledge and consent of the County Board. The approved minutes will be the official record of the County Board meetings. In addition, any recorded copies of the proceeding will be securely kept by the Office of the County Administrator for a period of four years.

**Rule 14. Robert's Rules of Order.**

The rules of parliamentary practice, embraced in Robert's Rules of Order and Norms of the Board shall govern the County Board in all cases in which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the Standing Rules of the County Board.

**Rule 15. Conduct.**

Any County Board member, employee, or citizen may be asked to cease their comments, sit down, leave the premises, leave by law enforcement escort, or get arrested for not following the County's policies of mutual respect, harassment, and violence in the workplace. The Chair, or

presiding officer shall enforce the conduct policy. Any member of the County Board, or the County Administrator can ask for the enforcement of this policy or recess in the meeting when it becomes apparent that the policies are not being followed. Some general things for which the policy may be enforced include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Being in attendance under the influence of intoxicant or non-prescription illegal drugs, or using such substances while on County property.
- 2) Conduct which violated the common decency or morality of individuals.
- 3) Commission of a felony or gross misdemeanor.
- 4) Violating safety rules and regulations.
- 5) Speaking or making derogatory or false accusations so as to discredit other individuals.
- 6) The use of profanity or abusive language towards any individual.
- 7) Harassment or discrimination.
- 8) Speaking without being recognized by the Chair.

**Rule 16. Suspension or Amendment of Rules.**

No rule of the County Board shall be suspended, altered, or rescinded except upon the affirmation vote of a 2/3 majority of the County Board, unless notice of such change shall have been given at a previous meeting in which case only a majority shall be required.

**Rule 17. Notice of Agenda.**

The regular County Board meeting agendas shall be provided to the official County newspaper, posted outside the Government Center Board Room, and posted on the County’s website [www.co.aitkin.mn.us](http://www.co.aitkin.mn.us) to provide the public with timely and accurate notice of regular County Board meetings.

***THESE RULES SHALL TAKE EFFECT*** and be in force from and after their adoption by the County Board, and any and all prior rules are hereby rescinded.

**Aitkin County Department Heads**

Administrator		927-7276
Assessor	Mike Dangers	927-7327
Attorney	Jim Ratz	927-7347
Auditor	Kathleen Ryan	927-7354
Community Corrections	Kami Genz	927-7281
Engineer	John Welle	927-3741
Environmental Services	Andrew Carlstrom	927-7342
Health & Human Services	Sarah Pratt	927-7200
Human Resources	Bobbie Danielson	927-7306
Land Commissioner	Dennis Thompson	927-7364
Information Technology	Chris Sutch	927-7345
Recorder	Tara Snyder	927-7336
Sheriff	Dan Guida	927-7400
Treasurer	Lori Grams	927-7325

Send Inquiries to: Aitkin County Administrator’s Office  
Attn: County Administrator  
307 2<sup>nd</sup> St. NW – Room 310  
Aitkin, MN 56431