

Beltrami County Jail Milestones and Timeline

- 1989: Our current Beltrami County Jail opened. It was designed and built as a “podular”, remote supervision facility that allowed Beltrami County to house 81 inmates.
- 2001: The Beltrami County Board approved and with the consent of the Department of Corrections (DOC) Beltrami County was authorized to “double bunk”. Double bunking allowed us to increase capacity to 106 inmates, with 12 of them being designated as female only. When the jail was originally designed and built it did not take into consideration the increase we would see in female offenders
- 2004: A remodeling project was completed that added a minimum security direct supervision unit at a cost to taxpayers of approximately \$200,000. This remodeling allowed Beltrami County to house 60 additional minimum security inmates. This also allowed Beltrami County to take inmates from other Counties, creating an un-intended revenue stream that lasted for approximately 10 years.
- 2013: The Beltrami County Board approved a three phase remodeling project to address needed space, a kitchen capable of meeting our needs, as well creating an area for special needs inmates. The special needs inmate area was essential to address new DOC “classification” regulations. During phase 1, a monkey wrench was thrown at the project when DOC added additional requirements for phases 2 and 3, to include the requirement to increase minimum staffing levels (hire more corrections officers) and design changes that put the project way over budget. The Beltrami County board chose to finish phase 1 of the project, but canceled moving forward with Phase 2 or 3. Phase 1, completed in 2015, added a kitchen capable of meeting current/future capacity needs and added administrative offices that were only going to be needed should Phases 2 and 3 been completed.
- 2014: A DOC inspection mandated that Beltrami County hire additional staff because of the jails original design and capacity were not meeting new DOC regulations. The Beltrami County board authorized the hiring of the additional staff.
- 2015: The Beltrami County Jail no longer had the capacity to house our inmates which necessitated the need to begin housing in other County Jails. Since 2016 Beltrami County has paid a combined total of nearly \$750,000 to other counties to house Beltrami inmates. Hubbard County has garnered a good chunk of what has been spent, being paid over \$487,000.
- 2016: The need to board prisoners in other counties grew at an alarming rate. This was directly due to the expanded DOC inmate classification system, lacking capacity for a growing female inmate population, and lacking space to house special needs inmates. The Sentence to Serve program unfortunately ended because of the few inmates wanting to participate in the program and the huge amount of contraband that was being introduced into the facility
- 2017: We experienced a significant exodus of staff leaving service in the jail with many of our veteran staff retiring. Some of the issues for their departure were directly related to the working conditions, how dangerous it had become, and the high number of inmates requiring special needs due to mental health and chemical dependency disorders. This increased demand on staff, requiring significant overtime to meet DOC requirements.
- 2018: The jail facility itself began to debilitate at an alarming rate. One DOC inspector paraphrased it as “aging 10 years in the last year”.

- 2019: A DOC inspection lowered inmate capacity by 8 and threatened to take 4 more if structural and maintenance issues were not immediately met. The inspection also restricted the use of certain areas previously used for staging inmates entering and exiting the facility from 8 inmates down to 3. Operational capacity was lowered to 118 inmates. In December 2019 the Beltrami County board entered into an agreement with the DOC to begin the process of remodeling or building a new jail facility.
- 2020: COVID-19 Pandemic changed how the Beltrami County Jail operated in order to keep inmates and staff safe. The roof was replaced to address a failing roof, new positions were authorized by the County Board to meet DOC requirements that included a training officer post and booking officer post. The County Board also authorized the long term lease of a body scanner to combat the huge issue of contraband being smuggled into the facility inside an inmate’s body. The use of the body scanner is currently in the certification phase by the Minnesota Department of Health, but due to COVID-19, that process has been delayed.
- 2021: The Beltrami County Board authorized the creation and hiring a new position in the “Reset” Program. A program designed to imbed a social worker in the jail facility to ease the transition of inmates back into the community with a goal of reducing jail recidivism.
- 2021: The Beltrami County Board approved hiring a project management consultant to help the County coordinate, facilitate and manage the Jail Project.
- 2022: The Beltrami County Board approved hiring a jail and justice system consultant to conduct a comprehensive Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study to evaluate gaps and needs in the Beltrami County correctional system and consider all options and evaluate costs for improvement.

Beltrami County Jail Preliminary Timeline

