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Date: Aug. 6, 2019
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Aug. 6, 2019, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board appoints Smith to Open Space Commission

The Washington County Board of Commissioners appointed Kevin Smith to the county's Parks and Open Space Commission Aug. 6.

He will fill an at-large vacancy for a partial term expiring Dec. 31, 2019.

The purpose of the commission is to bring citizen perspective to the operation of Washington County Parks. It reviews current operational 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.

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

County Board approves plat in May Township

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a five-tract plat in May Township Aug. 6.

The plat in May Township is east of May Avenue North and south of Square Lake Trail North. It is a five-tract Registered Land Survey.

Contact: Nancie Schwintek, Property Records Division Manager, 651-430-6758

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Equal Employment Opportunity / Affirmative Action

County will receive funds through federal maternal, child health grant

Washington County will receive \$159,348 annually from the federal Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, through the Minnesota Department of Health, after the County Board accepted the grant Aug. 6.

The grant runs from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30, 2024.

The grant provides consistent resources for services to mothers and children in Washington County, which the county uses to support developmental screening of children and home visiting services to at-risk and significantly-stressed families. The funding requires a 50 percent local match, which comes from the county's levy proceeds.

Contact: Jill Timm, Public Health Senior Program Manager, 651-275-7286

County Board agrees to allow haying at 2 county parks

Farmers will bale hay at St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park and Lake Elmo Park Reserve to help reduce the tall grass at the parks.

The County Board approved agricultural use licenses with John Strohfus and David See Aug. 6. Strohfus will bale the grass at St. Croix Bluffs, and See will bale the grass at Lake Elmo Park Reserve.

Haying is used at the parks to reduce the grass and increase the abundance and diversity of wildflowers in the park to benefit pollinators.

The agreements will be for five years. The county will determine the appropriate timing of the hay baling.

Contact: Dan MacSwain, Natural Resources Coordinator, 651-430-4323

County Board approves Met Council agreement to provide funds for LEPR upgrades

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a grant agreement with the Metropolitan Council Aug. 6 that will provide money for improvements to Lake Elmo Park Reserve's campgrounds.

The county will receive \$264,003 to update the electrical and water system at the modern campground and address improvements along Eagle Point Trail, with the money coming from the

state's Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment fund. The county will spend additional money from the county bond proceeds.

Work is expected to begin this fall.

Contact: Sandy Breuer, Parks Director, 651-430-4371

Sheriff's Office receives gift from Treasure Island Casino

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will receive \$1,310 from Treasure Island Casino to be used for advanced K9 unit training.

The County Board accepted the gift Aug. 6.

Treasure Island Resort and Casino has recently started a donation project that involves a Ticket-in, Ticket-out (TITO) program to guests. A TITO ticket is used in casino slots machines to print out a slip of paper with a barcode indicating the amount of money represented by the TITO. Treasure Island created two drop boxes in which guests may place their TITO with the money on the TITO going toward a designated charity.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

County continues agreement to use school as reception center

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an agreement with the Minnesota Department of Human Services Aug. 6 for the development, preparedness planning, management, and operation of a fixed-site radiological emergency reception center at Park High School in Cottage Grove.

The County Board approved the agreement on behalf of the Sheriff's Office Emergency Management.

Park High School would be used as a reception center for evacuees in the event of a nuclear power plant emergency at the Prairie Island Generating Plant.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

County Board approves sale of bonds to finance capital improvements, natural resource preservation program

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the sale of \$31 million in capital improvement bonds and \$2.5 million in Land and Water Legacy Program bonds Aug. 6.

The bonds are sold through competitive bids. Following the sale, the county will have \$139 million in outstanding debt.

The capital improvement bond proceeds will be used to fund projects listed in the county's 2019-2023 Capital Improvement Plan, which includes improvements to Wildwood Library, and to Lake Elmo Park Reserve and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. Bond proceeds will also be used to pay for repairs to county buildings, and building major roadways in the county.

The Land and Water Legacy money will be used to preserve and maintain natural resources in the county, including the acquisition and improvement of land and interests in land, improvement of water quality of rivers, lakes and streams, protection of drinking water sources, purchase of parklands, preservation of wetlands and woodland, and protection of land along water bodies from development. The program was approved by voters in a referendum in 2006.

The bonds issued have an average maturity of just more than 9.6 years and the interest is just more than 2.06 percent. The interest rate of 2.06 percent is lower than anticipated and will lead to a \$1.7 million less in total payments over the life of the bonds than had originally been estimated.

The county's credit rating was upgraded to AAA by both Moody's and Standard & Poor's rating agencies in 2007. The AAA rating is the highest rating available, and have been reaffirmed seven times since 2007.

Contact: Tabatha Hansen, Accounting and Finance Director, 651-430-6027

August recognized as Minnesota Breastfeeding Month

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized August as Minnesota Breastfeeding Month Aug. 6.

They also recognized Aug. 1-7 as World Breastfeeding Month.

From birth, breastfeeding protects infant health. Evidence of the impact on future health for both mother and infant is growing. Increasing breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity are state and national goals. Achieving these goals will reduce health care costs and save money for families, employers, and society.

Breastfeeding promotion and support is integral to the work of the Washington County Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program to improve maternal and infant health and to reduce health disparities. The current breastfeeding rate for WIC participants is nearly 86 percent at birth and 32 percent at six months. This year for the observance during August, the local WIC staff will provide displays at each clinic, hand out a small gift to breastfeeding families, and continue to support and encourage these family decisions.

During the 2019 Washington County Fair, a breastfeeding tent was provided for a private place to breastfeed while attending the fair.

Contact: Shannon Eisentrager, Communications Specialist, 651-430-6672

Arnt Construction will expand Hugo Yard Waste Transfer Site for county use

Arnt Construction will expand the Hugo Yard Waste Transfer Site, making it available to all Washington County residents, after the County Board approved a \$154,977 contract with the company Aug. 6.

The county has been seeking a location for yard waste collection sites in areas of the county that are currently underserved. An interim solution to managing yard waste in the northern portion of the county is to take over the operation for the City of Hugo's site until a permanent location is found.

The site is at the intersection of 170th Street North and Fenway Avenue North.

There is a gap in yard waste collection sites in the county, and curbside service is limited in most communities. There are few city yard waste collection sites, and those are open to city residents only.

The Hugo site will be open to all county residents, which will serve as a collection and transfer site.

Food waste will also be collected at the site. The service will be free to residents.

The current site is not large enough to accommodate the county operations, so the county negotiated a lease with the adjacent property owner allowing the county to expand the site under the construction contract.

The project will be paid for using the County Environmental Charge, which is a tax on garbage collected in the county.

The county will return the property to the City of Hugo, should a permanent site be found, and the county will continue to look for a permanent yard waste site in the area.

Contact: Kevin Peterson, Engineer II, 651-430-4330