

Washington County, Minnesota

Board of Commissioners - Actions

Actions at the Tuesday, July 5, 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.

Korte, Belka will serve on Groundwater Advisory Committee

David Korte, Stillwater, and Daniel Belka, Woodbury, will serve as citizen representatives on the Washington County Groundwater Advisory Committee, after they were appointed to the committee by the Washington County Board of Commissioners July 5. The appointments were recommended by Commissioner Gary Kriesel, District 3, and Commissioner Lisa Weik, District 5.

The Groundwater Advisory Committee advises the Washington County Board of Commissioners on matters relating to the development, content, implementation and periodic review and revision of the Washington County Groundwater Management Plan. It is established by state statute.

Farmers mini-market will be available at Government Center in Stillwater

Three vendors will set up a farmers mini-market on the Washington County Government Center parking lot in Stillwater, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners gave approval for the market July 5.

Three vendors, Greg Novak of Novak's Orchard, LLC; Eugene Schwartz of Schwarz Family Farms; and, Zoua Lo of Zoua and Dang's Farm, will provide fresh produce from July 12 to Sept. 27 from 3 to 6 p.m. All have agreed to the terms of the License to Use Real Property, Farmers Market Guidelines, insurance requirements, and payment of \$1. The designated market space is south of parking lot A at the Stillwater Government Center. The market will be open to the general public, including neighbors, Government Center visitors and others.

The mini-market is a tool to enhance wellness among county workers, who reported in a survey they don't meet the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables each day, and a tool to enhance wellness among the public. Washington County Statewide Health Improvement Program grant funds were used for the planning and promotion of the mini market.

County will submit application for federal funds to help with transportation projects

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved by resolution the submission of applications for the Regional Solicitation by the county to request federal funds to fund transportation projects that are regionally significant at its meeting July 5.

Through the adoption of the six-year federal transportation bill, federal funding is allocated to metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) across the country for regionally significant roadway, transit and bike/walk projects. The Metropolitan Council and the Transportation Advisory Board are the MPO for the Twin Cities, seven-county region. Every two years, the Metropolitan Council administers a Regional Solicitation in which eligible project sponsors submit applications to compete for these federal funds.

Washington County has submitted applications for these federal funds since 1994 and has been successful in receiving funds to help address growing congestion, pavement condition and safety issues on its transportation system.

The Metropolitan Council released the solicitation for 2011 May 12. County staff reviewed the eligibility criteria and identified six projects that could score well against other similar projects in the region. They are:

- County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 19: Roadway expansion from Park Crossing to CSAH 18 (Bailey Road) – Woodbury;
- CSAH 22 (70th Street): Roadway expansion from Goodview Avenue to CSAH 13 (Hinton Avenue) – Cottage Grove;
- CSAH 21 (St. Croix Trail): Road reconstruction from 45th Street to CSAH 20 (70th Street South) – Afton / Denmark Township;
- Mississippi River Trail: Trail connection along CSAH 18 (Bailey Road) from Point Douglas Road to Interstate 494 in Newport;
- Point Douglas Trail: Trail connection from Highway 61 to Highway 10 – Denmark Township;
- CSAH 13 Trail: Trail connection from Lake Elmo Park Reserve to Oakdale and to Woodbury – Lake Elmo/Oakdale/Woodbury.

New computer program will help workflow in child support collections

The Washington County Community Services will begin working with a new computer system, called CaseWorks, to help manage workflow in its child support work. The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed to a contract with Next Chapter Technology July 5 to purchase and install the system.

The system is already in use in Scott County, and has helped deliver improved client service and reduced costs. Among its benefits:

- eliminate search time for documents;
- provide unified access to state eligibility systems;
- reduce duplication of effort and decrease error rates by automatically filling out forms with information that has already been entered into the system;
- enable consistent information sharing between all parties;
- improve audit trail and ability to respond to legal discovery;
- enhance data for trend analysis and decision-making;
- reduction of staff time required to process caseload.

The cost of the contract is \$219,360, and is eligible for reimbursement with federal funds for 66 percent of the cost.

County sends notice of potential contract cancellation to nonprofits

Due to the current state government interruption, the Washington County Board of Commissioners took action to give notice to local nonprofit service providers that its contract with them may need to be cancelled, should the shutdown continue. The County Board gave its approval to the notices as its meeting July 5.

The county has not received any assurance that the state grants currently provided to the county for these services will continue to be paid. The services are primarily funded by the state. The Community Services Department recommended that the following services purchased through a contract should stop. Should the state government shutdown end, or the county receives assurances that the money spent by the county will be reimbursed after the shutdown, the county will rescind the contract cancellation notices. These services are not deemed by the department to be essential to the life, safety, and well being of residents.

The required 30-day notice of contract cancellation will be sent to following entities:

- East Suburban Resources (Dislocated Worker Program);
- Family Support Grant recipients (state cash grant to families with a developmentally disabled member);

- Human Services, Inc. (HSI) (Community Support Program, Basic Living Skills Program, Outreach Activities, Consumer Mentor Program, Social Recreational Services, Therapeutic Support Program, In-Home Services).

Critical safety net services provided by HSI and other vendors were recommended to continue without notice of cancellation due to the level of vulnerability of the clients. These services will be subject to ongoing review and consideration as the state government shutdown continues.

County Board receives report from Audit Committee

The Washington County Board of Commissioners received an annual report from the county's Audit Committee during its meeting July 5. The report was delivered by Ron Johnson, the county's internal auditor.

The Audit Committee is currently made up of County Board Chair Gary Kriesel, County Administrator Jim Schug, and residents Dennis Hanna of Grey Cloud Island and Jim Honsvall, Stillwater. Honsvall recently joined the committee, replacing Janice Meier of Afton, who served for six years, the time limit for service on the committee.

The committee met quarterly during the past year. It reviews the internal auditor's report on the tests of disbursements. That includes the use of purchasing cards, which are credit cards used by employees to make day-to-day purchases for county business. The auditor also reviews the check register each day. The committee also works with an outside audit team, from Larson Allen, providing information and asking questions about the auditing process. The Audit Committee also has been exploring the topic of information security in the county, and the steps the county takes to protect stakeholders from identity theft. During 2010, no instances of fraud were detected within Washington County government.
