

Washington County, Minnesota

Board of Commissioners - Actions

Actions at the Tuesday, September 1, 2009 Board Meeting

This page is a brief view of the actions taken by the Washington County Board of Commissioners. For further information, please telephone 651-430-6001.

Washington County's mission is to provide quality public services in a cost-effective manner through innovation, leadership, and the cooperation of dedicated people.

County board reviews a 'flat' budget for 2010

The Washington County Board of Commissioners reviewed an overview of the county's 2010 budget during a workshop Sept. 1, which recommends operating expenditures that would decrease 1.4 percent from 2009, with a net property tax levy that will increase by less than 1 percent, due to decreased state aid.

A presentation by the county's administrative staff showed commissioners how the county's levy has grown to account for half of the county's revenue, up from 40 percent five years ago, while money from federal, state and other local revenue has declined. Money provided by the state, especially, in the form of county program aid, is expected to fall from \$6.3 million in 2009 to \$5.5 million in 2010.

The recommended budget will actually see the net property tax levy per capita fall from \$356 to \$353. Operating costs per capita are also expected to fall, to \$592 in 2010, versus \$612 in 2009. That should translate into a slight reduction in the county's share of the property tax. Using the example of a home valued at \$150,000 in 2000, now valued at \$263,300, the county's share of property taxes on that home would be \$682 in 2010, down from \$712 in 2009.

The county's recommended operating budget would be \$144.3 million for 2010, down from \$146.4 million in 2009. The recommended budget comes on the heels of budget adjustments that came in 2009, reducing the county's current year's budget by \$3.1 million, primarily by eliminating 21 full-time positions on the county's staff.

Almost 30 percent of the county's operating budget is used for criminal justice programs, and more than 35 percent is used for health and human services programs. Not quite 14 percent is used for public works, 5 percent for libraries and 5 percent for property taxation programs. The county uses 10 percent of the operating budget for its internal services. At the same time that the county is seeing a reduction in revenue, it is seeing an increase in requests for aid to its residents, such as a greater need for food support.

The board must set the county's property tax levy for 2010 by Sept. 15. It will review more details in each department's budget during September and October, and is expected to adopt the final budget and levy Dec. 15. A budget review meeting will be conducted in the evening Dec. 8, to allow more public participation.

All budget workshops, to be conducted with individual department heads during September and October, are recorded and distributed to local cable access stations.

County will use funds to prevent homelessness, help homeless

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved agreements with non-profit agencies Sept. 1, designed to provide funds to help those who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness.

The board approved an agreement with the East Metro Women's Council for the organization to use \$151,500 in state funds awarded to the county to assist at least 88 households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The money will be used for both support services and direct financial assistance to families, youth and single adults, through June 2011. The county will use the same funding to contract with FamilyMeans to provide independent living skills instruction by improving financial literacy in youth and families. FamilyMeans will receive \$28,000 to serve 140 youth and 20 families during the two-year grant period, ending after June 30, 2011.

Funds will be used to rehabilitate foreclosed homes

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an agreement Sept. 1 with Two Rivers Community Land Trust, a non-profit organization, to use federal housing recovery funds from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program to rehabilitate foreclosed homes.

The land trust will use \$140,000 in Neighborhood Stabilization Funds to acquire and rehabilitate up to three units of foreclosed upon homes in Cottage Grove. The term of the contract is from June 16, 2009, through March 20, 2013. Two Rivers Community Land Trust sells homes to qualified buyers after the homes are rehabilitated.

County will host household hazardous waste collections

Washington County will be host to two weekend satellite household hazardous waste collection events this fall, one each in Hugo and Forest Lake.

The first event will be at the Forest Lake Transit Center Sept. 19. The second will be at the Hugo Public Works Garage Oct. 3.

Because the Hugo site is not owned by Washington County, the county needs a license for the use of the property, which was approved by the Washington County Board of Commissioners Sept. 1.

County will end contract on bridge demolition

Washington County ended its contract with Veit & Company Sept. 1, a company that was retained to demolish the JAR Bridge, or Rock Island Bridge, between Inver Grove Heights in Dakota County and St. Paul Park in Washington County. Legislation signed into law May 16, 2009, prohibited the demolition of the remaining bridge sections, and Washington County instructed its contractor, Veit & Company, to cease demolition at that point. Because of that, the county wrote a supplemental agreement with the company, eliminating the rest of the demolition work, and deducting \$250,000 from the demolition contract.

The county agreed to pay Veit & Company \$68,000 to clean up in the work area where it had started demolition.

County Board approves agreement with electronics recycler

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an agreement with Dynamic Recycling Sept. 1, which will provide for recycling the electronic waste collected at the county's Environmental Center and at weekend remote collection events.

The agreement sets the rates and terms that allow the county to maintain electronic recycling in a cost-effective manner, and one in a way that complies with transportation, safety and environmental regulations.

The contract is for \$375,600 for 28 months, or \$161,000 a year. The agreement calls for 80 percent reimbursement from Dynamic Recycling if the company is able to obtain financial support from manufacturers as part of Minnesota's Electronics Recycling law.

Utoft named to Community Development Block Grant Citizen Advisory Committee

Nancy Utoft, Woodbury, has been named to the Washington County Community Development Block Grant Citizen Advisory Committee. Utoft will represent the county's District 5 on the committee.

The Washington County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizen Advisory Committee is established to provide public input to and increase the accountability of the CDBG and HOME programs in Washington County. The purpose of the CDBG program is to develop strong urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities, principally for low-and moderate-income persons.
