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Date: Feb. 12, 2019
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Feb. 12, 2019, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board appoints Waller to fifth term on watershed district

John Waller, Hugo, will serve a fifth term on the Rice Creek Watershed District board, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners made the appointment Feb. 12.

Municipalities in the watershed district were notified of the opening, and the county commissioner in that area, Fran Miron, District 1, recommended the appointment.

Watershed district governance, required by state law, helps to control or alleviate damage by flood waters; improves stream channels for drainage or navigation; reclaims or fills wet or overflow lands; oversees water supply for irrigation; regulates the flow of streams; diverts or changes water courses; provides and conserves water supply; and provides for the protection of groundwater and regulation of groundwater use.

Contact: Alyssa Soderlund, Administrative Assistant, 651-430-6015

County purchases land to add to Big Marine Park Reserve

Washington County will add land to the Big Marine Park Reserve in the northern portion of the county, after the County Board approved the purchase of about 82 acres within the park Feb. 12. The property is at 12096 170th St. in May Township. The purchase was initiated by the property owners who advised the county of their interest in selling their property. An appraisal was completed and reviewed by the County Board, which determined that the property is appropriate for inclusion

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into Big Marine Park Reserve, and an offer based on the appraisal was made to the property owner. The property owner and county negotiated a purchase price of \$1.05 million, which will be funded by Land and Water Legacy Program proceeds. The Metropolitan Council will reimburse the Land and Water Legacy Program for 75 percent of the acquisition cost, or \$787,500.

Contact: Sharon Price, Right-of-Way Specialist-Property Manager, 651-430-4391

County Board reviews plan for segment of Central Greenway Regional Trail

Washington County Board of Commissioners reviewed a plan for the Lake Elmo segment of the Central Greenway Regional Trail master plan Feb. 12.

Approval of the master plan for this trail segment will be considered by the board at its Feb. 19 meeting. The Lake Elmo Segment of the Central Greenway Regional Trail begins at the existing north-south trail at County Road 19 and Interstate 94 and ends at County Road 15 and Highway 36. A regional trail connects two or more parks in the regional park system, and serves a regional audience. The master plan for the Lake Elmo segment was developed throughout 2018.

Most of the trail will be a 10-foot bituminous trail, with two-foot clear zones, where possible.

The route identified in the master plan will provide a separated, off-road trail for recreation and transportation purposes that will link with adjacent local trails and other destinations, such as Lake Elmo Park Reserve, downtown Lake Elmo, and Stillwater Area High School.

When fully developed, the Central Greenway Regional Trail will provide residents of Washington County with direct access to a regional trail that connects three Washington County regional parks, Big Marine Park Reserve, Lake Elmo Park Reserve and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.

The entire Central Greenway Corridor will traverse the entire north-south length of Washington County. The other segments are the North Segment, which still requires a master plan, and the South Segment, which had a master plan written in 2017. The Lake Elmo Segment connects the two.

The master plan for the trail is important, as it makes the county eligible for state and regional funding for land acquisition, park development, and operations and maintenance.

It is planned to have the master plan submitted for Metropolitan Council review and approval in March. The trail will be built as funds become available, in coordination with related projects.

Contact: Connor Schaefer, Planner II, 651-430-4303

County Board reports on administrator's annual evaluation

Washington County Board Chair reported on the board's annual evaluation of Administrator Molly O'Rourke Feb. 12.

The annual performance review was conducted Feb. 5. The board provided a recap of that meeting, and the performance evaluation that the board conducted.

The board's review was that O'Rourke has done excellent work as county administrator over the past year, meeting the goals and objectives set for her work last year.

Chair Stan Karwoski reported on behalf of the board that Washington County's greatest resource is its employees, as it provides people-focused services, and that O'Rourke has done an excellent job building relationships with the county's staff, and working collaboratively to see that employees are fully engaged in their work and prepared to provide exceptional service to county residents. The Board of Commissioners noted that O'Rourke sets high standards for the county's workforce, stressing customer service and processes, and then works with the staff to meet those standards. They added that O'Rourke is well-versed in all aspects of county business, and provides a solid grounding when making data-driven decisions with the county staff, especially when managing the fiscal health of the county, which she does in an exceptional manner.

The Board of Commissioners noted that O'Rourke's accomplishments during the past year included leading the county through its comprehensive planning for 2040, as well as planning for the county's future infrastructure of roads, parks, county buildings, libraries, and social services programs that will guide the county toward a healthy future.

In addition to reviewing the past year's accomplishments, the board set goals for O'Rourke's work in the coming year.

Contact: Molly O'Rourke, County Administrator, 651-430-6002