

Washington County, Minnesota

Board of Commissioners - Actions

Actions at the Tuesday, April 12, 2011 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.

Appointments made to county advisory groups

Benjamin Meyer, Hugo, will serve on the Washington County Parks and Open Space Commission, and Jennifer Osborne of Cottage Grove will serve on the county's Public Health Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee, after the appointments were made by the Washington County Board of Commissioners April 12.

Meyer will serve a term that expires Dec. 31, 2013. His appointment was recommended by Commissioner Dennis Hegberg, District 1. Osborne will serve a term that expires Dec. 31, 2011. Her appointment was recommended by Commissioner Autumn Lehrke, District 4.

The purpose of the Parks and Open Space Commission is to bring citizen perspective to the operation of Washington County Parks. The commission reviews current operation policies, capital improvement programs, parkland preservation, park development projects, and long-range planning s for county parks, and recommends plans and policy changes to the county board. The commission also provides citizens' perspectives on the administration of the Land and Water Legacy Program.

The purpose of the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee is to advise the Washington County Community Health Board on matters relating to the application, administration, and implementation of local public health duties for the county.

County observes National County Government Month

The Washington County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution April 12 noting April 2011 as National County Government Month.

The National Association of Counties proclaimed the month an opportunity to show appreciation for county government employees who provide services to residents of Washington County. The theme for the 2011 observance is "Serving Our Veterans, Armed Forces, and Their Families."

County will apply for funds to pay for programs for homeless

An application to the Minnesota Department of Human Services for funds to provide services for homeless people was approved by the Washington County Board of Commissioners April 12.

The grant of \$74,941 would be used by the county's Department of Community Services to diversify funding for shelter – such as motel vouchers and host homes – and homeless support services – such as case management – it currently

provides to eligible residents through its Housing Unit and Adult Mental Health Unit. The grant application is to fund services for the 2012-2013 biennium.

Library receives \$32,000 in donations

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted two gifts April 12 that total \$32,000 for use by the Washington County Library.

The RAFT Foundation donated \$30,000 in undesignated funds and the Wendell and Ethel Manske Christian Foundation, through the St. Paul Foundation, donated \$2,000 in undesignated funds. The donations will be used to purchase library materials for circulation and for a volunteer recognition event. The Washington County Library Board accepted both donations March 7. The library has received donations from both foundations over the last several years.

County renews liquor licenses for Outing Lodge

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved on sale and Sunday liquor licenses April 12 for the Outing Lodge in Stillwater Township.

The county oversees licensing for establishments in townships, according to state law.

The County Sheriff's Office, County Attorney's Office and the Department of Public Health and Environment all completed compliance and verification checks. The applicant will pay \$2,200 for the licenses.

Sheriff's Office receives funds for task force, equipment, crime analyst

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will receive grant money to supplement programs after the Washington County Board of Commissioners voted to accept the grants April 12.

One grant, for \$66,825, will come from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs – Criminal Justice Grants Program. The grant is part of the 2010 Narcotics and Grant Task Force Grant Agreement. The second grant received through an agreement with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, is \$440,616. This grant will be used to purchase one Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) Response Vehicle, one Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV), and one Multi-use Patrol/Response Boat.

The Response Vehicle will provide a protective vehicle for the Sheriff's Office response teams. It will allow for safer transportation to emergencies and incidents such as suspicious persons calls, active shooter incidents, radiological events, and disorderly civil disturbances. The ROV will provide the Sheriff's Office teams a safer way to investigate suspicious persons or incident from a safe distance. These devices have shown to be invaluable when dealing with hostile and contaminated environments. The Multi-use Patrol and Response Boat will be used in the county's industrial corridor. Currently there is no patrol craft in the region that allow any crew protection during severe or inclement weather. This craft will provide a safe platform from which the Water Recovery Team can conduct underwater surveillance and recovery missions, as well as patrols.

The Sheriff's Office will also receive a Minnesota Joint Analysis Center Grant, which is from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division. The grant will cover the costs of a Special Project Criminal Analyst position, until March 31, 2013. Law enforcement agencies across the state provide criminal information to the Minnesota Joint Analysis Center. This information is analyzed and disseminated throughout the state. The analyst in this position will work directly with the Sheriff's Office on its criminal cases analyzing criminal trends and activity throughout the county.

Week is proclaimed National Public Safety Telecommunications Week

The Washington County Board of Commissioners proclaimed the week of April 10 through April 16 as National Public Safety Telecommunications Week in Washington County.

The proclamation, adopted April 12, recognizes the work of the 9-1-1 public safety dispatchers in the county. The proclamation noted the critical first contact that county residents have with the 9-1-1 telecommunicators and dispatcher who are the vital link between residents and police officers, firefighters and paramedics.

Community volunteers recognized by county board

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized community volunteers at an annual recognition ceremony April 12 during their regular county board meeting in the Government Center in Stillwater.

Community Thread, a regional volunteer center in Stillwater, presented the group "Storm in the Valley" of Lakeland with the Outstanding Group Volunteer Award. Since August 2007, more than 55 families have been assisted by Storm volunteers, who have given more than 3,100 hours of service. They have helped seven individuals move, have painted 11 homes and have cleaned out, hauled away and organized 26 garages.

The Outstanding Youth Volunteer Award was presented to Samynktha Melachuri of Woodbury. Melachuri volunteers at the Minnesota Children's Museum, and at Feed My Starving Children.

The Outstanding Adult Volunteer Award went to Susan Edseth of Forest Lake, who has been an AmeriCorps volunteer with FamilyMeans for more than two years. She has spent more than 900 hours visiting people who have chronic illnesses or disabilities. She has also served with Great River Greening and the Washington County 4-H.

The Lifetime Volunteer Award was presented to Dixie Ewing of Woodbury. She has volunteered with her son's Boy Scout troop, and is an active member of the Woodbury United Methodist Church. She volunteered for the capital campaign that helped create the Woodbury YMCA, and served on the Y's Board of Directors. She has also served many other groups in the community of Woodbury.

A posthumous Lifetime Volunteer Award was given to Dick Stafford, late of Woodbury, which was accepted by his son Bruce Stafford. Dick Stafford served the Woodbury Community Foundation, the YMCA, the Woodbury Lions Club, the Woodbury Yellow Ribbon Network, and a number of other Woodbury organizations.

The board adopted a resolution recognizing community volunteers and their volunteer services, and proclaimed April 10 through April 16 as National Volunteer Week in Washington County.

The 1,171 volunteers managed by Community Thread provided 10,877 hours of service to community organizations in the St. Croix Valley in 2010.

County will continue commemoration of First Minnesota

The Washington County Library, in partnership with the Washington County Historical Society and the Metropolitan Library Services Agency, is presenting a series of events from January through July to commemorate the establishment of the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, which served in the Army of the Potomac and fought in major battles of the Civil War, most notably at Gettysburg, Pa.

The library will continue its commemoration April 30 with an event in honor of the First Minnesota at the Washington County Historic Courthouse. It will feature a special program adapted from letters of Washington County soldiers who served in the First Minnesota, and a display of portraits of members of the unit.

In preparation for the event, the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution April 12 declaring April 30, 2011, as the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Day in Washington County.

The board also saw a reproduction of a quilt given to George Bauer – a resident of Cottage Grove, when he enlisted – by a Confederate woman who nursed him back to health and sent him home to Fort Snelling wrapped in the quilt to hide his uniform.

Grant money from DNR will pay for conservation easement along Valley Creek

As part of the Valley Creek Protection Partnership, Washington County was awarded a grant of \$218,000 from the state Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund to acquire a conservation easement over approximately 50 acres of shore land along Valley Creek in Afton.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the acceptance of the grant money at its meeting April 12. No county match of funds is required to accept the grant.

These funds are intended to be used, in collaboration with the other Valley Creek Protection partners.

Sandberg appointed county engineer

Wayne Sandberg was appointed the County Highway Engineer by the Washington County Board of Commissioners at its meeting April 12.

Sandberg is the county's Public Works Deputy Director. He succeeds Don Theisen, the county's Public Works Director, who has been the county engineer since 2002. Theisen will continue in his role as Public Works Department Director. Sandberg has led the Transportation Division of the county's Public Works Department as Assistant Engineer since 2005. During his tenure, he has built community support on complex projects; obtained tens of millions of dollars in new funding; delivered award-winning projects; developed new staff into key positions; developed the county transit program; established himself as a leader on department initiatives such as performance measures; been a leader on state and national issues; and has been recognized for his achievements with several awards including American Public Works Association Minnesota Chapter 2010 Supervisor of the Year.

Over the past decade, the county has successfully used a transition process to move the Assistant County Highway Engineer into the County Highway Engineer position when that person is fully qualified and experienced to successfully carry out the responsibilities of the position.

County reaffirms that it will help pay for trail on Zephyr line

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a letter of support for the use of \$1 million from the county's Land and Water Legacy funds to be used to purchase Minnesota Zephyr right-of-way to add to the state's trail system. The Zephyr line is a 6.5-mile railroad bed that leads from downtown Stillwater west to connect to the Gateway Trail, a state recreational trail. The Land and Water Legacy program is a voter-approved program passed in 2006 that allows the county board to spend up to \$20 million for land and water conservation projects in the county.

Washington County first expressed its support of this acquisition and its willingness to commit Land and Water Legacy funds to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the acquisition in summer of 2007. Since that time, the DNR has been working to negotiate a purchase agreement with the landowner and to arrange the necessary funds for the acquisition. The DNR now has an option to purchase the property. As the DNR works with the State Legislature to secure the remainder of the funds that are needed for the acquisition, Washington County reaffirmed its support of the project.

County Board begins process of redistricting

With the receipt of the results from the 2010 census, state and local governments will undertake the process of redistricting to establish election districts to be used in the 2012 elections.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners will be responsible for establishing district boundaries for the five board seats. Some of the parameters set by state law which the board must take under consideration are:

- districts shall be composed of contiguous territory and be as compact as practicable;
- districts shall be as nearly equal in population as possible;
- no district shall vary in population by more than 10 percent from the average of all districts;
- a majority of the least populous districts shall contain not less than a majority of the county population.

Minnesota law requires that there shall be a new election of commissioners in all districts at the next general election following redistricting. Commissioner Districts 1 and 3 will be on the ballot as those terms will be expiring. Districts 2, 4, and 5 will also be on the ballot for election unless the change in population from the old district to the new district is less than 5 percent of the average district population.

The county board, or redistricting commission if there is one, shall determine the number of board members to be elected for two-year terms and for four-year terms at the 2012 election to provide for staggered terms on the county board.

Bid accepted for lighted ski trails at Lake Elmo Park Reserve

A bid of \$389,500 from Starry Electric, Inc., to build four zones of lighted cross-country ski trails in the Lake Elmo Park Reserve, was accepted by the Washington County Board of Commissioners April 12.

All four zones would provide about five miles of lighted ski trails in the park reserve. This program is funded through the Parks and Trails Fund of the sales tax revenue resulting from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment.
