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Our Mission: Providing quality services through responsible leadership, innovation and the cooperation of dedicated people

**Date:** May 28, 2019  
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the May 28, 2019, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

#### **County Board accepts grants from state Department of Human Services**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted two grants from the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) May 28, one to support fraud prevention and another to provide services to people who are homeless.

The county will receive \$170,000 to prevent fraud in the county's public assistance program. The Fraud Prevention Investigation Program (FPI) is a partnership between the county's economic support division and the Sheriff's Office Investigations Division to ensure that appropriate public assistance benefits are issued to people who are eligible to receive them. The program's focus is to quickly identify and resolve instances in which applicants are receiving benefits for which they are ineligible, which helps ensure that federal, state, and county funds are only made available to eligible families and individuals.

The County Board also accepted a grant of \$240,000 from DHS to support the county's Project for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness for the coming two years. The county received about \$40,100 from this grant for the past year. The grant funds outreach and case management for individuals experiencing homelessness and diagnosed with a mental illness or substance use disorder. The majority of the funds from the new grant, or 77 percent, will be dedicated for staff costs; 18 percent of the grant will be used for direct assistance for people served, such as application fees,

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damage deposits and first months' rent; and the remaining 5 percent will be used for administrative expenses.

Outreach is conducted by social workers on the county's Homeless Outreach Services Team, who engage with individuals through the county's housing walk-in hours, as well as throughout the community by visiting places such as highway rest areas, drop-in centers, libraries, and parks. Once engaged with households, staff can provide ongoing case management and assist individuals in accessing housing and other services they may need.

**Contact: George Stone, Community Services Division Manager, 651-430-6472, and Therese Gilbertson, Social Services Supervisor, 651-430-4129**

### **Grant from CDC will pay for training for health emergency**

Washington County will receive a \$171,682 grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to assist in preparing for health emergencies.

The County Board accepted the grant May 28.

The money is used to plan, train, and exercise to be ready and able to respond in the event of a public health emergency. The activities are extended to community partners, such as local medical providers, school districts, police, fire, and emergency medical services, and non-profit organizations. The grant is for work from July 2019 to June 30, 2024.

**Contact: David Brummel, Deputy Director Public Health & Environment, 651-430-6662**

### **Traffic Marking Service, Inc., will do pavement striping in county**

Traffic Marking Service, Inc., will do latex pavement striping along county highways and local streets after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$143,000 contract with the company May 28.

Lane striping is required on roadways meeting certain width and volume thresholds under standards adopted under state law. Washington County contracts for its highway striping.

Funding for this contract is provided via property tax levy. Washington County also works with local communities throughout the county for roadway pavement marking. Cities and townships will be able

to have their roads striped under Washington County's contract and reimburse the county for the work.

**Contact: Mitch Bartelt, Engineer II, 651-430-4349**

### **Miller Excavating will do CSAH 13 trail project in Woodbury**

Miller Excavating, Inc., will improve a trail along County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 13, or Radio Drive, between Pioneer Drive and Valley Creek Road in Woodbury after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$1.4 million contract with the company May 28.

The project will include signal improvements and other local improvements. The project will include constructing a trail on the west side of the roadway to fill a gap in the trail.

After Washington County and the City of Woodbury reviewed the project, signal maintenance, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades, and existing trail pavement replacement were added to the project.

The project is funded by highway state aid, turnback funds, and the City of Woodbury.

The County Board also approved cost-share and maintenance agreements with the City of Woodbury.

**Contact: Morgan Abbott, Engineer II, 651-430-4359**

### **Hoisington Koegler Group, Incorporated, will create county bicycle, pedestrian plan**

Hoisington Koegler Group, Incorporated, will create a County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Washington County, after the County Board approved a \$145,000 contract with the company May 28.

The need for a County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan emerged from the planning process for the Washington County 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the 2016 Washington County Resident Survey.

They both show a growing demand for safe and connected non-motorized transportation options for community members and visitors throughout the county.

The work will include reviewing existing conditions and plans at the county and city level; conducting stakeholder and community engagement, performing analyses on the existing network, gaps and barriers, demographics, and safety; and determining prioritized future bicycle and pedestrian routes.

The results should also recommend funding mechanisms, design standards, and implementation strategies.

The consultant contract will be paid with county funds, a Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) Grant, and levy proceeds.

**Contact: Emily Jorgensen, Planner II, 651-430-4338**

### **Washington County will join Great River Rail Commission**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed May 28 to join the Great River Rail Commission, formerly the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission.

The commission is made up of 17 local and regional governments, Dakota, Ramsey, Winona, Wabasha, and Goodhue counties, and the cities of Hastings, St. Charles, Winona, Cottage Grove, Red Wing, and St. Paul Park.

The commission's goals are to:

- increase transportation alternatives by expanding passenger rail service between the Twin Cities and Chicago;
- increase freight rail capacity along the corridor;
- bolster economic development in Minnesota, especially in the state's portion of the corridor between the Twin Cities and La Crescent; and
- increase safety for rail and highway users.

The commission's role is to coordinate with the Minnesota Department of Transportation and other entities responsible for project development to ensure accountability; advocate for projects with local, state, and federal governments; and actively support project development.

The county's membership dues for 2020 would be \$4,250; membership does not obligate the county to any capital costs.

**Contact: Jan Lucke, Planning Works Planning Director, 651-430-4316**

### **Washington County will provide loan to watershed district for Sunnybrook Lake project**

Washington County will loan the Valley Branch Watershed District \$500,000 for a short time to allow the watershed district to work on a flood control project on Sunnybrook Lake.

The County Board approved the loan May 28.

The Valley Branch Watershed District has been working to identify solutions to flooding in the Sunnybrook Lake area in the City of Grant. After considering numerous options, the watershed district board of managers is working with potential sellers of properties that are most impacted by the flooding. The watershed board included funding for one home purchase in its 2019 budget, and wants to complete the first purchase in June; however, the watershed district won't receive its first property tax payment until early July. To allow for the purchase, the watershed district has asked the county for a short-term loan.

State law allows for such a loan. The watershed district will pay back the loan in full by July 31. The loan is provided at no interest cost to the district because of its short term. Funds for the loan would come from a temporary use of county fund balance.

**Contact: Kevin Corbid, Deputy Administrator, 651-430-6003**