



Saint Louis County

Administration • 100 North Fifth Avenue West, Room 202 • Duluth, MN 55802
Phone: (218) 726-2450 • Fax: (218) 726-2469 • www.stlouiscountymn.gov

Kevin Z. Gray
County Administrator

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release:

December 2, 2014

CONTACT: Linnea Mirsch,
Deputy Administrator of Budget and Operations
218-733-2747

County Board to host public meetings on 2015 budget, also debuts OpenGov online budget tool

As the St. Louis County Board moves closer to setting its 2015 budget, the public will have more opportunity than ever before to see how its money is being spent. The county, this week, is launching an interactive online tool that gives anyone with Internet access the ability to explore both the current budget, as well as look at investment trends over the last decade. The Budget Explorer displays 10 years of government spending and revenue detail in a user-friendly portal, which can be accessed at stlouiscountymn.gov/budgetexplorer. Powered by OpenGov, the Budget Explorer is a tool that increases government transparency by allowing users to drill down into the current year budget and also compare it to previous years through interactive graphs that easily explain revenue and expenses by fund, department and type.

Meanwhile, the County Board, as always, will hold two public meetings to receive comments on its 2015 proposed tax levy and operating budget. The first meeting will take place Tuesday, December 4, at 7 p.m. at the St. Louis County Courthouse in Virginia. The second meeting will be Thursday, December 11, at 7 p.m. at the St. Louis County Courthouse in Duluth.

“Transparency and openness in government are important for our citizens, and for us, too,” said Commissioner Keith Nelson, chair of the Board’s Finance Committee. “We work very hard to be responsible stewards of tax payer dollars, and this new tool will let the people of St. Louis County see that for themselves.”

“By adding the Budget Explorer to our website, we're consolidating the thousands of pages of actual financial data from the last 10 years and making it much more informative and accessible.”

said Linnea Mirsch, deputy administrator of budget and operations. “At our public budget meetings, which used to be called Truth in Taxation hearings, we explain significant changes succinctly. With this new transparency tool, many more people than just those who attend our meetings will have the opportunity to review the budget and in particular those areas that are of the most interest to them.”

Following the public meetings, the County Board is scheduled to vote on the final levy and budget at its December 16 meeting, which will be held in the Morse Town Hall. Commissioners in September set the maximum levy at \$116.6 million – a 2.9 percent increase over 2014.

For more information about the public meetings on the 2015 budget or any other County Board matter, please call 218-726-2450 or visit stlouiscountymn.gov.

###