

# Washington County, Minnesota

## Board of Commissioners - Actions

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### Actions at the Tuesday, November 22, 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.

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

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#### **County, Marine on St. Croix sign agreement for library service in Marine**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners signed an agreement with the City of Marine on St. Croix Nov. 22, which outlines the level of library service which will be provided to that city in the new year.

Washington County, in partnership with the City of Marine, will provide library service at the Marine on St. Croix City Hall using a "library express" system including automated lockers for pick-up of requested materials, book return and a circulating collection.

In addition to installing a locker system in the city hall, the county will provide a browsing collection of popular youth and adult library books in the community service area of the city hall, and will provide a self-checkout system for those materials.

The city and the county will jointly oversee the use of the Elizabeth W. Jordan bequest, a bequest designated for improving library services in the community. The county will respond to requests from the city proposing the use of county funds received from the Jordan estate to further maintain and improve county library collections and services, and the county board will ratify appropriate requests. The bequest fund has \$308,000.

In addition, the county is conveying to the city the shelves, tables, chairs, book carts, computers and other items that are already in the library.

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#### **Hours at county library branches will change in 2012**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed Nov. 22 to change the hours during which the Washington County Library branches will be open in 2012. The changes are being made to accommodate budget reductions for the coming year.

Library branches will be closed Sunday and Monday. The R.H. Stafford branch in Woodbury, the Hardwood Creek branch in Forest Lake, and Park Grove branch in Cottage Grove will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

The Oakdale branch and the Wildwood branch in Mahtomedi will be open 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, 12:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, and 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. The Valley branch in Lakeland will be open from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The library branches will be open a total of 234.5 hours each week.

### **Counties will transport prisoners together to save money**

Washington County will join Ramsey and Dakota counties to share the duty of transporting prisoners to save costs. The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a mutual aid agreement with those counties at its board meeting Nov. 22.

In Minnesota, the transportation of prisoners is a responsibility of county sheriffs. Deputies are required to transport prisoners to and from other detention facilities, medical appointments, and court appearances. Many thousands of miles are logged each year by the transport unit. Safety and security remain the primary concern in this area of responsibility, and transports made by a trained Sheriff's Office staff remain the most prudent alternative.

Over the years, the Sheriff has sought ways to reduce transportation costs. Recently, administrators from Washington, Ramsey, and Dakota counties met to define an arrangement where the transportation of prisoners could be consolidated between the three counties.

For example, a deputy taking prisoners to a specific location would take the prisoners from Ramsey and Washington counties going to that same location at the same time. It is hoped that this would reduce the amount of time and number of miles driven by the respective counties, and would provide for a safer and more cost-effective system than the one in place.

If this pilot project proves successful, other counties which have already expressed an interest in joining this collaboration would sign onto the mutual aid agreement to formalize their involvement.

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### **Shepersky will join Historic Courthouse Advisory Committee**

Allen Shepersky of Woodbury was appointed to the Washington County Historic Courthouse Advisory Committee by the Washington County Board of Commissioners Nov. 22. The appointment was recommended by Commissioner Lisa Weik, District 5.

The purpose of the committee is to review current operation and long-range plans of the Historic Courthouse building use and restoration within the context of the mission statement adopted by the Washington County Board of Commissioners for the Historic Courthouse. The Historic Courthouse is in Stillwater.

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### **County receives grant to enforce off-highway vehicle safety rules**

Each year the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources allocates state funds to assist with the enforcement of off-highway vehicle laws and safety issues in the county.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners voted Nov. 22 to accept \$15,664 in grant funds. These funds will be used to cover the costs of staff time and benefits, equipment purchases, maintenance, operating expenses, and training. The money will be received over two years, in 2011 and in 2012.

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### **Consultant will be hired to help fill position of county administrator**

Dave Unmacht of Springsted, Inc., will assist the Washington County Board of Commissioners with its search for a new county administrator. The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed Nov. 22 to contract with Unmacht.

County Administrator Jim Schug will be retiring Jan. 26, 2012. The board at its Nov. 15 meeting decided to fill the position internally and to use a consultant's services to manage the process. It is estimated that the cost to fill the position with an internal candidate with the assistance of a consultant would be approximately \$5,000 to \$8,000, plus an additional up to \$1,000 for miscellaneous services such as background check, etc.

After considering the area companies that perform this type of service, the county's Department of Human Resources recommended Unmacht to work as a consultant. Unmacht is a previous county administrator and Springsted is known to the County Board for the financial advisor services it has provided Washington County for many years.

The board will meet with Unmacht in the near future to discuss the process and timing of the services that he will provide.

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### **County's emergency management program will be aligned with Sheriff's Office**

The Washington County Emergency Management program will be under the auspices of the county's Sheriff's Office after a vote to approve the realignment was made by the Washington County Board of Commissioners Nov. 22. For more than 25 years, the county's emergency management operation has resided in the Department of Public Health and Environment.

In July 2010, while attending the Federal Emergency Management Agency Integrated Emergency Management Course in Emmitsburg, Md., county staff began to have some informal discussion looking at whether this function would now be more appropriately located in the Sheriff's Office to make better use of its emergency response resources – both people and equipment – and its considerable experience in this area of county government. Recently, the County Administrator, the Public Health and Environment Director, the Sheriff and the Emergency Management Director resumed discussions of this possibility. As a result of those discussions and some research on the structure that many other counties follow, the new proposed structure appeared most efficient.

All of the emergencies that could occur will involve the Sheriff's Office, and the Sheriff's Office is responsible for public safety communications in the county, which make it a logical fit. Also, local public safety agencies already look to the Sheriff's Office to manage emergencies, and it is the most common structure for emergency management in counties throughout the state.

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### **Land, water legacy money will pay for conservation easement over Lake Elmo farm**

Funds from the voter-approved Land and Water Legacy Program will be used to pay for a conservation easement and trail easement over a portion of the property owned by Thomas G. Armstrong in Lake Elmo.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the use of \$505,920 of funds Nov. 22 made available by voters in 2006 to preserve the land and water in Washington County. As a condition of the purchase, the landowner donated fee title to the easternmost 75 feet of the parcel for future use for road expansion and a recreational trail and converted the cropland to a natural condition. In addition, the landowner's son and daughter-in-law Tom P. and Jodi Armstrong donated fee title to the easternmost 75 feet of their property just south of the subject property for road expansion and a recreational trail.