

Washington County, Minnesota

Board of Commissioners - Actions

Actions at the Tuesday, March 15, 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.

Doneux named to Board of Adjustment and Appeals

Mark Doneux, Stillwater Township, was named to the Washington County Board of Adjustments and Appeals by the Washington County Board of Commissioners March 15.

The board, which is created to adhere to state requirements, has the exclusive authority to hear and decide appeals to determinations made by the Zoning Administrator according to the Washington County Development Code. The board also has the power to order the issuance of variances and hear and decide an appeal by the owner of land who has been denied a permit to build within the limits of land delineated on an Official Map.

Doneux will fill an unexpired term until Dec. 31, 2011.

Country Services will do case management for those with developmental disabilities

Country Services, Inc., will perform case management for 29 additional residents with developmental disabilities in Washington County, after the Board of Commissioners approved an amended contract with the organization March 15. Washington County is responsible, under state law, for providing case management services to more than 1,100 children and adults with developmental disabilities. The case management for these individuals is performed by social workers in the Community Services Department or contracted private agencies.

This contract amendment is for the 2011 and 2012 caseload, at a cost of \$38,689 per year in fees, funded by medical assistance.

Region receives funds to prepare for catastrophic events

The metropolitan region of 10 counties, and including the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and Washington County, will receive \$600,000 to prepare for the potential release of harmful materials.

The region, made up of the counties of Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Scott, Sherburne and Washington, and the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, which works together under a joint powers agreement, will receive funds through the federal Department of Homeland Security, State Homeland Security Grant Program 2010. The funds will be used to increase the metropolitan region's capabilities in the areas of detection of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive materials; effectively communicating and sharing information with regional partners; and training in best practices in responding to such events. It is anticipated that \$367,800 will be received in 2011, and \$234,200 will be received in 2012.

Washington County serves as the fiscal agent for the joint powers group, and will retain \$28,667, or 5 percent of the grant, for grant management and administration purposes.

The Board also approved receiving funds for the county, along with Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin and Ramsey counties, and the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, of \$330,528 over the course of two years through the Twin Cities Urban Area Security Grant Program, funded by the federal Homeland Security Grant Program, to enhance preparedness for emergencies. The funds will be used to:

- to assist cities with the cost associated with new requirements for use of radio frequencies for outdoor warning sirens;
- improve countywide communications capabilities with the purchase of equipment for a Communications Vehicle to be owned and maintained by the Washington County Sheriff's Office.
- improve the ability to gather and analyze information from local, regional, state and federal agencies in emergency situations, referred to as "Common Operating Picture."
- training and exercises to support newly acquired equipment for Washington County.

It is expected that \$165,264 will be received in 2011-12 and \$165,264 in 2012-13.

County conducts public hearing on bond sale

The Washington County Board of Commissioners conducted a public hearing March 15 to receive comment on a proposed issuance of \$42 million in general obligation bonds, \$35 million of which will be issued under Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) bonding authority. No members of the public spoke at the public hearing Tuesday.

The county's CIP was adopted along with the rest of the county's budget for 2011 Dec. 14, 2010. The plan included the issuance of general obligation bonds to provide money to finance the identified projects. The Washington County Board of Commissioners conducted a public hearing on the county's CIP for the next five years Dec. 14, 2010, and first reviewed the county's proposed five-year capital improvement plan at its meeting Oct. 12, 2010.

The road projects to be financed by the bonds include:

- Broadway Avenue reconstruction in Forest Lake, \$15 million;
- County State Aid Highway 19 (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.

The county's financial advisor, Springsted, Inc., proposed that the most effective financing strategy for the county would be to consolidate three components making up current financing needs into a single general obligation bond issue. The November 2006 Land and Water Legacy Program, a voter-approved program to protect sensitive natural resources in the county, will need \$5 million in bonds for current and near-term expenditures. The CIP plan included \$1.4 million in projects to be funded through equipment notes, which is shorter-term borrowing for items that have a shorter life, and another \$34.5 million to be funded through CIP bonds. These three components total \$40.9 million in projects to be funded with the 2011 bond issue.

After the hearing, the board passed a resolution to offer the 2011 bonds for sale April 18. The amount approved provides for market variability and transaction costs and authorizes the financial advisor to deal with bond values of up to \$42 million to pursue the best value for the county.

In addition to the road projects, funds will be used to pay for 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.

The Land and Water Legacy Program will receive \$5 million of the bond issue, to reimburse the county for four completed projects, and to complete seven projects currently in progress.

County declares state of emergency for potential floods

With the potential for spring flooding on both the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers, the Washington County Board of Commissioners passed a local declaration of a state of emergency for the county at its meeting March 15.

State statutes require a declaration to activate a full array of emergency powers and duties of the county in a disaster response, and the declaration enables the county to potentially recoup disaster related expenses.

With this declaration, the county's emergency operations plan is activated, which enables departments within the county to use resources for flood response activities. It also allows the county to receive requests from local units of government for technical assistance and resources, and enables the county to coordinate with the state and federal government for additional assistance as needed.

The state of emergency remains in effect until there's no need for emergency response and recovery efforts. Local units of government are expected to pass their own declarations, which allows for the same type of coordination of response to the flooding with the county.
