

Washington County, Minnesota

Board of Commissioners - Actions

Actions at the Tuesday, May 11, 2010 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.

Kriesel recognized for work with Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Network

Board members recognized one of their own May 11, when the Washington County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution of congratulations for Third District Commissioner Gary Kriesel, who was recognized May 4 by the Twin Cities Area Red Cross for his work with the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Network. Kriesel was one of 12 recipients of the Honor Local Heroes presented to residents whose deeds exemplify the mission of the American Red Cross.

Kriesel has worked with community members and groups to create the Yellow Ribbon Network, which provides support for the military and their families while military personnel are deployed overseas. He has been both an organizer, spending time building bridges between organizations that provide support for military families, and he has been hands-on, doing such tasks as setting up playground equipment for families who are missing a deployed soldier who could have done the task.

Kriesel voiced appreciation for the award, but noted that it is not he, but rather the deployed men and women, who should be named as heroes.

Washington County Regional Rail Authority part of advocacy group

The Washington County Regional Railroad Authority (WCRRA) – which is composed of the Washington County Board of Commissioners – agreed to join the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission May 11, and to contribute to the group, which advocates for improving high speed passenger rail service from the Union Depot in St. Paul to Le Crescent. The WCRRA is part of the commission, along with Regional Rail Authorities of Ramsey, Dakota, Goodhue, Winona and Wabasha counties, which are all financial partners in the commission.

The commission's budget for 2010 is \$39,000, and the WCRRA will contribute \$7,313, or 18.75 percent of the budget, which is the funding allocation for the WCRRA. The tasks for the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission are advocacy and legislative coordination of rail plans, encouragement of public involvement and management and administration of the organization.

County seeks public comment on housing project

Washington County seeks public comment plans to reallocate just more than \$300,000 from a project in Oakdale to the TrailSide Senior Project in Forest Lake.

The county had directed \$200,000 of federal Community Development Block Grant funds to the Granada Lakes project in Oakdale, and \$104,000 to the Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed property. Both projects have since voluntarily canceled their participation in the program, leaving \$304,000 in

unspent funds.

The county proposes to redirect those funds to the TrailSide senior project in Forest Lake, which is a planned 70-unit senior rental project that will serve low-income residents. Before the county may redirect the funds, public comment must be received.

The Granada Lakes housing program is continuing under the auspices of CommonBond Communities, a nonprofit organization that provides and manages housing for low-income residents. It is expected that residents who will live in the four rental units that CommonBond is preparing in Oakdale will require services to support them in living in these homes, after experiencing long-term homelessness. Washington County provided a "Letter of Confirmation" for the CommonBond project, in support of its application of funds through Minnesota Housing.

County will direct housing funds to five projects

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed May 11 to direct \$950,000 in federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to five housing projects in the county. The county received the funds, which will be dispersed through the CDBG and Home Investment Partnership Program consolidated plan and 2010 annual action plan.

The action plan has already been reviewed by the county board, a joint-counties public hearing was conducted on the plan, and the plan has the recommendation of the county's Community Services Department and the CDBG Citizen Advisory Committee. Recipients of the grant money will be Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, \$200,000; Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), \$235,000 for Oakhill Cottages; Harriet Tubman Center East, \$217,700; Washington County HRA, \$26,000 for Brick Pond Apartments; and Washington County Community Services, \$104,000. Also, \$168,000 will be used to administer the programs.

Xcel will move power poles for County State Aid Road 18 project

Xcel Energy will relocate power poles in Afton as part of a project to reconstruct 4.4 miles of County State Aid Road 18 in Afton.

The Washington County Board of Commissioner approved a contract with Xcel May 11 for the work in the public right-of-way. The project will reconstruct the roadway as a two-lane, rural section roadway with four-foot shoulders, and address drainage problems in the area. Work began last summer, and should be completed by the end of this summer. Xcel power poles need to be relocated if they have an impact on construction or if they will be in areas too close to the road for safety after the project is complete. Poles that are impacted by construction will be moved by Xcel at no cost to the county; Xcel will be compensated for moving poles that are within the safety-clear zone, as the poles were outside of the original limits of the county right-of-way. The cost of the reimbursable work to be performed by Xcel Energy is \$262,000.

Washington County recognizes Law Enforcement Memorial Week

Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized May 14, 2010, as Law Enforcement Memorial Day with a proclamation May 11 that the week of May 9 through 15 is Law Enforcement Memorial Day in Washington County. The week recognizes the peace officers of the country who work devotedly and selflessly on behalf of the people, and that those peace officers have given the country an internal freedom from fear of violence and civil disorder. The Washington County Sheriff's Office plans to conduct its annual Memorial Ceremony at noon Friday, May 14, at the Historic Courthouse at Pine and Third streets in Stillwater.

More county roads will have pavement work this summer

Increased dollars will be devoted to maintaining the health of pavement on county roads after action by the Washington County Board of Commissioners May 11.

Each year, the county budgets money to provide timely maintenance on county roads that significantly increases the length of time pavement will last, avoiding a more costly reconstruction project. This year, the Public Works department asked for an additional \$1.86 million to add projects to the summer's "to-do" list.

A County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 8 bituminous reclamation project in Hugo will receive an additional \$500,000 to complete the project; the project was originally budgeted at \$2 million, but the price has increased.

Additional County State Aid money will be redirected because two projects in the county's five-year capital improvement program have changed. There is a delay in the CSAH 17 (Lake Elmo Avenue) bridge over Highway 36 project, and the scope of the CSAH 12 project at Highway 244 has changed. Those two changes have freed up money to be used elsewhere in the county. Pavement preservation work will be completed on CSAH 74, from Highway 61 to CSAH 13 in Cottage Grove and Newport, and CSAH 13 between Pioneer Drive and Donegal Drive in Woodbury. With the increase in funding, work will also be done on CSAH 20 between Oakgreen and Highway 95; on CSAH 7 between County Road 59 and Paul Avenue North; and CSAH 18 between CSAH 19 and Highway 95.

Solar power will heat the water at Lake Elmo Park Reserve

A solar-powered water heater will provide hot water at the Lake Elmo Park Reserve campground, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed to accept a grant of \$18,000 from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to pay for the heater. The money is from the Parks and Trails fund of the Legacy sales tax, approved by state voters in 2008.

The project involves installing solar panels and electrical connections to the existing water heater, and will be completed by Century College students under the supervision of parks and college staff. A 25 percent required match will be met by the value of the work of the Century College students and Washington County Park's operating budget.

Mediation Agreement and Support of Petition related to watershed boundaries approved

A mediated agreement between the County, two watershed districts, several affected cities and townships and the Board of Water and Soil Resources was approved by the Washington County Board of Commissioners May 11. In addition, the board approved a resolution of support for South Washington Watershed District to submit a corresponding petition to change boundaries to the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

The cities of Cottage Grove and Woodbury, Denmark Township and the South Washington Watershed District, Valley Branch Watershed District and the county have reached agreement related to the boundaries of the South Washington Watershed District and the Valley Branch Watershed District to incorporate area previously operating as the Lower St. Croix Water Management Organization. The proposed boundary change now goes on to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for approval.



Theisen recognized for work by national county engineers organization

Don Theisen, Washington County's Public Works Director and County Engineer, was awarded the 2009 Urban County Engineer of the Year Award at the annual conference of the National Association of County Engineers (NACE). Greg Isakson, the Goodhue County Engineer and Minnesota's representative to NACE, and Darrell Pettis, the Le Sueur County Engineer and Administrator and the president of the Minnesota County Engineer's Association, presented

the award to Theisen at the Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting May 11.

Theisen has been Washington County's Public Works Director and County Engineer since May 2002. He also served as the county's deputy director, and has served as Public Works Deputy Director. He has also worked for Dakota County and Chisago County in county engineer and transportation posts. Theisen earned an undergraduate degree in civil engineering at the University of Minnesota, and has a Mini-Master for Government Managers from the University of St. Thomas. He is a resident of Forest Lake.
