

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNTY BOARD  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
AUGUST 4, 2020**

**WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS CONVENES**

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:       Commissioner Fran Miron, District 1  
                  Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2  
                  Commissioner Gary Kriesel, District 3  
                  Commissioner Wayne Johnson, District 4  
                  Commissioner Lisa Weik, District 5

Also Present:  Kevin Corbid, County Administrator  
                  Susan Tice, County Attorney Civil Division Chief  
                  Stephanie Kammerud, Administrative Assistant

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Board Chair Miron asked for comments from the public; none were heard.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Commissioner Karwoski moved, seconded by Commissioner Weik, to adopt the Consent Calendar as follows:

- A. Approval for Community Services to apply for a Department of Human Services grant to provide continued COVID emergency shelter funding.
- B. Approval of local option disaster credit abatement for the property located at 95 – 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW in Forest Lake.
- C. Approval to set a Public Hearing for September 15, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. to consider revisions to Washington County’s 2020 Fee Schedule, Policy No. 1032, to implement a Washington County specific cross-country ski pass beginning in the winter of 2020-2021.
- D. Approval of Contract No. 13566 with TKDA in the amount of \$130,700 for the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 38 Multi-Use Trail project (RB-2660).
- E. 1. Award bid authorizing execution of Contract No. 13561 in the amount of \$140,292 with Valdes Lawn & Snow Removal LLC for the Trunk Highway 36 and Hadley Avenue Landscaping project (RB-2589).

2. Approval of Cooperative Agreement No. 13479 between the City of Oakdale and Washington County for Trunk Highway 36 and Hadley Avenue Landscaping project (RB-2589).

F. Accept the 2020 COPS Hiring Program Award Terms and Conditions and approve 1.0 FTE deputy sheriff position.

The motion was adopted 5-0 with a Roll Call vote as follows: Ayes, Commissioners Weik, Kriesel, Johnson, Karwoski, and Miron. Nays, none.

## **PROPERTY RECORDS AND TAXPAYER SERVICES**

### **Elections Update**

Deb Ledvina, Property Records and Taxpayer Services (PRTS) Director, provided an update on elections information.

Ms. Ledvina reported that the state Primary Election is August 11<sup>th</sup>, and the Government Center has been open since June 26<sup>th</sup> for in-person, absentee voting. Voting opens today at the Cottage Grove, Forest Lake, Oakdale, and Woodbury locations for direct balloting in addition to the Government Center, where voters will feed their completed ballots directly into a ballot tabulating machine.

The Absentee Ballot Board began last Wednesday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, to count the absentee ballots received for the Primary. To date, Washington County has mailed out more than 27,677 absentee ballots to voters. More than 12,000 absentee ballots have been returned and processed. In comparison, in 2016, the county mailed out 1,420 Absentee Ballots for the Primary (with 1,044 being returned and counted). That is an increase of 1,849% between 2016 and 2020 for absentee ballots that were mailed for the Primary Election. Ms. Ledvina added another interesting fact, that during the Primary Election in August of 2016, there was a total vote count of 11,187, and the county has already received and accepted 12,292 absentee ballots. This year, the county is required to open properly postmarked ballots through the end of the day on Thursday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, which is two days after Election Day.

Regarding Primary Election night reporting, the Office of the Secretary of State (OSS) has notified the county that it will be reporting in-person and absentee ballot results on election night, just like the county has always done, then supplementing these results with the absentee ballots received on Wednesday and Thursday.

Ms. Ledvina reported that Washington County has 83 municipal voting precincts. The county has joint powers agreements with seven municipalities (Landfall, Grant, Pine Springs, Lakeland, Oakdale, Woodbury, and Forest Lake) and is responsible for operating 33 polling places on Election Day. Washington County has hired more than 412 election judges for the Primary, and to work on the Absentee Ballot Board, and anticipates hiring 550 to 600 election judges for the General Election.

This year, the county is using electronic poll books (Poll Pads) to replace the paper rosters. Paper rosters are often the cause of long lines at the polls and inefficient election record keeping. The county will be using 257 Poll Pads that will be deployed countywide.

The security of voter information is a priority for the state and its cyber security specialist has met with the county's IT Department to make sure everything is secure. The election software resides on a separate election server that is not connected to the internet.

In terms of safety, the county assures high sanitation standards and social distancing are in place. Election officials will have a more active role in terms of making sure potential voters are adhering to rules regarding spacing and the wearing of masks, and cleaning of equipment and surfaces. The county has received personal protection equipment (PPE) from Office of the Secretary of State for the polling places. This PPE includes masks for election judges and masks for members of the public if they do not have one. It also includes hand sanitizer and disinfectant. Using Poll Pads will also reduce person-to-person exposure that occurs with election officials handling paper rosters.

Ms. Ledvina reported for the General Election on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Washington County's absentee ballot mailings will probably amount to more than 100,000. The county will need to hire more election judges to handle the duties of the General Election, which not only will have more voter volume, but also because of COVID-19 concerns. The number of judges that may decide to step down as time grows closer to the General Election is not known at this time. The county may have to train some county employees to be election judges in the event that COVID-19 gets worse and the current election judges are no longer able to perform their duties, or to allow election judges to work in shifts to minimize COVID-19 exposure. Additional PPE such as Plexi-glass shields may be needed if social distancing cannot be maintained, or depending on the experiences of staff at the polling places during the Primary Election.

Reporting results for the General Election will be different. Absentee ballots postmarked on or before Election Day will be counted if received seven days after Election Day. A witness will not be required to use absentee ballots as was the case for the absentee ballots for the Primary in the past.

### **Resolution – Authorizing the 2020 CARES Act Election Funding Grant Application**

Steve Gransee, Taxpayer Services and Election Division Manager, presented a resolution approving a 2020 CARES Act Election Funding grant application to be submitted to the Office of Secretary of State (OSS). This is in addition to the general CARES Act grant monies the county is receiving.

The resolution appropriates the required 20% match from the general local government CARES Act funding allocation; delegates the Director of Property Records and Taxpayer Services (PRTS) to submit the grant application to Office of the Secretary of State (OSS) and execute the agreement returned to be returned to the county following OSS approval; and, authorizes the PRTS Director to apply and execute agreements for any additional funds made available between now and the November 3<sup>rd</sup> General Election.

The OSS received funding through the 2020 CARES Act to reimburse counties and municipalities for COVID-19 related election expenses. It provides a block grant to counties, which then requires counties to work with their municipalities to allocate the funds to them.

The grant request is \$218,118.00. Washington County's share of the grant is \$111,844.74. The money will reimburse the Washington County for a portion of the increased absentee voting costs for staff, supplies, and postage.

The amount to be shared with municipalities is \$106,273.26. OSS formed a work group of county and city representatives that developed a recommended municipal allocation to distribute these funds to cities and townships. Mr. Gransee has been in contact with municipalities with options of being reimbursed for costs. If a municipality does not have eligible expenses for reimbursement, the county has requested the municipality allocate remaining funds to the county for further reimbursement of the county's absentee voting costs. Municipalities are currently discussing the grant with their city councils and township boards to respond back to Washington County by August 31<sup>st</sup>.

Commissioner Karwoski moved to approve **Resolution No. 2020-085** as follows:

### **2020 CARES ACT ELECTION FUNDING**

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 Pandemic requires additional efforts to make the election process safe, sanitary and effective; and

WHEREAS, the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State is currently soliciting grant applications from counties for grants pursuant to Laws 2020, Chapter 77, section 4 and the federal CARES Act; and

WHEREAS, grants will be provided to each county pursuant to a formula set forth in Section H of the grant application provided by the Office of the Secretary of State; and

WHEREAS, the funds provided by the Office of the Secretary of State are provided for the purpose of the uses set forth in the federal CARES Act and as further restricted by Laws 2020, chapter 77, section 4, subdivision 4; and

WHEREAS, those purposes are primarily for the protection of persons involved with the election process including voters, as well as certain other purchases set forth in law; and

WHEREAS, the county will work with the municipalities within the county to determine a fair, equitable, and mutually agreeable allocation of the funds within the County and between municipalities, and if an agreement cannot be reached, the funds will be distributed pursuant to the OSS identified

default allocation formula as determined by the Secretary and provided in Section E of the grant application; and

WHEREAS, the grant application is to be completed by the staff of the auditor and other staff responsible for the administration of elections in this county; and

WHEREAS, the grant application must be completed, certified by a county official, typically the chief county election official, returned to the Office of the Secretary of State and a grant agreement executed prior to the receipt of the funds to which the county is entitled pursuant to Sections E and F of the grant application; and

WHEREAS, Laws 2020, Chapter 77, section 4 requires a 20% match for the grant; and

WHEREAS, the county has received general local government CARES ACT funding that can be used for the 20% match; and

WHEREAS, the grant agreement will reflect the grant application for each county; and

WHEREAS, additional assistance may be forthcoming later in this election cycle from state and federal funds, particularly those funds appropriated for these purposes by the Legislature; and

WHEREAS, there are continuing needs throughout the election cycle for both COVID-19 and election security efforts and concomitant costs; and

WHEREAS, time is of the essence.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the grant application in the form presented to this board and to be submitted to the Office of the Secretary of State is hereby approved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board hereby appropriates the required 20% match amount from the general local government CARES ACT funding allocation as indicted in the application for the purposes set forth in the grant application; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the chief elections officer, Director of Property Records and Taxpayer Services, of the County and staff are directed to submit this approved grant application at the earliest opportunity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that when the grant agreement is provided to the chief elections officer, Director of Property Records and Taxpayer Services, of the county, that person is delegated the authority to execute that agreement and return it to the Office of the Secretary of State without further approval by this Board; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the chief elections officer, Director of Property Records and Taxpayer Services, of the county is hereby authorized to apply for any additional funds made available by the state for the defrayment of costs of efforts to combat COVID-19 in the election process and for the enhancement of election security, and to execute any grant agreements required to access those funds from this date until the general election on November 3, 2020.

Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion and it was adopted 5-0 with a Roll Call vote as follows: Ayes, Commissioners Weik, Kriesel, Johnson, Karwoski, and Miron. Nays, none.

## **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Approval of Letter to County Legislative Delegation**

County Administrator Kevin Corbid presented a letter drafted to be sent to the county's legislative delegation asking for the following items to be included in the final agreements related to bonding and finances: \$3 million for the Manning Avenue and Highway 36 interchange; \$21 million for the Recycling & Energy Facility in Newport; \$3.5 million for the 4<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge; \$2 million for the Cottage Grove Ravine Park Lower Landing Facility improvements; \$500,000 for the St. Croix Bluffs Boat Launch improvements; and, funding to address the Minnesota Department of Human Services billing errors that impact county costs.

Commissioner Kriesel moved to approve that the letter be sent to the county's legislative delegation supporting approval of a capital bonding bill at an upcoming special session. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

## **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

Commissioners reported on meetings and other events that they attended. Please see archived web streaming of the board meeting for full commissioner reports at [www.co.washington.mn.us](http://www.co.washington.mn.us), under "County Board."

## **BOARD CORRESPONDENCE**

No board correspondence was received.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Weik moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Karwoski, and it was adopted unanimously. The County Board meeting adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

## **BUDGET WORKSHOP - 2021 RECOMMENDED BUDGET**

The Board met in workshop session for an introduction of the 2021 Washington County recommended budget. The following were presented: Internal Service Departments – Administration, Accounting and Finance, Human Resources, and Information Technology; General Operations; Commissioners; and the Washington County Community Development Agency. Present for the workshops were Commissioners Miron, Karwoski, Kriesel, Johnson, and Weik. Also present were Kevin Corbid, Jan Lucke, Jennifer Wagenius, outside agencies, and county staff.

## **BOARD WORKSHOP – PUBLIC WORKS**

The Board met in workshop session to discuss the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 15 (Manning Avenue) and Trunk Highway (TH) 36 south segment/58<sup>th</sup> Street extension project (RB-2652). Present for the workshop were Commissioners Miron, Karwoski, Kriesel, Johnson, and Weik. Also present were Kevin Corbid, Jan Lucke, Jennifer Wagenius, and county staff.

Attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kevin J. Corbid".

Kevin Corbid  
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fran Miron".

Fran Miron  
County Board Chair