

Minnehaha County Board of Commissioners

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From the Desk of Commissioner Jean Bender:

Moving into 2020, the Commission continues to prioritize a forward looking approach to solving problems. While we look to the future, I also want to take a moment to highlight some of the successes Minnehaha County achieved in 2019. Increasing effectiveness and efficiency helps stretch taxpayer dollars farther and improves outcomes and customer satisfaction.

These items and many others are possible because of continued problem solving and hard work from county employees:

Improving online property tax payments

- The county launched an improved portal for online property tax payments. The updated system simplifies the process for taxpayers and reduces internal processing time.

Facilities

- Last summer a taskforce reviewed and provided recommendations to meet current and future facilities needs. Area business and accounting professionals toured our facilities, analyzed data, and asked great questions. The taskforce concluded two bond issues up to \$40 million dollars in total can be issued without increasing property taxes above current levels. This is possible due to bond capacity that will become available when previously issued bonds reach maturity this year.
- Proposed facility renovations and construction includes the Administration building, Extension building, Highway Department, and the Juvenile Detention Center. The Commission is collecting more data for each project and will discuss financing options later this year.
- Jail expansion construction continues on budget and on schedule.

Pre-Trial Services

- Public safety expenses are a significant budget cost driver as they have increased two to four times the rate of inflation annually since 2012. Remaining department budgets averaged one percent annual increases. According to state statute, once someone is arrested, jail, prosecution, public defense, and court appointed attorneys are county responsibilities. Pre-trial staff use a risk instrument to provide data to judges which helps determine if someone should be released or continue to be held while awaiting trial. Individuals unlikely to reoffend, likely to show up for trial, and not a danger to themselves or others, are best placed at home, working to support their family.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software

- ERP software includes property tax, budgeting, accounting, and payroll. The multi-year transition moves these systems off AS/400 systems that date back to the 1970s. The software has greater functionality and saves staff time.

While these are just few examples of successes, the Commission will continue to partner with county employees and elected officials to raise the bar as we serve you in 2020.

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