

Washington County, Minnesota

Board of Commissioners - Actions

Actions at the Tuesday, September 27, 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.

Stafford library will get automatic book sorter system

The R.H. Stafford Branch of the Washington County Library will receive new equipment, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed Sept. 27 to purchase a new sorter for the library.

The sorter system would be attached to the internal book drop window inside the library and would let the public check in materials as they return them and receive a receipt for returned materials. Library materials returned through the sorter would be sorted into bins reducing the handling time of materials by staff. The sorter equipment uses technology to improve on the turnaround time of getting library materials checked in and ready for the next borrower. It expands the opportunities for library customers to be self sufficient and documents their return of library materials quickly and accurately. Its use should reduce the handling of library materials by library staff and maintain the capacity of the library's largest and busiest branch to meet customers' needs. The sorter will cost \$283,000.

County will maintain landscaping along St. Croix Trail in Lakeland, Lakeland Shores

Washington County will help maintain specialized landscaping along St. Croix Trail, or County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 18, in Lakeland and Lakeland Shores, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed to the work Sept. 27.

The St. Croix Trail construction project involved the reconstruction of 1.3 miles of roadway between Seventh Street South and Upper Fifth Street North, in the City of Lakeland and the City of Lakeland Shores. The completed project resulted in a two-lane divided roadway with raised median, curb and gutter, storm sewer, three single-lane roundabouts, and a paved multi-use trail. As part of the project, specialized landscaping was installed in the medians of CSAH 18 after it was requested by local community leaders. This landscaping requires regular maintenance, and is the responsibility of the local community.

The City of Lakeland and the City of Lakeland Shores have agreed to share the maintenance of the project's landscaping, with the county, and these cities will have access to the medians for this work.

County Board approves budget for resource recovery project

As one of the parties to the joint powers agreement that oversees the resource recovery facility in Newport, the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the 2012 budget for the facility at its meeting Sept. 27. Washington County is one member of the Ramsey/Washington County Resource Recovery Project Board. The 2012 budget includes the scheduled payments to the facility vendor, Resource Recovery Technologies, and hauler rebates in accordance to the 2007-2012 Processing Agreement. The recommended 2012 Resource Recovery Project Budget is \$10,196,787. The budget is funded by county contributions and interest on investments.

The amount each county contributes is based on a 73 percent share from Ramsey County and a 27 percent share from Washington County. With that formula, the Washington County share will be \$2,749,082.

The revenue source for the county's share is the County Environmental Charge, which is a charge placed on garbage collection in the county. The proceeds are used for solid and hazardous waste services, such as household hazardous waste collections, recycling grants to cities and townships, community-wide programs, and resource recovery.

County makes its contribution to trail on Zephyr right-of-way

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed Sept. 27 to pay \$1 million toward the purchase of the Minnesota Zephyr right-of-way owned by David Paradeau.

The county directed the money to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which is acquiring the right-of-way for an addition to the state trail system. The county's source of funding for the contribution is the Land and Water Legacy Program (LWLP) bond funds, which is a voter-approved fund for the purpose of purchasing parkland and improving water quality of rivers, lakes and streams.

The right-of-way includes 5.9 miles of the corridor from Lake Masterman in Grant to Highway 95 in Stillwater, the Highway 95 bridge and a trail easement over the southerly 2,000 feet from the Highway 95 bridge to downtown Stillwater. The purchase price is \$4,235,000 and includes the rails, ties, bridges, and land.

A covenant will be placed on the land that requires the state to use the corridor as a public recreational trail in perpetuity, to seek the county's approval if it conveys any interest in the property to another party, and to pay the county its fair market value share if the property is ever sold.

This project is an opportunity for Washington County to partner with the state to complete a portion of the trail system proposed in the county's Lake Links Trail Plan extending from Mahtomedi to Stillwater.

The DNR engineers have begun design work on the trail that will include a bridge at Manning Avenue. The ties and rails are scheduled to be removed late fall 2011 and the trail will be open for walking. The DNR will pave approximately two miles of trail in summer 2012 and will pave the remainder of the trail as development funds are secured.

Board receives update on energy efficiency projects

The Washington County Board of Commissioners received an update Sept. 27 on a number of energy conservation plans being undertaken at the county.

The county has been working on a variety of energy activities, including the use of federal stimulus funds to promote energy conservation, and the use of an energy efficiency and conservation block grant funds to pay for the development of a county energy plan.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant is being used for energy audits and evaluations, air conditioner replacements, building automation upgrades and window replacements, the development of a County Energy Plan, and traffic synchronization projects. Almost all of the \$655,640 in the grant is committed; \$202,352 has been spent so far, and the remaining \$453,288 is contractually committed. The energy saved and jobs created as result of grant funds and will be tracked and reported when the project is complete.

The county is also creating an energy plan, which will take into account all aspects of energy use in the county, covering buildings, transportation, waste and water use. In the county buildings, that means retrofits, optimizing building operation, and influencing how employees use energy. In the area of transportation, it means increasing efficiency in the county's vehicle fleet, timing traffic signals, and reviewing how employees commute. It also means following the "reduction and recycling" practice of not generating additional waste, and green purchasing. The plan also examines in what areas the most energy is consumed, and in what areas the most money is spent on energy needs.

The county is also a pilot county in the Public Buildings Enhanced Energy Efficiency Program, which has as its goal to reduce energy consumption by at least 10 percent in the county. Fourteen county facilities are being evaluated for energy-saving opportunities; it is expected that the evaluation will be completed by November.
