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

**Date:** July 23, 2019  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the July 23, 2019, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

### **Washington County will be part of Gold Line Joint Powers Board**

Washington County will be part of a Gold Line Joint Powers Board, along with Ramsey County and the respective regional rail authorities from each county, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners, sitting as the county's Regional Rail Authority, agreed to form the board July 23. The Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project, which will create a bus rapid transit route from downtown St. Paul to Woodbury along Interstate 94, is nearing the end of the project development phase of work.

As Gold Line BRT prepares to apply to the Federal Transit Administration to enter the engineering phase of work in 2020, and the construction phase of work in 2022, a new organizational structure is needed to streamline financial oversight and the management of contingency funds. The proposed Gold Line Joint Powers Board brings all local funding partners together in this role. It also limits liability claims to a single party, streamlines public access to funding-related decisions, and creates a forum for county collaboration.

The joint powers board may contract for supporting services, such as audit, insurance, financial management, and legal counsel.

It is anticipated that the Gold Line Joint Powers Board will enter into an agreement with the Metropolitan Council for the engineering phase of work near the end of 2019. Engineering for the

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line is expected to take one to two years, and construction will take two to three years, with completion anticipated in 2024.

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

### **County Board makes 2 appointments to citizen committees**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners made appointments to two citizen advisory committees July 23.

Ann Siess will serve as a commissioner District 3 representative to the Parks and Open Space Commission during a partial term expiring Dec. 31, 2021.

The purpose of the commission is to bring citizen perspective to the operation of Washington County Parks. It reviews current operation policies, capital improvement programs, parkland preservation, park development projects, and long-range planning efforts for parkland and facilities for county parks. The commission also provides citizens' perspectives on the administration of the Land and Water Legacy Program.

Rachel Perez will serve as a business representative to the Workforce Development Board, in a partial term expiring Dec. 31, 2021.

It is the responsibility of the Workforce Development Board to determine the most effective designation of administrative entities, grant recipients, and program operators for the Workforce Service Area. It also jointly plans for collaboration, and provides for on-site review and oversight of program performance.

**Contact: Yvonne Klinnert, Public Information Manager, 651-430-6026**

### **Washington County will work with Solid Ground to help families experiencing homelessness**

Washington County will work with Solid Ground to serve 28 families experiencing homelessness, after the County Board approved an agreement with the agency July 23.

The county will provide \$141,399 in Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance program funds to the agency for the service.

The program was established by the Legislature in 1993 to assist families with children, youth/unaccompanied youth, and single adults who are experiencing barriers to housing. The program is conducted through the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency with funds awarded on a biennial basis.

The money will be used to serve 28 households, or families experiencing homelessness, with support services and rent payment assistance through the Home Again program. The outcomes of the program are to ensure households will be permanently housed and not re-enter shelter or become homeless within six months of program exit.

**Contact: Dana Dumbacher, Community Services Policy Analyst, 651-430-8363**

### **Newport Transit Station will continue as state fair park-and-ride lot**

Metro Transit will continue to use the Newport Transit Station parking lot as a Minnesota State Fair park-and-ride lot after the Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed to the use July 23. The license allows the use of the paved parking area and the existing vacant lot amounting to 400 parking spaces. Newport Transit Station has served as a State Fair Park-and-Ride for the past three years.

In 2017, more than 15,000 transit riders used the Newport Transit Station park-and-ride lot express service to go to the fair. In 2018, despite service being cut to only weekends and Labor Day, the Newport Transit Station had almost 6,000 state fair riders.

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

### **County will purchase land along Highway 36 to add to Government Center campus**

Washington County will purchase a parcel of land on 60<sup>th</sup> Street North that is between the county Government Center and jail and Highway 36.

The County Board approved the purchase of the .34 acres of land with a house for \$300,000 to include in the Government Center campus July 23. The purchase will complete the campus on the southern side and provide necessary space for any future expansion. An appraisal was completed and reviewed by the County Board previous to the purchase.

**Contact: Don Theisen, Public Works Director, 651-430-4304**

### **Sheriff's Office receives gift, grant money**

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will receive a donation from Target Corporation and a grant from the state's Department of Labor and Industry.

The County Board accepted both on behalf of the Sheriff's Office July 23.

Target Corporation donated \$1,500 to the Sheriff's Office to support the Back to School - Shop with a Cop event in Forest Lake put on by the Sheriff's Office.

The state's Department of Labor and Industry, Occupational Safety and Health Consultation Unit, has awarded the Sheriff's Office a \$1,000 grant to replace several life jackets and flotation devices that have reached the end of their service life. The grant does require a 100-percent match, which will be covered by revenue received from the sale of outdated dive equipment.

**Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601**

### **McGee re-appointed Washington County medical examiner**

Dr. Michael B. McGee was designated the Washington County medical examiner by the County Board July 23, for a four-year term beginning Aug. 4.

In 2011, Washington County entered into an agreement with Ramsey County for medical examiner services. In that agreement, McGee was named the Washington County Medical Examiner.

**Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601**

### **County will continue reciprocity for use of household hazardous waste facilities**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed July 23 to continue an agreement with Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, and Scott counties for reciprocity for use of household hazardous waste services, through 2024.

The agreement allows residents of those counties to use the household hazardous waste program services of any of the counties, and establishes a mechanism for payment of costs incurred by a county receiving household hazardous waste from the county where the resident lives. Washington County has a separate agreement with Chisago County.

The Washington County Environmental Center, 4039 Cottage Grove Drive in Woodbury, provides residents with a free and convenient disposal option for household hazardous waste, electronics, and recyclables year round. It is open Tuesday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Thursday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The center also has a Free Product Room, in which residents may browse the shelves and take home previously-owned products such as paint, stain, automotive supplies, household cleaners, and other products. All items taken to the Environmental Center are inspected to determine if they are usable products.

**Contact: Adam Frederick, Environmental Program Coordinator, 651-430-6702**

### **Sheriff's Office will receive grant for occupational resources for employees**

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will receive a \$7,500 grant from the state Department of Labor and Industry, Occupational Safety and Health Consultation Unit, to fund wellness initiatives in the Sheriff's Office.

The County Board accepted the grant July 23.

The money will provide training for peer support programs, clinician support for the peer support team, and resiliency training for the Sheriff's Office staff and their families. It also helps fund Breach Point Training for Sheriff's Office staff.

The grant requires a 100-percent match, which will come from \$2,280 of revenue received from the sale of abandoned property, and local public health grant funds already budgeted for \$5,220.

Compared to the general population, law enforcement officers report much higher rates of depression, PTSD, burnout, and other anxiety-related mental health conditions; one in four law enforcement officers have thoughts of suicide at some point in their lives. In 2017, there were 140 law enforcement suicides, which was more than in-the-line of duty deaths.

**Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601**

### **County Board accepts gifts received in second quarter of 2019**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted cash and in-kind donations July 23 made to the county in the first quarter of 2019, totaling \$7,859.43.

The Library received general donations and memorials, as well as donations to pay for Alcoholic Anonymous materials for the library, all totaling \$1,395.72.

Donations to the Parks, including exhibit donations to the Historic Courthouse, totaled \$856.

The Sheriff's Office received donations for the Explorer's Unit National Competition, and for community events, totaling \$2,400.

Business people from throughout the county contributed gift cards, vouchers, and tickets for a variety of services that were given to foster care providers at the county's annual Foster Care Appreciation event in May, totaling \$3,117.71 of in-kind donations.

**Contact: Stephanie Kammerud, Administrative Assistant, 651-430-6014**

### **Washington County receives 4 National Association of Counties awards**

Washington County was named an award recipient four times in three categories at the recent National Association of Counties conference in Las Vegas, Nev., July 14.

The county won awards in the areas of:

- County Resiliency: Infrastructure, Energy and Sustainability, with "BizRecycling," a program of Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy, started in 2013 to help businesses enhance or start recycling and organics/food waste collection to increase commercial waste diversion rates in the two counties. BizRecycling connects businesses with recycling experts who can help identify recycling and waste reduction opportunities. Businesses receive free onsite consultations, technical assistance, and grants to implement best practices in waste management, with the goal of reaching 40 percent of business establishments in the two counties by the end of 2020.
- Criminal Justice and Public Safety, with "Dosage Probation Program," which relies on an offender's internal motivation to change behavior. The offender can shorten the time they are under probation supervision by actively participating and completing programming to reduce the likelihood of future criminal behavior. The model is far more efficient and cost-effective than the traditional model of supervision in which probationers are sentenced to years of supervision with or without behavior change conditions.

- Criminal Justice and Public Safety, “East Metro Human Trafficking Task Force,” comprised of the Washington County Attorney’s Office, Washington County Sheriff’s Office, Woodbury Police Department, Oakdale Police Department, and Homeland Security Investigations. These agencies are collaborating to proactively investigate sex trafficking cases to prosecute sex traffickers, protect and rehabilitate victims of sex trafficking, and decrease demand for the commercial exploitation of victims of sex trafficking.
- Children and Youth, “Read to Me: Babies Need Words Every Day,” in which Washington County Library partnered with Washington County Public Health and Environment to offer literacy-rich educational opportunities for families by providing parents of at-risk newborns with Read to Me totes during WIC (Women, Infant, and Child) clinic and public health nurse home visits. Parents left with information about the importance of reading and armed with books and encouraging tips to keep reading, singing, and talking with their child at home. Mini “pop-up libraries” at three WIC clinics around the county allowed families to read together while waiting.

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