

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNTY BOARD**  
**WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA**  
**JUNE 30, 2009**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. in the Washington County Government Center, County Board Room. Present were Commissioners Hegberg, Pulkrabek, Peterson, Weik, and Kriesel. Absent none. Board Chair Peterson presided. Also present were James Schug, County Administrator; Molly O'Rourke, Deputy Administrator; George Kuprian, Assistant County Attorney; Doug Johnson, County Attorney; Dan Papin, Community Services Director; Patrick Singel, Deputy Community Services Director; Michele Kemper, Community Services Division Manager; Tom Adkins, Community Corrections Director; Sandra Hahn, Community Corrections Division Manager; Kevin Corbid, Director of Property Records and Taxpayer Services; Don Theisen, Public Works Director; Kay McAloney, Human Resources Director; Sheriff Bill Hutton; Chief Deputy Sheriff Mike Johnson; and Yvonne Klinnert, Public Information Coordinator II.

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Matt Liveringhouse, 1438 54<sup>th</sup> Street North East, Buffalo, operates a Medical Transportation Company in Wright County that provides access and special transportation. He discussed the non-emergency medical transportation contract for brokerage services. Wright County has looked at a different option than the brokerage service. He feels the brokerage service is filled with bureaucracies and inefficiencies and cost more. His solution is simple. It allows a free market and the client, the passenger, to choose which company they want to be transported with. That is what Wright County is doing. They are contracting with specific providers and the client can call a company directly.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Commissioner Kriesel moved to adopt the June 16, 2009 County Board minutes. Commissioner Hegberg seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Dan Papin, Community Services Director, responded to questions raised by the County Board last week regarding the non-emergency transportation for eligible Medical Assistance, General Assistance and MinnesotaCare Recipients contract. Mr. Papin indicated that between 600 and 700 people last year, or an average of 245 people per month, used the MTM rider brokerage for ATS Services. An average of 45 of these rides were provided each month. The other question was why does the county need to be involved. Federal law requires states to insure that the ride occurs and that if the client requires assistance in obtaining that ride that it be available to them. In Minnesota the responsibility for that ride falls to the county. The broker determines if the individual needs special transportation or access transportation. They facilitate the

bill payment mechanism and reimbursement mechanism that reimburses the person providing the ride for the services and mileage they provide. Another question that was asked was what are other counties doing. He stated that as of this morning Hennepin, Anoka, Ramsey, Dakota, Chisago, and Isanti have signed on. Sherburne has informed Anoka County of their intent to do so. Scott and Carver counties are in a unique position because they own and operate their own transportation system, they are going to sign on for 90 days, then they will transfer that business into their own internal system. Wright County has not signed the agreement. Mr. Papin recommended that the County Board approve the six month agreement with Anoka and the other participating counties. That six month period would allow staff time to identify the most appropriate long-term solution to the problem.

Mr. Papin advised the Board that Anoka County will be hosting a non-emergency medical transportation forum on August 6. They will invite the participating counties to attend. Medical Transportation Management, Inc. and other providers will be invited. The Department of Human Services will be available to address the requirements of the counties.

Commissioner Pulkrabek moved to enter into a cooperative agreement with other counties for the provision of non-emergency transportation for eligible Medical Assistance, General Assistance, and MinnesotaCare recipients through a contract transportation management service. Commissioner Hegberg seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

Commissioner Weik suggested that an implications wheel be performed prior to the August 6 meeting. She feels that a careful analysis through this software program in evaluating various options would be helpful and hopes that could be started.

### **COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS**

Commissioner Pulkrabek moved to authorize the Community Corrections Department to end intake for custody evaluation and mediation services for Family Court effective August 31, 2009. Commissioner Kriesel seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

### **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

#### **Impacts to Washington County from Cuts to Human Service Funds**

Dan Papin noted that statewide Human Service cuts amount to \$236 million. He reviewed the following impacts to the county due to cuts in Human Service Funds:

Reduction in the Children and Community Services Act Grant – The state reduction of \$39.2 million over that biennium means that Washington County's \$2.5 million grant will be reduced by \$433,000 for state

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fiscal year 2010 and another \$572,000 for state fiscal year 2011 for a total of about \$1 million over the two years. These dollars are currently used to pay for child protection services, including investigation of child abuse, sexual abuse as well as child neglect, and work with the families to try to put back the pieces. These funds are also used for foster care and other out of home placement. The funds are also used to license child daycare homes and foster homes for adults and children. Children's mental health services are also provided with these funds. These are all state mandated services.

Mr. Papin noted that when there are fewer county or state dollars and social workers are laid off, that subsequently impacts the ability to draw down federal revenue under Title IV and other programs because staff claim their time and the county is able to get federal reimbursement on the time. So federal revenue is reduced any time staff is reduced and that affects the budget as well.

Mr. Papin stated this area will make for interesting policy decisions by the Board as it begins the 2010 budget process. Will the Board want to raise property taxes and not reduce services in this area? Or, will the Board want to reduce staff and perhaps impact the quality of services or start cutting corners that might end up creating more problems? Or, does the Board simply opt out and indicate that the county cannot be compliant and stop providing some of these mandated services? He is not advocating for any of these right now, especially opting out, but these are the kinds of choices the Board will need to make.

Commissioner Peterson asked for statistical information that indicates that if these services are not provided to children in the front end, will the county be providing services as they reach teenage and adult age. Mr. Papin stated he will provide the Board with that information.

Mental Health Grants - \$200,000 over the next two years have been unallotted. These funds are used to pay for social workers who provide services to the serious and persistently mentally ill, most of whom live in communities. They live in small apartments, small homes with a few of them living together, but that is where the impact will be felt. Based on growing case load demands and the fact that the state has over the last few years been reducing the number of institutions that are available, this is a time where he would normally be coming to the Board asking for staff instead they will have to go in the other direction. The Governor argues in his unallotment statement that this is a hold harmless cut because there is stimulus money that counties can plug into. He feels that argument is shaky and they have to worry about one time money being used to plug a gap that is an ongoing need. Staff has been notified that the \$200,000 cut may not be the end of it, there may also be further grant reductions.

Elimination of General Assistance Medical Care – This was done in the first set of unallotments and has now been moved up and will be effective March 1, 2010. This will affect single individuals making less than \$650 per month. In 2008 expenditures were made on behalf of Washington County residents eligible for the program in the amount of \$3.5 million. Currently, there are 545 active clients receiving General Assistance and there are 60 applications pending for this program. Most of these individuals are impaired,

they have disabilities, they are not the working poor, and they are the people that perhaps the government has a responsibility for. Many of these individuals are mentally ill. With some work, he believes that many of these individuals can be transitioned to MinnesotaCare. MinnesotaCare does not have as generous a benefit as General Assistance Medical Care, but hopefully the more people they can get into MinnesotaCare at least there will be some basic coverage. However, because many of these individuals are serious and persistently mentally ill, they will end up in hospitals and that is a more expensive level of care and there is a cap under MinnesotaCare on the amount they will pay for in-patient care. There is an implication for the county that the hold order costs for individuals who experience a mental health crisis will end up at Regions at about \$1,100 per day and that will come back to be a direct county cost.

Elimination of Emergency General Assistance and Emergency Minnesota Supplemental Aid Assistance – This may end up being very costly. By not being able to resolve one-time emergencies, this may result in evictions and more complications for this population. This will go into effect November 1. Staff manage these crises for emergencies with a state allocation of \$210,000 a year. They were able to help 260 households last year. Most of the money goes for a month's rent to keep them in their homes or to fix a utility shutoff. Individuals are only eligible to get these funds one time a year. The implications of not being able to respond to that emergency situation is that people will face eviction and it is a population that is impaired or disabled. The Governor does have a plan to end long-term homelessness in Minnesota, but this may end up taking an abrupt turn with the elimination of this emergency program.

Child Support – The reduction was the elimination of all state incentive money. Washington County did well, so those incentives will be eliminated. Over the course of a year he anticipates a loss of \$150,000, \$75,000 for the remainder of 2009. This will also affect federal funding.

Mr. Papin indicated that the Governor last week unallotted mental health funding by an additional \$670,000 state wide, the county's share is about \$13,000. He further reduced the CCSA grants by about \$200,000 state wide, the county's share is about \$4,000. In doing so he restored some other funding for other programs such as the methamphetamine program. There will be significant impacts on the provider community, PCA and payments and other caps on what will be paid to the provider community for services that were provided.

### **NACo Board Appointment**

Jim Schug, County Administrator, notified the Board that there is an opening on the National Association of Counties (NACo) Board of Directors through July, 2010. If any Commissioners are interested in seeking this position, a letter of interest needs to be submitted to the Association of Minnesota Counties by July 3, 2009.

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**COMMISSIONER REPORTS – COMMENTS – QUESTIONS**

Commissioner Weik reported on a Waste to Energy workshop that she and Commissioner Kriesel attended last week. She was excited about a process that takes solid waste and converts it to good or high quality transportation grade diesel fuel. She attended the Counties Transit Improvement Board meeting yesterday and reported on her trip to Chicago to attend the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) workshop. She attended several technical tours and rode every rail in Chicago except freight. Attendance was up 30% and there were attendees from Japan and Spain. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) were also in attendance. There were high quality speakers and presentations. She attended many presentations on safety. Commissioner Weik mentioned that the City of Woodbury is going forward with their initiative for the Yellow Ribbon Network. She also reported that she will not be attending next week's County Board meeting.

Commissioner Kriesel reported on an event held at the Disabled Veterans Rest Camp. They hosted a picnic for the General of the Croatian Army. Some of his soldiers and some members of the German army are attending an exchange program and training exercises at Camp Ripley. He thanked Cub Foods for supplying steaks for this event. On Thursday he will be attending the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission in Red Wing. He indicated that the Counties Transit Improvement Board voted to have the GEARS Committee consider targeted projects in an advisory capacity to CTIB. Dakota County is talking about extending the Cedar Avenue project and would require another \$10 million, which they believe they can raise \$5 million in Federal or other funds, but it might necessitate a \$5 million increase from CTIB and there was a concern about that.

Commissioner Hegberg also attended the Waste to Energy workshop last week. He reported on the Counties Transit Improvement Board which discussed not having enough money to do all the things that are in consideration at this time. The Community Action Program for Ramsey and Washington Counties is meeting every other week and there are more meetings than he had anticipated.

Commissioner Peterson reported that South Washington County lost one of the nicest gentleman that has ever lived down there. Marty Lynch passed away last week. He was the Principal at Park High School and will be missed.

Commissioner Peterson reported that as Chair of the Metropolitan Mosquito Control she met with the Legislative Auditor and talked about their budgeting process and polices for mosquito control. She was pleased to learn that they had nothing but praise for the Mosquito Control budget and policies. She announced that the Government Center offices will be closed on Friday, July 3 in observance of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

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**BOARD CORRESPONDENCE**

Board correspondence was received and placed on file.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Pulkrabek moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Weik and it was adopted unanimously. The Board meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Myra Peterson, Chair  
County Board

Attest:

James R. Schug  
County Administrator