



Dakota County

General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Agenda

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

9:30 AM

Conference Room 3A, Administration
Center, Hastings

(or following County Board)

If you wish to speak to an agenda item or an item not on the agenda, please notify the Clerk to the Board via email at CountyAdmin@co.dakota.mn.us
Commissioners may participate in the meeting by interactive technology.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Note: Any action taken by this Committee of the Whole constitutes a recommendation to the County Board.

2. Audience

Anyone in the audience wishing to address the Committee on an item not on the agenda or an item on the consent agenda may come forward at this time. Comments are limited to five minutes.

3. Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

3.1 Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

CONSENT AGENDA

4. County Administration - Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes of Meeting Held on January 20, 2026

REGULAR AGENDA

5. County Board/County Administration

5.1 *Communications and Public Affairs* - Legislative Update

5.2 *Office Of The County Manager* - 2025 Board Priorities Fourth Quarter Update

6. Public Services and Revenue

6.1 *Library* - Update On Impact Of Library Digital Book Pricing

7. **County Manager/Deputy/Director's Report**
8. **Future Agenda Items**
9. **Adjournment**
 - 9.1 Adjournment

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Public Comment can be sent to CountyAdmin@co.dakota.mn.us



General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5324

Agenda #: 3.1

Meeting Date: 2/3/2026

Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)



General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5325

Agenda #: 4.1

Meeting Date: 2/3/2026

Approval of Minutes of Meeting Held on January 20, 2026



Dakota County

General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Minutes

Tuesday, January 20, 2026

9:30 AM

Conference Room 3A, Administration
Center, Hastings

(or following County Board)

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Workman at 10:20 a.m.

Present

- Commissioner Mike Slavik
- Commissioner Joe Atkins
- Commissioner Laurie Halverson
- Commissioner William Droste
- Commissioner Liz Workman
- Commissioner Mary Liz Holberg
- Commissioner Mary Hamann-Roland

Also in attendance were Heidi Welsch, County Manager; Tom Donely, First Assistant County Attorney; and Jeni Reynolds, Sr. Administrative Coordinator to the Board.

The audio recording of this meeting is available upon request.

2. Audience

Chair Workman noted that all public comments can be sent to CountyAdmin@co.dakota.mn.us
No comments were received for this agenda.

3. Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

3.1 Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

Motion: William Droste

Second: Mike Slavik

Ayes: 7

CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Commissioner Slavik, seconded by Commissioner Droste, the Consent agenda was approved as follows:

4. County Administration - Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes of Meeting Held on January 6, 2026

Motion: Mike Slavik

Second: William Droste

Ayes: 7

REGULAR AGENDA

5. Central Operations

5.1 Update On 2024 Audit Results

Troy Gabler and Chris Knopik, representatives from the accounting firm Clifton, Larson, Allen, briefed this item and responded to questions. This item was on the agenda for informational purposes only.

Information only; no action requested.

6. County Board/County Administration

6.1 Legislative Update

Mary Beth Schubert, Communications and Public Affairs Director briefed this item. Paul Cassidy and Dan Dwight, Stinson representatives, were present via interactive technology and provided a state legislative update. This item was on the agenda for informational purposes only.

Information only; no action requested.

6.2 Update On Effects Of Heightened Federal Law Enforcement On County Operations

County Manager Heidi Welsch gave a brief overview. The Committee held discussion and gave direction to prepare a draft letter for Board review and potential approval at a Special County Board meeting on January 27, 2026.

Information only; no action requested.

7. County Manager/Deputy/Director's Report

County Manager Heidi Welsch gave the committee an update on the current Boardroom update. Upon hearing the update, the committee directed staff to not order additional tables, chairs, microphones for the Boardroom. The committee chose to stay in conference room 3A for future committee meetings, rather than move those meetings to the Boardroom.

8. Future Agenda Items

There were no suggested topics for future meetings.

9. Adjournment

9.1 Adjournment

Motion: Mike Slavik

Second: Mary Hamann-Roland

On a motion by Commissioner Slavik, seconded by Commissioner Hamann-Roland, the meeting was adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

Ayes: 7

Respectfully submitted,
Jeni Reynolds
Sr. Administrative Coordinator to the Board



General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5323

Agenda #: 5.1

Meeting Date: 2/3/2026

DEPARTMENT: Communications and Public Affairs

FILE TYPE: Regular Information

TITLE

Legislative Update

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

Provide an update on legislative topics.

SUMMARY

Staff will share developments related to the County’s legislative priorities. The update may also include discussion on other State and Federal legislative topics of interest to Dakota County.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only; no action requested.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACTS

- None
- Current budget
- Other
- Amendment Requested
- New FTE(s) requested

RESOLUTION

Information only; no action requested.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION

None.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment: Presentation Slides

BOARD GOALS

- A Great Place to Live
- A Healthy Environment
- A Successful Place for Business and Jobs
- Excellence in Public Service

CONTACT

Department Head/Author: Mary Beth Schubert



Legislative Update

Mary Beth Schubert

Feb. 03, 2026

Legislative Update



- State update
- Federal update
- Legislative Breakfast Update
- Governor's Demo Meeting
- Coming up: Congressionally Directed Spending
- Other items?



General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5299

Agenda #: 5.2

Meeting Date: 2/3/2026

DEPARTMENT: Office of the County Manager

FILE TYPE: Regular Information

TITLE

2025 Board Priorities Fourth Quarter Update

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

Receive an update on the fourth quarter of the 2025 Board Priorities.

SUMMARY

The County Board identifies priority areas each year and tracks their progress through the year. With the fourth and final quarter of 2025 complete, staff will present a status update on the 2025 Board Priorities. A status update of the board priorities is attached along with brief information regarding each priority.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only; no action requested.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACTS

- None
- Current budget
- Other
- Amendment Requested
- New FTE(s) requested

RESOLUTION

Information only; no action requested.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION

None.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment: 2025 Board Priorities Q4 Update
- Attachment: Presentation Slides

BOARD GOALS

- Thriving People
- A Healthy Environment with Quality Natural Resources
- A Successful Place for Business and Jobs
- Excellence in Public Service

CONTACT

Department Head: Heidi Welsch
Author: Jessica Parker Carlson



2025 Board Priorities – Fourth Quarter Update

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
<p>Excellence in Public Service</p> <p>Hire and Retain Excellent Staff</p>	Implement consistent hybrid and remote work policy.	All Divisions and Elected Offices	The Dakota County telework policy was revised in February 2025. The updated policy, communication, and telework acknowledgement were sent to all staff in late February/early March. Starting March 31, 2025 staff eligible for hybrid work could telework up to three days as department and duties allow.	
<p>Excellence in Public Service</p> <p>Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources</p>	Collaborate with like counties to ensure interests are adequately represented.	County Administration	Commissioners in AMC District 10 successfully worked together on a transportation funding issue at the end of the 2025 legislative session. This may be a model for future collaborative work among counties.	
<p>Excellence in Public Service</p> <p>Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources</p>	Prepare for state and federal funding cuts.	All divisions/elected offices	All divisions/elected offices worked on budget planning and cuts in 2025. Proposed plans were presented to the Board in July and discussion continued throughout the 2026 budget process. Discussions will continue as part of 2027 planning. Priority will continue in 2026.	

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
Successful Place for Business and Jobs Innovate and Collaborate	Collaborate with partners on development.	County Administration	County staff have continued to meet with city development partners on general and city specific issues. While we have not always agreed on specific outcomes, work on enhancing both development and the process will continue. This priority will continue into 2026.	
Excellence in Public Services Community Engagement	Design and implement new website.	Communications Central Operations	Staff recommended and the County Board approved contracts with two vendors to complete pre-work and development of the website. In the third quarter, Information Technology (IT) and Communications completed stakeholder engagement. Throughout the fourth quarter, the team continued to work on the new website redesign and implementation. This included work with all divisions and accessibility efforts. Priority will continue in 2026. The planned launch of the website is summer 2026.	
Excellence in Public Service Community Engagement	Develop strategies that will improve and leverage Commissioner communication and liaison with communities.	Communications	Examples of 4 th quarter 2025 activities include multiple efforts related to county human services modernization such as preparing materials for testimony or meetings and coordination with other counties and Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), facilitated and provided materials for a visit to the Spring Lake Reserve Bison Prairie by the governor’s office, Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) staff and Met Council representatives, facilitated and provided materials for a House Capital Investment Committee bonding tour of the 1-35/CR50 project and the Crisis and Recovery Center in West St. Paul.	

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
Excellence in Public Service Hire and Retain Excellent Staff	Confirm current compensation strategy and desired outcomes.	Human Resources	In the first quarter, 2025 wage increases were administered. This information was used for the 2025 local county salary survey, which was completed and submitted in June 2025. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Excellence in Public Service Hire and Retain Excellent Staff	Continue to assess and implement Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) strategies.	Human Resources	County Manager and Human Resources staff met with all County Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) individually during second quarter to receive feedback, understand needs, and explore opportunities to support ERGs and work to help support a more inclusive work environment. There were also quarterly updates at Senior Leadership meetings related to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access strategies. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Thriving People Create Access to Opportunities	Complete and implement Library Strategic Plan.	Public Services and Revenue	The library completed the development of the three-year strategic plan at the end of 2024. The library's Senior Management Team worked to identify priorities for the coming year based on the plan. Highlights include the Wentworth and Burnhaven Library remodels, implementation of a new print solution, a teen initiative to strengthen services and staff skills in working with teens, collaboration with Social Services on a .5 social worker position at Wentworth Library. 2026 priorities for the library are budget and resource management, the customer experience, teen initiative, learn to read, reaching specific audiences, and digital books. Priority will continue in 2026.	

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
<p>Excellence in Public Service</p> <p>Dependable and Modern Infrastructure and Systems</p>	<p>Replace voting equipment under cost sharing Joint Powers Agreement (JPA).</p>	<p>Public Services and Revenue</p>	<p>At the start of the year, the Board approved the budget adjustment and structure for the cost-share and municipal repayment plan. All municipal stakeholders were notified, and all 45 partners executed cost-share agreements. Five proposals were received by the County in June and vendor demonstrations occurred in August. In September, the selection committee finalized a recommendation and in October the County Board accepted the recommendation and authorized the County Attorney's Office to begin contract negotiations.</p>	
<p>Successful Place for Business and Jobs</p> <p>Dependable and Modern Infrastructure and Systems</p>	<p>Complete Cannabis Ordinance adoption and retail registration process.</p>	<p>Public Services and Revenue</p>	<p>Received County Board policy direction at March General Government and Policy Committee (GGP) and reviewed draft ordinance at April GGP. On May 20, Dakota County Board adopted Ordinance Number 133 – Regulating the Registration and Sale of Cannabis Products at a public hearing. To date, 13 rural jurisdictions have consented for the County to administer retail registration and compliance responsibilities. Application information has been posted on the County's website. To date, no retail cannabis or temporary cannabis event applications have been received.</p>	
<p>Successful Place for Business and Jobs</p> <p>Dependable and Modern Infrastructure and Systems</p>	<p>Implement new tax forfeit rules and system.</p>	<p>Public Services and Revenue</p>	<p>Internal procedures and policy have been updated to reflect the new law. Multiple forfeiture auctions were completed in 2025, and distributions managed in accordance with the new law.</p>	

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
<p>Thriving People</p> <p>Create Access to Opportunities</p>	<p>Develop arts blueprint.</p>	<p>Public Services and Revenue</p>	<p>A Request for Proposals was published in January 2025. The consultant selected to work on plan was VIA partnership. A comprehensive tour of County facilities and properties was held with the consultants to establish the current state of public art in the County. Numerous public engagement events were held, a survey deployed, and leadership feedback opportunities offered. Engagement and benchmarking findings were presented to the Board in December 2025. Plan drafting will continue through the first quarter of 2026 with plan adoption planned for the third quarter of 2026. Priority will continue in 2026.</p>	<p style="background-color: #90EE90;"></p>
<p>Excellence in Public Service</p> <p>Innovate and Collaborate</p>	<p>Improve partnerships with cities.</p> <p>Analyze current relationship. Identify and implement improvements.</p> <p>Determine County funding for Dakota911.</p>	<p>Central Operations</p>	<p>Information from Office of Performance and Analysis study was presented at the April General Government and Policy Committee meeting along with a discussion regarding Dakota911. County staff continue to work on relationships with cities. Priority will continue in 2026.</p>	<p style="background-color: #90EE90;"></p>
<p>Excellence in Public Service</p> <p>Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources</p>	<p>Develop 5-year financial plan.</p>	<p>Central Operations</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 audit were both completed along with the 2025 debt issuance project. Planning for the five-year financial plan is underway. Priority will continue in 2026.</p>	<p style="background-color: #FFFF00;"></p>

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Assess workloads and FTE levels; create 5-year staffing plans.	Central Operations Human Resources	Office of Performance and Analysis staff have completed reports for Human Resources, Service and License Centers, Information Technology, and Finance. Work is underway on reports for departments in the Physical Development Division and Community Services. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Eliminate financial potholes; ensure permanent programs/FTEs are not funded with one-time money.	Central Operations	Several potholes were eliminated during 2026 budget planning. This information will continue to be presented to the Board as part of the 2027 budget process. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Review and maximize charge back collections in Community Services.	Central Operations	Direction has been provided by the County Manager to ensure that maximum charge back revenues are being captured going forward.	
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Clean up Transportation collections.	Central Operations	Staff successfully completed a reconciliation of Transportation collections in 2025.	

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Increase revenues to be within the Office of the State Auditor range of 35%-50%.	Central Operations	Discussions on need have been incorporated into the budget discussions and planning. The bond rating process noted this issue as an item of importance for the County. Continued discussions as part of the 2027 budget process. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Reduce reliance on County Program Aid (CPA) for operations.	Central Operations	This issue was discussed as part of the 2026 budget process and will continue to be discussed as part of the 2027 budget. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Obtain bonds for select Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects.	Central Operations	This was successfully completed in June 2025.	
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Centralize Finance Department. Phase 1: Collections, Contracts, and Physical Development Finance	Central Operations	Phase 1 occurred in January 2025. Hiring for multiple vacant positions occurred. Continuing to work on efficiencies from combining units into Finance.	

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Centralize Finance Department. Phase 2: Grants Management	Central Operations	Phase 2 is planned for 2026 implementation. Meetings have occurred with Public Health, Employment and Economic Assistance, and Social Services to gather grant roles and responsibilities performed by departments. Work continues to be underway on the workplans and schedule.	
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Centralize Finance Department. Phase 3: Accounts Payable	Central Operations	Work in this area will start to be analyzed in 2026.	
Thriving People Create Access to Opportunities	Stand up Disability Advisory Council.	Central Operations	Coordination for the Disability Advisory Council was transferred to the Access Management Coordinator in 2025. Bylaws and priorities for the Council were approved by the Board in 2025. The Council completed 2026 workplan which was presented to the Board.	
Thriving People Welcome and Responsible Service for All People	Design and implement Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Program.	Central Operations	Access Management Coordinator has been meeting with stakeholders and working on several projects. Quality Logic was consultant hired to assist with digital accessibility. This includes training and assessment on a variety of digital applications. Work is also underway with staff in Physical Development to further review and work on physical accessibility in buildings. Priority will continue in 2026.	

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Maintain overall facilities rating at good.	Physical Development	Evaluation of a good versus fair facility rating was conducted as part of the Capital Improvement Program development process. The 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program projects were adopted to reflect the five-year plan to maintain the Facility Condition Index of .25 (Fair). Priority will continue in 2026.	
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Improve efficient use of office buildings. Pursue lease agreements for empty office space	Physical Development Public Services and Revenue	Vacant space in the Extension and Conservation Building have been discussed by Senior Leadership as part of countywide space discussions. Space on the Northern Service Center second floor was offered to ISD 197 and the County Attorney's Office. The space did not meet the needs of either.	
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Review and align Environmental Legacy Fund (ELF) purpose, policy, and practice.	Physical Development Central Operations	The Physical Development Director worked with the Finance Director on a short and long-term review and plan for ELF. The 5-year CIP was reviewed and approved by the Board in December 2025.	
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Develop a consistent purpose, policy, and practice for Byllesby Dam revenues.	Physical Development Central Operations	Financial implications and potential changes to the Fund Balance Policy for the Byllesby Dam are being discussed. The County Board approved an ELF fund balance transfer to the Byllesby Dam enterprise fund to cover operating expenses from 2023-2025.	

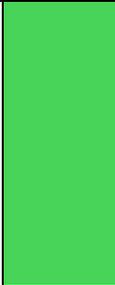
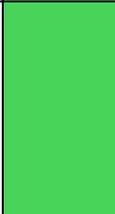
Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
Healthy Environment w/Quality Natural Resources Energy Efficiency and Sustainability	Complete Byllesby Dam turbine replacement.	Physical Development	In 2025, staff completed punch list items and worked on high voltage interconnect logistics. During the fourth quarter of 2025, staff continued to finalize the interconnection process. Full commissioning is expected in March 2026. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Healthy Environment w/Quality Natural Resources Energy Efficiency and Sustainability	Develop energy reduction and greenhouse gas plan for County.	Physical Development	Contractor selected to complete inventories of 1) emissions generated by County operations, 2) emissions reductions and carbon sequestration for County operations and lands, and 3) emissions reductions and sequestration facilitated by the County and implemented by others. Data collection in third and fourth quarters. Staff initiated analysis, trend identification, and reporting on countywide emissions from 2005 to 2022 (last full year of data). Priority will continue in 2026.	
Healthy Environment w/Quality Natural Resources Protect and Maintain Quality Natural Resources	Complete Natural Resources Management System Plan update.	Physical Development	Vision plan was adopted in third quarter 2025. During the fourth quarter, draft objectives were developed and work started to merge the Land Conservation and the Natural Resource Management System plans into the Natural Systems Plan. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Healthy Environment w/Quality Natural Resources Protect and Maintain Quality Natural Resources	Secure funding for Recycling Zone +.	Physical Development	Additional \$6 million from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) secured in CAP funding. County Board authorized agreement in August. Bids were opened in October 2025. During the fourth quarter a contractor was selected for project construction. The project was \$2.88 million lower than 2023 estimates.	

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
Healthy Environment w/Quality Natural Resources Protect and Maintain Quality Natural Resources	Complete 2050 Parks System plan.	Physical Development	Discussed during Physical Development Committee meeting in first quarter. Released for public comment in April. Committee approval in July followed by County Board approval the following week. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Healthy Environment w/Quality Natural Resources Protect and Maintain Quality Natural Resources	Complete and implement new Solid Waste Management Plan.	Physical Development	Plan was submitted to Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and no substantive comments were received. The plan was approved by the Board in September 2025. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Healthy Environment w/Quality Natural Resources Protect and Maintain Quality Natural Resources	Study new waste technologies.	Physical Development	Provided details to General Government and Policy Committee in January 2025 with additional details provided via the Physical Development Directors update in March 2025.	
Successful Place for Business and Jobs Dependable and modern infrastructure and systems	Deliver 2025 CIP projects on time and in budget. Build Lebanon Maintenance Facility.	Physical Development	Construction completed in summer 2025. Staff moved in starting in mid-August. Priority will continue in 2026.	

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
Thriving People Create Access to Opportunities	Complete initial phase of Dan Patch Rail Corridor Study for potential greenway/trail.	Physical Development	Presented at Regional Rail Authority meeting in March 2025.	
Thriving People Create Access to Opportunities	Complete Parks Visitors Services Plan update.	Physical Development	Basic elements discussed during Vision Plan development. Vision Plan scheduled for approval in summer 2025. Planned for early 2026 due to staffing capacity with other plans being updated and created. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Thriving People Care for Vulnerable Populations	Deliver Public Assistance Benefits withing state required timelines.	Community Services	During 4 th quarter 2025, Medical Assistance (MA) review volume was managed, slight growth in MA application backlog due to renewals. Clarity's support with reorganization and workflow redesign underway. Seeing the wins from this work in our Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Cash timeliness data; 30 Day SNAP timeliness for application processing is at 80% and cash programs are at 90%. This is an increase from 32% in Dec 2024 for SNAP and from 67% for cash. We continue to experience a great deal of support through use of overtime and up to 39 temp PT staff working in the Greater MN initiative. Great amount of uncertainty due to Federal Administration informing Minnesota they are freezing Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and SNAP budgets along with State's auditing, holds and no longer approving providers for 14 MA paid services. Priority will continue in 2026.	

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
Thriving People Care for Vulnerable Populations	Complete MNChoices assessments within state required timelines.	Community Services	-March: 1,619 in queue; seven to eight months for response -June: 1,284 in queue; seven months for response -Sept: 1,148 in queue; Hiring remaining 2025 approved FTE -December: 926 in queue. Continuing to bring down backlog even with record setting numbers of new requests (avg. 300 new requests/month). Wait is now 5 months from initial inquiry to assessment. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Thriving People Care for Vulnerable Populations	Develop more youth placement options (with metro collaboration).	Community Services	Regional workgroup met three times in first quarter and developed legislative proposals. Received Board approval and letter of support. Workgroup developing formal structure moving forward, collecting data and engaging community. In second quarter staff continuing to advocate for needs. Collaborating with other counties to maximize capacity. Greater utilization of Aspen House capacity for Dakota County youth. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Thriving People Care for Vulnerable Populations	Refine Housing Business Plan.	Community Services	Board approval to authorize transfer of Local Affordable Housing Aid (LAHA) funds to CDA. 2026 budget reflects current board approved activities. Plans for early 2026 to begin LAHA discussion through Finance. Staff provided update in January 2026 to the Board. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Thriving People Care for Vulnerable Populations	3-5 year lease/contract for homeless shelter.	Community Services Physical Development	Staff learned that Eagan hotel will no longer be an option in early spring 2026. Staff are reviewing alternatives. Provided an update to the Board in January 2026.	

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
Thriving People Community Safety, Health and Well-being	Open Mental Health Crisis Center.	Community Services Physical Development	Ribbon cutting February 2025. Mental Health Crisis Center is now open and being utilized.	
Thriving People Community Safety, Health and Well-being	Investigate and plan Family Resource Center(s).	Community Services	Continue to prepare for launch in 2026. The advisory council has been selected, the planning workgroup is drafting communication and evaluation plans, and the navigator position description is nearing completion. In the fourth quarter, a contract was executed for the coordinating agency. The Program Coordinator was onboarded and began working with host organizations to prepare and plan for implementation in Q2 2026. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Thriving People Community Safety, Health and Well-being	Investigate and pursue federally qualified health center (FQHC) access for uninsured or under-insured residents.	Community Services	Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) includes this work. The CHIP Advisory Committee and Internal Steering Committee reviewed most recent data on access to care. Priorities were identified. Several next steps were determined including additional research on models. Priority will continue in 2026.	
Thriving People Community Safety, Health and Well-being	Develop plan and invest Opioid Settlement funds in the community.	Community Services	Board gave direction to sunset Opioid Response Advisory Committee (ORAC) at the end of 2025. Launched five additional Naloxone Access Point (NAP) sites. ORAC held its last meeting in early December. Held annual city partners meeting in mid-November. Reviewed RFP applicants for multimedia campaign and began working through the contracting process.	

Board Goal	Initiative	Division/Office	Update	Status
<p>Excellence in Public Service</p> <p>Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources</p>	<p>Sunset corrections fees</p>	<p>Central Operations Community Services</p>	<p>Community Corrections submitted a letter to the MN Department of Corrections outlining intent to comply with probation fee collection requirements by August 1, 2029, as outlined in statute.</p>	
<p>Thriving People</p> <p>Community Safety, Health and Well-being</p>	<p>Open jail Integrative Health Unit.</p>	<p>Sheriff's Office Physical Development</p>	<p>Ribbon cutting in March 2025. Unit is now occupied by inmates.</p>	



2025 Board Priorities 4th Quarter Update

Dakota County Strategic Plan Goals



A Great Place to Live
(For a lifetime)

Thriving People

Healthy Environment with Quality Natural Resources

Successful Place for Business and Jobs

Excellence in Public Service

Care for vulnerable populations

Create Access to Opportunities

Protect and maintain quality Natural Resources

Energy efficiency / sustainability

Prepared, connected workforce

Innovate and collaborate

Dependable and Modern Infrastructure and systems

Community safety, health and well-being

Welcoming and responsive service for all People

Dependable and Modern Infrastructure and systems

Hire and retain excellent staff

Community Engagement

Responsible taxes and sound stewardship of resources

Board Priorities Status



Excellence in Public Service (25 Priorities)	Priorities	On Track	At Risk	Stopped
Innovate and collaborate	1	100% (1)		
Community engagement	2	50% (1)	50% (1)	
Dependable and modern infrastructure and systems	1	100% (1)		
Hire and retain excellent staff	3	100% (3)		
Responsible taxes and sound stewardship of resources	18	67% (12)	33% (6)	
Healthy Environment with Quality Natural Resources (7 Priorities)	Priorities	On Track	At Risk	Stopped
Energy efficiency and sustainability	2	100% (2)		
Protect and maintain quality natural resources	5	100% (5)		
Successful Place for Business and Jobs (4 Priorities)	Priorities	On Track	At Risk	Stopped
Innovate and collaborate	1		100% (1)	
Dependable and modern infrastructure and systems	3	100% (3)		
Thriving People (16 Priorities)	Priorities	On Track	At Risk	Stopped
Care for vulnerable populations	5	60% (3)	40% (2)	
Community safety health and well-being	5	100% (5)		
Create access to opportunities	5	100% (5)		
Welcoming and responsive service for all people	1	100% (1)		

3

County Administration



- Implement consistent hybrid and remote work strategy
- Collaborate with like counties to ensure interests are adequately represented
- Prepare for state and federal funding cuts
- Collaborate with partners on development

4

Communications



- Design and implement website
- Develop strategies that will improve and leverage Commissioner communication and liaison with communities

5

Human Resources



- Confirm current compensation strategy and desired outcome
- Continue to assess and implement Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Strategies

6

Public Services and Revenue



- Complete and implement Library strategic plan
- Replace voting equipment under cost sharing joint powers agreement (JPA)
- Complete cannabis ordinance adoption and retail registration process
- Implement new tax forfeit rules and system
- Develop arts blueprint

7

Central Operations Division



- Improve partnerships with cities
- Develop five-year financial plan
- Assess workloads and FTE levels/create staffing plans
- Eliminate financial potholes; ensure permanent programs/FTE are not funded with one-time money
- Review and maximize chargeback collections in Community Services
- Clean up Transportation collections
- Increase revenues to be within the Office of State Auditor range (35% - 50%)

8

Central Operations Division



- Reduce reliance on County Program Aid (CPA) for operations
- Obtain bonds for select CIP projects
- Centralize Finance (Phase 1, 2, 3)
- Stand up Disability Advisory Council
- Design and implement Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance program

9

Physical Development Division



- Maintain overall facilities rating at good
- Improve efficient use of office buildings
- Review and align Environmental Legacy Fund (ELF) purpose, policy, practice
- Develop a consistent purpose, policy, and practice for Byllesby Dam revenues
- Complete Byllesby Dam turbine replacement
- Develop energy reduction and greenhouse gas plan for County
- Complete Natural Resources Management Systems Plan update
- Secure funding for Recycling Zone+

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Physical Development Division



- Complete 2025 Parks System Plan
- Complete and implement new solid waste Management Plan
- Study new waste technologies
- Deliver Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects on time and in budget
- Complete initial phase of Dan Patch Rail Corridor Study for potential greenway/trail
- Complete Parks Visitor Services Plan update

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Community Services Division



- Deliver public assistance benefits within state required timelines
- Complete MNChoices assessments within state required timelines
- Develop more youth placement options (with metro collaboration)
- Refine Housing Business plan
- 3-5 year lease/contract/contract for homeless shelter
- Open Mental Health Crisis Center
- Investigate and plan Family Resource Center(s)

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Community Services Division



- Investigate and pursue federally qualified health center access for uninsured or underinsured residents
- Develop plans and invest opioid settlement funds in the community
- Sunset Corrections fees

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Sheriff's Office



- Open Jail Intergrative Health Unit

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Next Steps



- 2026 Board Priority Reporting at General Government and Policy Committee meetings:
 - April 7, 2026 (Written Update)
 - July 7, 2026 (Presentation)
 - October 6, 2026 GGP (Written Update)
 - January/February 2027 (Presentation)

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2026 Board Priorities:

Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources



1. Develop 5-year financial plan that achieves the following goals:
 - Eliminate the Structural Deficit.
 - Increase reserves to be within the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) range (35% - 50%).
 - Provide reliable funding for service and program priorities of the Board.
 - Prepare for and implement state and federal funding cuts.

Partial list of operational steps / tasks to achieve these goals:

- Reduce reliance on CPA for operations.
- Create 5-year staffing plans using assessment of workload levels.
- Review and align purpose, policy, and practice for each Fund.
 - Include policy discussion of use of interest within each fund.
- Consider new revenue sources (e.g., wheelage tax, County environmental charge).
- Identify and secure reliable funding for parks, natural resources, environmental resources.
- Review and update Transportation Policy on cost share and advance funding.
- Consider further cuts and potential of 'giving back' services to the state.
- Consider process improvements and efficiencies such as AI for transactional work.
- Study potential efficiencies through partnering with neighboring counties.

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2026 Board Priorities:
Create Access to Opportunities



1. Implement the Library Strategic Plan.
2. Advance the 'Arts Blueprint'.
3. Update Parks Operational Plans.
 - o Natural Resources Systems Plan
 - o Greenway Plan
 - o Parks Visitor Services Plan
4. Review Comprehensive Plan requirements and provide direction on scope and extent of Plan update.

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2026 Board Priorities:
Care for Vulnerable People



1. Deliver Public Assistance Benefits within State Required Timelines.
2. Complete MNChoices Assessment within State Required Timelines.
3. Develop More Youth Placement Options and alternatives to placement options (with metro collaboration).
4. Review and refine the housing business plan (HBP).
 - o Measure and report on progress of the HBP.
 - o Determine role of permanent supportive housing in the Housing Business Plan.
5. Pilot existing .5 Full-Time Employee (FTE) social worker stationed at Wentworth Library.

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2026 Board Priorities:

Community Safety, Health and Well-Being



1. Facilitate development of Community Resource Center(s).
2. Investigate and pursue health care access for uninsured or under-insured residents.
3. Complete an assessment of a healthcare model in the jail.
4. Improve safety at high crash rate locations based on the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Crash Rate Index.
5. Improve safety for pedestrian and bicyclists based on high and medium priority County Highway Pedestrian and Bicycle Gaps.

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2026 Board Priorities:

Innovate and Collaborate



1. Partner well with Cities and Counties.
 - o Consider intersections among Dakota911, Emergency Management, and Radio Services.
2. Collaborate with Community Development Agency (CDA) and partners on development.
 - o Review and present policies and practices within the purview of the County that are a hinderance or asset to economic development (as part of the Comprehensive Plan).
 - o Support coordinating strategic infrastructure and land development with CDA and the cities.

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2026 Board Priorities:
Community Engagement



1. Design and implement new website.
2. Provide more online/self service options in our services using Artificial Intelligence.
3. Create more financial and budget engagement (ex. Interactive Budget Books, additional Budget Open House events).

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2026 Board Priorities:
Dependable and Modern Infrastructure and Systems



1. Fair, efficient, and accurate 2026 elections.
2. Deliver 2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects on time and in budget.
 - o Renovation of Wentworth Library.
 - o Recycling Zone Plus facility.
 - o Renovation of Burnhaven Library.
 - o Spring Lake Park Reserve improvements.
 - o MN River Greenway completion.
 - o CR 32 (117th Street) completion.

22

2026 Board Priorities:
Energy Efficiency / Sustainability



1. Complete Byllesby Dam Turbines.
2. Audit current energy and emission processes to determine opportunities.

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2026 Board Priorities:
Protect and Maintain Natural Resources



1. Implement new Solid Waste Management Plan.
 - o Study new processing requirements at landfills.
 - o Increase food waste prevention.
 - o Increase reuse opportunities.
2. Implement 2050 Parks System Plan.

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2026 Board Priorities:
Hire and Retain Excellent Staff



1. Confirm current compensation strategy and desired outcomes.
2. Continue to assess and implement inclusion, diversity, equity and access (IDEA) strategies.

25

2026 Board Priorities:
Welcoming and Responsive Services for All People



1. Identify program and services areas with highest disparities for study and potential future action.
 - Continue and maintain Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance program.
 - Prepare for implementation of the African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Act.

26

2026 Board Priorities:

Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources



1. Maintain overall facilities rating at “fair” and plan to return to “good” based on the Facility Condition Index (FCI).
2. Collaborate with other counties to ensure interests are adequately represented.

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Emerging 2026 Priorities



- Federal Law Enforcement and Impact on County Operations – Incident Command Structure

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General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5303

Agenda #: 6.1

Meeting Date: 2/3/2026

DEPARTMENT: Library

FILE TYPE: Regular Information

TITLE

Update On Impact Of Library Digital Book Pricing

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

Provide the committee with an update on the impact of digital book pricing.

SUMMARY

Public Libraries lease eBooks and digital audiobooks under limited terms, typically for two years or 26 checkouts and often pay three to four times the consumer price for a title.

Court decisions put publishers in control of pricing and licensing terms. In 2025, one quarter of Dakota County Library’s over 5 million checkouts were digital books. The library faces increasing demand and costs and customers experience longer wait times and limited access.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only; no action requested.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACTS

- None
- Current budget
- Other
- Amendment Requested
- New FTE(s) requested

RESOLUTION

Information only; no action requested.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION

None.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment: Library Pricing Sheet

Attachment: Presentation Slides

BOARD GOALS

- Thriving People
- A Healthy Environment with Quality Natural Resources
- A Successful Place for Business and Jobs
- Excellence in Public Service

CONTACT

Department Head: Jennifer Reichert Simpson

Author: Jennifer Reichert Simpson

Impact of Library Digital Book Pricing



Public Libraries face challenges funding e-books, digital audiobooks and digital media. Offering these resources is essential for their role in providing access and accessibility with digital technology integrated into daily life.

- Public Libraries typically lease e-books and digital audiobooks through an aggregator, such as Overdrive that provides the Libby app.
- Licenses usually expire after two years or after 26 check-outs. Once one of these conditions is fulfilled, the title is removed.
- When an option to buy a digital book is available, it's often 2-3 times the cost of leasing the book.
- Libraries pay three to four times what a consumer pays for the same e-book or digital audiobook.

With five major publishers controlling the most in-demand titles, libraries and their professional organizations are looking to engage in discussions with local government leaders and publishers to create sustainable strategies.

Digital Books at Dakota County Library

- 31% of the library's over 5.8 million checkouts are e-books or digital audiobooks in 2025.
- Libby checkouts increased by 13% and unique users of Libby increased by 12% from 2024 to 2025.
- 33% of the books and materials budget is allocated to digital books.
- Individuals wait 48 days to get a digital book vs. 16 days for a print title.

Estimated 2025 average cost per title



Consumer vs. Library Cost

Title: The Women - by Kristin Hannah





Impact of Library Digital Book Pricing

Jennifer Reichert Simpson
Library Director

Digital Books at Dakota County Library



- The library's digital book provider is Overdrive that provides the Libby App.
- It is a shared collection with all 8 metro library systems through MELSA, the Twin Cities Metro Regional Library System.
- Dakota County cardholders get prioritized for Dakota County purchased items.



Digital Books at Dakota County Library



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- 33% of the books and materials budget is allocated to digital books.
- Individuals wait 48 days to get a digital book vs. 16 days for a print title.



Most Library Digital Books are Leased

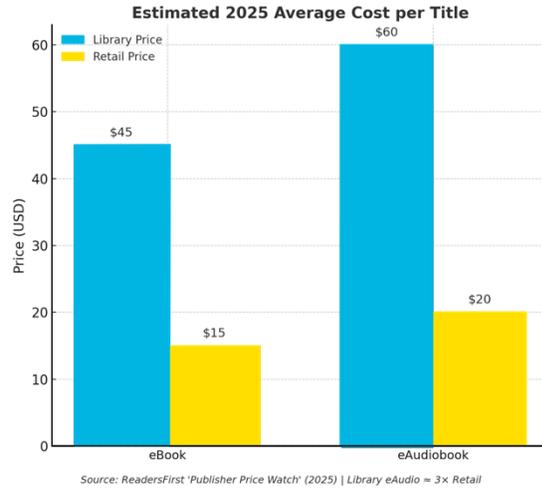


- Public Libraries typically lease e-books and digital audiobooks through an aggregator, such as Overdrive that provides the Libby app.
- Licenses typically have an expiration date of two years or 26 check-outs. After one of these conditions is met, the title disappears.
- When an option to buy a digital book is available, it's often 2-3 times the cost of leasing the book.

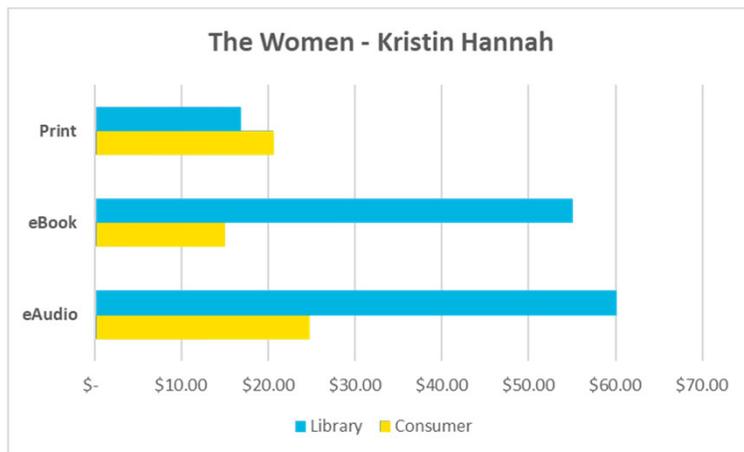
High Cost of Digital Books



Libraries pay three to four times what a consumer pays for the same e-book or digital audiobook.



Consumer vs. Library Cost



U.S. v. Apple Inc.

Hachette v. Internet Archive

- Affirmed publishers control terms.
- Leasing licenses became standard, and prices increased in the following years.

Current Response

Minnesota Library Association and Urban Libraries Council are seeking legislative discussions and conversations with the 5 big publishers.

Connecticut recently passed statutory provisions that prohibit publicly funded libraries from entering into license agreements that contain certain terms, such as prohibiting time limits on licensing. Bill only takes effect when another state or states with a combined population of 7 million adopt similar laws.

Thank you

Questions & Discussion



General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5326

Agenda #: 9.1

Meeting Date: 2/3/2026

Adjournment