

Washington County, Minnesota

Board of Commissioners - Actions

Actions at the Tuesday, August 2, 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.

Regional Rail Authority sees plans for Red Rock Corridor

The Washington County Board of Commissioners, sitting as the Washington County Regional Rail Authority (WCRRA) Aug. 2, saw long-range plans for stations along the Red Rock Corridor, a transitway that roughly follows Highway 61 from Minneapolis, through St. Paul south along the highway to Hastings.

The transitway is planned to carry express buses in the short term and commuter rail in the long term. Stations are planned for Lower Afton Road in St. Paul, and in Newport, Cottage Grove and Hastings. The planning process addresses the stations, as well as land uses surrounding the stations.

The Red Rock Corridor Commission, which is guiding the planning, has conducted focus groups, visioning sessions and open houses in the communities that will be directly affected by the stations. The commission has adopted the principals that the plan is to create a place, not just a project; development will be concentrated near transit; the plans will balance commuter parking with development; plans will connect to existing uses and neighborhoods; the plans will incorporate sustainability; and the project will be phased over time.

Several tasks remain in the future, including working with Metro Transit to consider how best to add capacity at the existing park-and-ride facility in the corridor; continue to coordinate the environmental review process; and coordinate any infrastructure improvements near the proposed station sites. Plans would include a new park-and-ride lot in Newport and an expansion of commuter buses to Newport. All the plans include working with the railroads to establish any rail infrastructure improvements needed to implement commuter rail in the corridor.

During the planning process, information gathered indicated:

- property values increase near station areas;
- the prevailing character of an area is an important determinant of new development type;
- station area amenities increase property values;
- transit service by itself does not spur development;
- expanding transit systems increase demand for transit-oriented development;
- the target market for transit-oriented development is typically older couples and young singles.
-

City and county partners are in the process of endorsing the report, and the commission continues to accept comments. The final WCRRA approval will be requested in 2011. The entire report may be read at www.redrockrail.org.

Kemper will join WorkForce Investment Board

Michelle Kemper, the Washington County Community Services deputy director, will be a member of the county's WorkForce Investment Board, after her appointment by the Washington County Board of Commissioners Aug. 2. The WorkForce Investment Board is mandated by state law. The board is made up of area residents representing

business, organized labor, and public agencies, with the majority of the members coming from businesses. Its purpose is to oversee employment and training programs in Washington County, and designate administrative entities, grant recipients and program operators for the Workforce Service Area.

County will contract with Dakota County for detoxification services, chemical health assessments

The Washington County Board of Commissioners gave its approval to a contract Aug. 2 with Dakota County to provide detoxification services and chemical health assessments. State statute requires that the county provide these services to residents.

Dakota County Receiving Center (DCRC) provides several services, including detoxification and chemical health assessments. This contract – extending from July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2014 – is for both services.

In 2010, 593 Washington County residents spent a total of 1,393 days receiving detoxification services. A resident could receive more than one service or days of service. Based on year-to-date data, the totals for 2011 are expected to be similar.

The rate for this contract was decreased substantially at the request of DCRC. It is now \$185 per day, and Washington County will not be billed for more than two days per individual, regardless of the actual number of days an individual is at DCRC, except for individuals under a court commitment. The contract rate does not include transportation, and that can be authorized separately if needed. Detoxification is paid for through tax levy dollars, private health insurances, publicly-funded health care programs, and fees charged to recipients of the service. The county has a budget of \$368,700 in 2011 and 2012, and \$400,000 in 2013 and 2014 for this service.

This contract includes required chemical health assessments. The county contracts with many treatment providers in the county for this service, as the county does not employ the assessors directly. All assessment providers will be paid \$150 per assessment that does not result in treatment services with the assessing provider, and \$250 per assessment if it is conducted at a local hospital.

The board also approved a contract with Human Services Inc. to do chemical health assessments. Human Services Inc. performs the most assessments for Washington County, and \$25,000 has been budgeted to have the organization perform assessments during the next four years.

Stillwater, Bayport libraries will receive services from Washington County

The Washington County Board of Commissioner approved an extension of the county's library agreement to provide services to the Stillwater Library and the Bayport Library through Dec. 31.

Both libraries are municipal libraries, and were established before the county library system came into existence. Washington County Library provides various support services, such as cataloging of library materials and purchase of some library materials and services. In 2011, the county library anticipates a reimbursement from the libraries for services purchased from vendors of \$25,000.

The board extended these agreements to Dec. 31, and will give the parties time to assess the impact of budget changes that may be required by state budget reductions as well as changes in service related to the new integrated library system (ILS) known as "Symphony."

The money is a reimbursement from the two associate libraries of costs associated with sending out overdue notices, purchasing a share of electronic databases, purchasing of telecommunications services, and purchasing processing supplies for new items in the collections.

Contracts awarded for construction in St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park

Work on a project that will bring a new shower house, septic system and recreational vehicle (RV) dump station at St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park will move forward after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved contracts for the work Aug. 2. Electrical service to the RV sites at the park will also be upgraded.

Parkos Construction Company, Inc., is the lowest responsible bidder for the general construction and electrical work in the amount of \$667,700; Doody Mechanical Inc., will do the plumbing and heating work for \$64,950; and Wex Companies, Inc. (dba Septic Check), was the lowest responsible bidder for septic system in the amount of \$268,956, for a total of \$1,001,606 for the project.

This project is funded by Metropolitan Council parks and trails fund grants, and state and Metropolitan Council bonds, for \$1,317,500; and by the county's Parks Division budget, for \$100,000.

County will continue agreement for juvenile center for detention services

Washington County will renew its joint powers agreement for juvenile detention services with other counties to share in the operation of the East Central Regional Juvenile Center, after the County Board approved the extension of the agreement Aug. 2. The county is required by the state to provide for the detention of juveniles placed for delinquency reasons by the juvenile court.

In 1995, Washington County entered into a Joint Powers Agreement with other counties in the Tenth Judicial District of Minnesota to build and operate a juvenile detention facility. Anoka County operates the facility under this agreement on behalf of the member counties, which include Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Pine, Sherburne and Wright counties, in addition to Washington County. This agreement is set to expire Sept. 8, 2012; this action renews the agreement for five years. The five-year term of the new agreement is automatically renewable for a second five-year period unless notice is provided by Dec. 31, 2015.

The East Central Regional Juvenile Center (ECRJC) is a 36-bed facility. Washington County is contracting for five of the 24 beds reserved for member counties under this agreement. The regional facility allows Washington County to meet its needs for a juvenile detention facility without operating a full-service detention facility. This reduces costs, shares fiscal liabilities, and allows for more complete services to those detained than would be economically feasible in a single county facility.

Washington County is able to detain juveniles in the Law Enforcement Center up to eight days; those who must be detained longer are detained in the ECRJC. The center also provides short-term correctional programming. In 2010, Washington County had a daily juvenile population of three detainees at the center, down from almost five a day in 2007 and just more than four per day in 2008 and 2009. The 2011 per diem for member counties is \$208. The cost of the contract is based on the facility being able to sell an additional seven beds to non-members each day. In the event that the average number of beds sold to non-members averages less than seven, the additional operating costs are shared by member counties.

If Washington County uses all five of its contracted beds in 2012, the cost will be approximately \$420,000. The advisory committee overseeing the facility is formed under the Joint Powers Agreement and is made up of commissioners and corrections directors from each member county.
