



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

7A
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: December 16, 2025

Title of Item: Resolution to Exit the Minnesota Merit System

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	Action Requested: <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <div style="text-align: right; font-size: small;"><i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i></div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end;"><input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing*</div>
Submitted by: Bobbie Danielson, HR Director	Department: HR Dept.
Presenter (Name and Title): Bobbie Danielson, HR Director	Estimated Time Needed: 3 minutes
Summary of Issue: The Minnesota Department of Human Services has completed a comprehensive review of Aitkin County's human resources policies and practices—including personnel policies and rules; recruitment, assessment, and selection procedures; job classification and compensation systems; performance evaluation processes; and employee development and training—and has determined that Aitkin County's own established personnel system complies with the applicable federal merit system standards. We currently pay \$7,110 quarterly to DHS for the MN Merit System, so administering the system in-house will save \$28,440 annually. The final step in the process consists of a formal written resolution passed by the County Board. Please find the resolution attached for your review and approval.	
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:	
Recommended Action/Motion: Motion to authorize Aitkin County to withdraw from the Minnesota Merit System effective end of day, December 31, 2025, and to adopt the attached Resolution affirming that Aitkin County will operate under its existing personnel administration policies and procedures for the HHS Department effective January 1, 2026.	
Financial Impact: <i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i> <i>Is this budgeted?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i> Cost savings of \$28,440 annually.	

Resolution #20251216-xxx A RESOLUTION AFFIRMING EXISTING COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION, RECRUITMENT PRACTICES, AND PERSONNEL POLICIES

WHEREAS, Aitkin County wishes to withdraw from the Minnesota Merit System effective December 31, 2025, end of day, resulting in an estimated annual savings of \$28,440; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Department of Human Services has completed a comprehensive review of Aitkin County's human resources policies and practices—including personnel policies and rules; recruitment, assessment, and selection procedures; job classification and compensation systems; performance evaluation processes; and employee development and training—and has determined that Aitkin County's own established personnel system complies with the applicable federal merit system standards required under 5 CFR Part 900; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes §§ 375.56 through 375.71 provide that a county board may, but is not required to, establish a county personnel administration system by adopting a resolution creating a personnel department and related structures; and

WHEREAS, Aitkin County already maintains a fully functioning Human Resources Department with established policies, procedures, and practices governing personnel administration; and

WHEREAS, the County Board finds that its current personnel administration structure and policies effectively support consistent, fair, and compliant administration of all employment matters, and meet the federal merit system standards;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Aitkin County will continue to operate under its existing personnel administration policies and procedures, and will not establish or adopt the optional personnel administration system authorized under Minn. Stat. §§ 375.56–375.71; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Aitkin County Human Resources Director, under the oversight of the County Administrator, is hereby authorized to continue to administer all aspects of the County's personnel system, including recruitment and selection processes, development and use of job-related assessment tools, maintenance of the position classification and compensation plan, administration of performance evaluation and employee training systems, interpretation and implementation of personnel policies, administration of the County's grievance procedures, and enforcement of all applicable federal merit system standards and nondiscrimination requirements, consistent with 5 CFR Part 900 and County policy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Aitkin County will continue to utilize its established grievance procedures, applicable to all employees, for the resolution of disputes or disagreements as to the interpretation or application of the specific terms and conditions of policy or collective bargaining agreements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that written applicant appeals not resolved through the Human Resources Department shall be heard by a three-member panel consisting of the two Commissioners assigned to the Personnel Committee and the County Administrator; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that nothing in this Resolution shall be construed as adoption of the optional personnel administration system under Minn. Stat. §§ 375.56–375.71, nor as a limitation on the County Board’s authority to amend its personnel policies or administrative practices in the future.

Adopted this 16th Day of December, 2025 By The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners.

Attest:

J. Mark Wedel
County Board Chair

David J. Minke, County Administrator
Clerk to the County Board

Bobbie Danielson
Human Resources Director

**STATE OF MINNESOTA}
COUNTY OF AITKIN}**



Minnesota Department of Human Services
Elmer L. Andersen Building
Temporary Commissioner Shireen Gandhi
Post Office Box 64998
St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0998

November 20, 2025

David J. Minke
County Administrator
Aitkin County Government Center
307 Second Street Northwest, Room 312
Aitkin, Minnesota 56431

Dear David Minke:

I am writing to notify you that your county personnel system is in compliance with the Federal Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration (5 CFR Part 900). Minnesota Statutes, section 256.012 (2) (b) provides that a county may withdraw from the Minnesota Merit System only after the Commissioner of Human Services certifies that its personnel system meets federal requirements.

This decision is based upon a review of your human resources policies and practices outlined in the following documents:

- Personnel policies/rules;
- Summary of the assessment/selection processes to be used, including procedures for job analysis, and development of selection/assessment tools;
- Classification plan, including classification specifications, or position descriptions/questionnaires;
- Compensation plans;
- Performance evaluation forms and plan; and
- Employee development/training plan.

The final step in the process consists of a formal written resolution passed by your county board. The resolution should attest to the fact that you have met all of the requirements of the Federal Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration, and that your county human resources office will provide human resources services in compliance with these standards. Please send a copy of the resolution to Melisa Bryant in the Minnesota Merit System.

Staff from the Minnesota Merit System office will be contacting you to discuss the disposition of any outstanding employee transactions.

If you have any questions, please contact Melisa Bryant at 651-431-6962 or Melisa.Bryant@state.mn.us.

David Minke
November 20, 2025
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Thank you for your continued partnership.

Sincerely,


Shireen Gandhi
Temporary Commissioner

Cc: Bobbie Danielson, Aitkin County Human Resources Director