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Date: Aug. 20, 2019
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Aug. 20, 2019, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Attorney's Office to receive reimbursement for prosecuting prison inmates

The Washington County Attorney's Office will be reimbursed for the cost of prosecuting inmates in the Stillwater and Oak Park Heights correctional facilities who are involved in criminal activity.

The County Board approved an agreement with the state Department of Corrections, Facilities Division, Aug. 20 to receive the funds. The agreement goes through June 30, 2020.

The state reimburses counties for expenses of the county attorney resulting from activities involving inmates of state correctional institutions in the county.

Contact: Attorney Pete Orput, 651-430-6124

County Board approves application for gambling permit for Carpenter nature center

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a permit for lawful gambling from the Carpenter St. Croix Nature Center Aug. 20.

The center plans to conduct a raffle Sept. 8. Denmark Township has been notified of the event.

After approval by the County Board, the application will be sent to the Minnesota Gambling Control Board for its consideration.

Contact: Patricia Gillen, Taxpayer Services Technician, 651-430-6183

Summit Food Services will provide food at County Jail

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Equal Employment Opportunity / Affirmative Action

Summit Food Services will provide meals and snacks to Washington County Jail inmates, after the County Board approved a five-year contract with the company Aug. 20.

The company was formerly known as CBM Managed Services, and has been providing food at the jail since 2013. Summit Food Services, LLC, is based in South Dakota and serves more than 470 correctional, private, and public facilities.

The contract will run from Nov. 1 through Oct. 31, 2024. The contract calls for an annual increase in the cost per meal equal to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to start Nov. 1, 2020, and continue annually through the remainder of the agreement; the increase will never exceed 3 percent annually.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

Sheriff's Office will receive additional funds to fight drug trafficking

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will receive an additional \$5,340 from the Office of National Drug Control Policy for participation in the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program. The County Board accepted the additional funds Aug. 20, which will bring the total grant amount to \$122,840.

The increased funding will be used to purchase supplies and equipment necessary to ensure the safety of drug task force officers who are exposed to hazardous materials in the field.

The grant runs through the end of this year.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

Sheriff's Office receives donation for canine unit

The Washington County Sheriff's Office received a \$2,800 donation from Linda and Mike Givens to support the office's canine unit.

The County Board accepted the gift on behalf of the Sheriff's Office Aug. 20.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office has six patrol canines serving the county. The Givens donated money to purchase bullet-resistant vests for the canines in the unit that didn't have one. Since that donation, one of the Sheriff's Office canines retired due to a medical condition.

In June, the Sheriff's Office began training its newest member of the canine unit, Huck. Huck will be finishing his training at the end of August and will begin working on the street with his partner,

Deputy Brandon Yetter. The Givens donated another \$2,800 to the Sheriff's Office to buy Huck a bullet resistant vest.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

County will pay additional money for CSAH 15, 14 realignment

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an additional \$133,175 to complete the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 15, or Manning Avenue, and CSAH 14 realignment Aug. 20. The additional money will be used to construct a new roadway entrance into the Washington County Fairgrounds from the intersection of CSAH 15 and Stillwater Way (Old Highway 5). The improvements include grading new approach lanes ditches, the addition of traffic signal infrastructure, paving and striping the roadway, and connections to existing fairgrounds parking areas.

The change order requested represents 1.4 percent of the original cost of the contract, which was \$9.8 million.

The project realigned CSAH 14 (Old Highway 5) and CSAH 15, or Manning Avenue, with a multi-lane roadway with medians and multi-use trails, and two signalized intersections.

Contact: Cory Slagle, Assistant County Engineer, 651-430-4337

S.M. Hentges & Sons, Inc., will make improvements at Lake Elmo Park Reserve

S.M. Hentges & Sons, Inc., will make improvements at Lake Elmo Park Reserve, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$1.7 million contract with the company Aug. 20.

The Lake Elmo Park Reserve Improvement Project will upgrade the modern campgrounds and Eagle Point Trail, and provide additional access to the west side of the park.

The modern campground's electrical system has become costly and inefficient, and requires constant maintenance. The project will replace the electrical system within the campground, upgrading 57 camp spots to 50-amp hook-ups and 23 spots to 30-amp hook-ups. This will eliminate power shortages at the campground. The project includes replacing water lines throughout the campground,

and adding 58 water hook-ups. The modern campground will also get electrical fixture upgrades in the restroom and shower buildings, and site restoration around the modern campground playground. The Eagle Point Trail on the west side of Lake Elmo Park Reserve runs for about four miles around Eagle Point Lake. This is a turf trail used for hiking, biking, and cross-county skiing in the winter. This project will regrade three segments of the trail that have drainage issues. These will include culvert placement and turf restoration, making the trail accessible year round. In addition, a boardwalk bridge will be placed across Eagle Point Lake to improve trail access. This project will also address flooding along the paved bike trail next to the main park road.

Access to Eagle Point Trail will also be improved with the addition of a parking lot off Inwood Avenue on the west side of the park. The parking lot will have 20 parking spots. Vehicles using the parking lot will be required to have a park permit. The parking lot is expected to increase safety along Inwood Avenue.

The project will be paid for with proceeds from the county's bond sale, state sales tax, and Metropolitan Council bonds.

Construction will begin on the Eagle Point Trail and west side access Sept. 3. The park's modern campground will close Sept. 9 for construction. It is expected the projects will be complete by next spring.

Contact: Eden Rogers, Engineer I, 651-430-4352

County Board continues review of 2020 budget

The Washington County Board of Commissioners continued to review the county's 2020 budget at workshops Aug. 20.

The board received its first overview of the county's 2020 budget at a workshop Aug. 13.

The board will review the budget through September, with individual departments presenting more detailed recommended budgets at workshops. A public hearing on the budget will be the evening of Dec. 3, before the final budget is adopted Dec. 10.

The recommended budget reflects the continued population growth in the county, which is now the third fastest growing county in the state, growing at an annual rate of 1.8 percent. Increased population requires additional road improvements, increased county services, and buildings in which

to house those services. More people place demands on recreational opportunities in county parks, and services at county libraries.

The property tax levy, which will be set Sept. 24, is recommended to increase by 5.94 percent, which would translate into a 2.3 percent decrease in the county's tax rate. This would be the sixth time in the last seven years that the county tax rate would fall. Once the County Board sets the levy, it may lower it but it cannot raise it in the final budget.

Should the recommended levy be approved, the impact on the owner of the median valued home in the county, which is \$295,200, would be an increase of \$37 a year in county taxes.

The County Board reviewed recommended budgets for the Attorney's Office, the Department of Community Corrections, and the Sheriff's Office Aug. 20.

The County Attorney's Office has 53 staff members in the criminal, civil, and juvenile divisions, as well as six administrative staff members.

The office's \$7.2 million budget receives its funds primarily from the county property tax levy, and the major expenditure is personnel; other expenditures are for services and charges, and materials and supplies.

The office's emphasis is on preventing crime, through police training and community outreach. The number of complaints issued by the office is almost 1,300 a year, a trend that was carried out in the previous two years. While the number of referrals to the office have slowed, the complexity of the cases grow, with one case last year having 300 to 400 victims, with a growing number of complex and sophisticated racketeering cases.

Initiatives for 2020 include:

- continue to educate regarding human trafficking;
- continue to work on keeping children safe;
- continued enhancement of office technology; and
- closely monitoring the drug diversion program to address the ongoing opioid and methamphetamine crises.

The Community Corrections Department is recommended to have a \$12.3 million budget, two-thirds of which is paid for with property tax levy dollars. The rest is paid for with state funds, and fees.

Three-quarters of the costs for the department are for wages and benefits.

The department serves adults and juveniles. About 75 staff members serve more than 12,400 clients with probation and parole supervision, and criminal diversion programs. The number of adult cases is rising, with an increase in pre-trial supervision, and in response to the impact of the opioid crisis. Fourteen staff members serve about 1,000 juvenile clients.

The Sheriff's Office is recommended to have a \$37.8 million budget. That includes funds for two additional correctional officers, the increase of a half-time deputy position to full-time to patrol the county's parks, and money to conduct training that is required by the state.

The Sheriff's Office emphasizes community engagement. Initiatives for 2020 include a focus on crimes against the elderly; drug take-back programs and supporting the Drug Enforcement Agency task force; impaired and distracted driving; jail programming; and the human trafficking unit partnership with the county Attorney's Office.

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