

LAND STEWARDSHIP ACTION

The Power & Importance of County Boards



What is a County Board?

The overall responsibility of a County Board is managing and administrating county operations as a governing authority. They are responsible for County property tax assessment, tax administration, elections, record keeping, transportation, planning and zoning, solid waste management, environment, parks and water management, law enforcement, courts and health and human services.

What does a County Commissioner do?

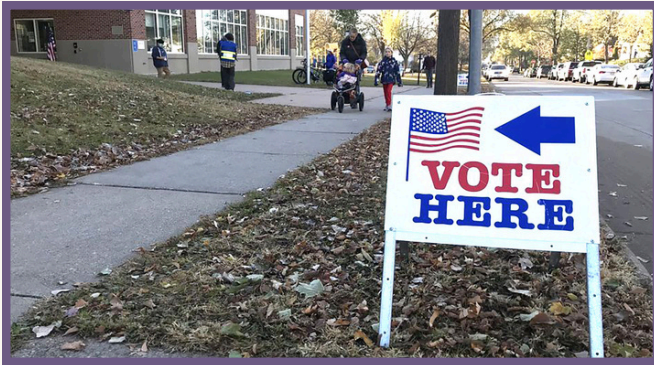
Counties are governed by an elected board of non-partisan commissioners who serve four-year terms. All counties in Minnesota have five commissioners except the four largest that have seven. Every county commissioner must be a resident of the county and the district from which they are elected. Commissioners are responsible for overseeing the county's management and administration, representing county interests at the state and federal level, participating in long-range planning, and managing the county budget and finances.

Minnesotans depend on counties to provide services that build, maintain, and protect their homes, schools and neighborhoods.

- Support and maintain public infrastructure
- Transportation and economic development assets
- Keep residents healthy
- Work with the County Sheriff to ensure public safety to protect our citizens
- Maintain public information and coordinate elections
- Implement a broad array of programs in a cost-effective and efficient manner.
- Counties are rapidly moving into other areas of government support, including social services, corrections, child protection, library services, hospitals and rest homes, public health services, planning and zoning, economic development, parks and recreation, water quality, and solid waste management.



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Why is this important for Land Stewardship?

Good local government in Minnesota is critical because of our **strong local control** laws. Local elected officials determine the quality of life for residents and give people a voice in how their county is managed. The decision-making is more directly connected and responsive to the specific needs and concerns of the community. This form of governance is typically more accessible to the public, and elected officials are often more engaged with constituents. Ultimately, strong local governance in the form of County Boards is crucial to building and maintaining healthy, vibrant and prosperous communities.

How do they advance LSP's work?

- County Commissions appoint Planning and Zoning Committee members, Economic Development Authority board members, and Board of Appeals and Adjustments members. See below for more information on how these boards impact land stewardship.
- Dictate how much funding is allocated for the Soil and Water Conservation District.

- Set County Animal Unit Caps.
- Every 10 years create or update a Comprehensive Plan that serves as a policy guide for future growth and development in the areas of **land use**, transportation, **water resources**, parks and trails, housing, economic competitiveness, and **resilience and sustainability**.

Get Involved! Attend the monthly meetings at the county government building. When and where the meetings are held is listed on your county's website page and in a general circulation newspaper.

