

WORK SESSION OF THE MOWER COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

September 2, 2025

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in Work Session September 2, 2025 at 1:02 p.m. at the Government Center in Austin, Minnesota.

Members present, viz: Chair Polly Glynn, Vice-Chair Dan Sparks, Jerry Reinartz, and John Mueller. Member excused: Mike Ankeny. Also in attendance were County Administrator Matthew Verdick and County Attorney Kristen Nelsen.

The Board reviewed the preliminary 2026 budget presented by Finance Director Loni Swenson, who outlined departmental needs, levy impacts, and major cost drivers. These included reduced county program aid, increased workers' compensation and liability insurance costs, declining wind program revenue, and new expenses from the paid family medical leave mandate. Unknowns remain around health insurance rates, the Law Enforcement Center agreement with the City of Austin, and whether to use the state's paid family leave program or a private option. State and federal cost shifts were identified as significant contributors to the levy increase. The Board discussed timelines for certifying the preliminary levy, revenue uncertainties from solar and wind programs, and the goal of avoiding cuts to public safety.

The discussion also covered funding for outside agencies, with scrutiny on allocations to the Agricultural Society, Impact Austin, libraries, historical programs, and Discover Austin. Libraries, as mandated services, may be held at 2025 funding levels, while non-mandated programs like Impact Austin and DCA dues were flagged as possible reductions. Members debated fairgrounds management costs, potential revenue from facility rentals, and the need to limit extra funding requests. Highway and Health & Human Services budgets have already been reduced by \$500,000, with further cuts and deferred maintenance under consideration. The Board emphasized fiscal stewardship, the limits of reserve use, and preparing for continued financial pressures into 2027 due to ongoing cost shifts and declining revenues.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 2:42 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY: 

Chairperson

Attest: 

By: _____

Clerk/Administrator