

Washington County, Minnesota

Board of Commissioners - Actions

Actions at the Tuesday, April 19, 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.

County sells \$40 million in general obligation bonds

The Washington County Board of Commissioners awarded the sale of \$40 million general obligation bonds at its meeting April 19 to Banc of America Merrill Lynch.

The bond proceeds will be used to pay for capital projects outlined in the capital improvement program (CIP). That program was adopted along with the rest of the county's budget for 2011 in December 2010. The plan included the issuance of general obligation bonds to provide money to finance county projects. These include road projects, technology upgrades for county buildings, a cost management program for fuel consumption, and an automated book sorter for the R.H. Stafford branch of the Washington County Library, and funding for the voter-approved Land and Water Legacy Program.

During preparations for the bond sale, the county's finances were examined by Standard & Poor's and Moody's ratings agencies. Standard & Poor's confirmed the county's AAA rating and Moody's confirmed the county's Aaa rating, both the highest ratings granted by the agencies. Nationally, there are 3,068 counties. Of those, Moody's lists 88 as having a Aaa rating, and Standard and Poor's lists 67 as having AAA rating. Because of the county's superior ratings, the interest rate the county pays will be lower. As a result, the county will save \$2.2 million over the life of the bonds, in comparison to the cost estimate prior to the bond sale.

Capital Improvement Plan projects to be financed by the bonds include:

- Broadway Avenue reconstruction in Forest Lake, \$15 million;
- County State Aid Highway 19 (CSAH) (Woodbury Drive) in Woodbury reconstruction, \$6 million;
- Valley Creek Road rehabilitation in Woodbury, \$4 million;
- County Road 13B pavement improvement in Lake Elmo, \$2 million;
- Road improvements around the Government Center in Stillwater, \$2.5 million for county roads 62 and 63, a parking lot, sidewalks and trails;
- Road improvements on CSAH 22, 20, 19 in Cottage Grove, for reconstruction, new alignment, improved safety and east-west connectivity, \$2.5 million;
- Fiber Optic Ring infrastructure for county facilities, to improve communications and data management, \$1.3 million;
- Automated Sorter for the R.H. Stafford Library, for operation efficiency and customer service, \$300,000.

The bonds also include financing for the Land and Water Legacy Program, which was approved by voters in 2006 to protect sensitive natural resources in the county. The county will use \$5 million in bond proceeds for current and near-term expenditures. The bonds also included \$1.1 million in projects to be funded through equipment notes, which is shorter-term borrowing for items that have a shorter life. A public hearing on the bond sales was conducted March 15.

Board wishes lieutenant colonel well

The Washington County Board of Commissioners extended its congratulations to Lt. Col. Barbara O'Reilly April 19 on her pending retirement.

O'Reilly has worked closely with a growing number of Washington County communities, businesses, and organizations to enable Washington County to become the first Yellow Ribbon County in Minnesota, created to support military personnel and their families during pre-deployment, deployment, and reintegration into their communities. She has served in the United States Army and the Minnesota National Guard for 21 years, and is looking forward to retirement effective July 31, 2011.

Board appoints Farley to block grant advisory committee, Meyer to Library Board

Danisa Farley, Cottage Grove, will serve on the Washington County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizens Advisory Committee, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners made the appointment April 19. Farley will serve a term that will expire Dec. 31, 2013. Her appointment was recommended by Commissioner Autumn Lehrke, District 4.

The Washington County CDBG Citizen Advisory Committee provides public input and increases 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.

Sara Meyer, St. Mary's Point, was appointed to the Washington County Library Board. The board, which is mandated by state statute, is advisory to the Washington County Board of Commissioners. The library board recommends policies on strategic plan and facilities plans and promotes library services.

County will contract with Cottage Grove White Pine II, memory care facility

Washington County will contract with Cottage Grove White Pine II, which has a 22-bed building specializing in memory care, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the contract April 19.

The memory care facility is adjacent to the company's current 41-bed assisted living facility. The facility will provide 24-hour customized, or assisted living, services to both private pay clients and clients eligible to receive financial help for Home and Community Based Services. Twenty-four hour customized living is a service designed for persons in need of regular supervision and assistance with daily activities such as medication administration, personal care, and housekeeping. These individuals are assessed by county staff and are determined not to need the level of care provided in a skilled nursing home, but they are unable to remain safely in their former homes. Each client receives individualized services based on their level of need. This memory care facility will provide high levels of supervision and security.

Clients will primarily receive services funded by Medical Assistance and will pay a reduced rate rent. The provider will complete an annual program evaluation describing any incident or maltreatment reports and outlining how their services have helped delay the onset of institutional (i.e., nursing home) placement.

Additional 'no parking' zone will be placed next to Lake Elmo Elementary

Washington County will establish a new no-parking zone on County State Aid Highway 17 (Lake Elmo Avenue), after improvements have been made to the parking and drop-off facilities at Lake Elmo Elementary School. The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the change April 19.

The Stillwater Area School District has recently completed improvements to the parking areas at the school. Since then, both the City of Lake Elmo and the school district have asked that the no-parking zone be established to encourage use of the new parking area and to improve visibility for vehicles exiting the school site.

WorkForce Investment Board will sponsor business forum May 25

The Washington County WorkForce Investment Board (WIB) will sponsor a business forum from 7:30 to 11 a.m. Wednesday, May 25, at Bremer Financial in Lake Elmo. The Washington County Board of Commissioners gave its approval for the forum at its meeting April 19.

The WIB is co-sponsoring the forum in conjunction with Bremer Financial, Century College, Forest Lake Chamber of Commerce, Haberman Machine, Hilton Garden Inn, Connexus Energy, Anchor Bank and the City of Oakdale. The forum is designed to provide businesses in Washington County with an opportunity to receive beneficial tools and information to help strengthen the business community. The forum will focus on three topics: Healthcare, Social Networking and Financial Programs. A small panel of experts will provide information and engage participants in discussion. Breakfast will be provided, and the cost is \$15 per person. Bremer Financial is at 8555 Eagle Point Drive, Lake Elmo.

Board congratulates Administrator Schug on 25 years of service

The Washington County Board of Commissioners congratulated Jim Schug, county administrator, for 25 years of service to the county during the board's meeting April 19.

Schug joined the county in 1986 as the director of the community services department. He was hired as the county's administrator in 1994.

Board members congratulated Schug for building a strong leadership team, streamlining the county business by reducing the number of departments, while at the same time, building an exceptional team of department heads, who built strong departments, which bring exceptional service to county residents.

In thanking the board for its best wishes, Schug noted that he has worked in county government for 37 years, adding the years he spent previously to working for Washington County, and that "I loved every minute of it." Schug thanked the commissioners and county employees for their support in his role as administrator, and noted the high quality of the employees at Washington County.
