

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

**Date:** April 28, 2020  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the April 28, 2020, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting via virtual systems, with staff in person at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

### **County Board accepts gifts to county under new guidelines**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted gifts given to the county in the first quarter of 2020 April 28, under new guidelines that were established earlier.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the County Board approved a change to the county's gift policy March 24. The former policy stated that all donations of greater than \$1,000 value be formally accepted by the County Board; that was suspended for the duration of the governor's declaration of a state emergency related to the pandemic.

The county received \$2,295 in cash, \$200 for general operations, \$1,495 for the library, and \$600 for the Sheriff's Office, with \$500 given through the Chaplain Nev Crowther Memorial. The county also received \$1,000 of office furniture as an in-kind donation.

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

### **County Board appoints members to watershed groups**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners made appointments to watershed management groups in the county April 28.

- Michael Madigan, Woodbury, was appointed to a fifth term expiring April 30, 2023, as a manager on the South Washington Watershed District;

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- Sharon Doucette, Cottage Grove, was appointed to a first term expiring April 30, 2023, as a manager on the South Washington Watershed District; and
- Jill Lucas, Afton, was appointed to a fourth term expiring Nov. 14, 2022, as a manager on the Valley Branch Watershed District.

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 Board approves expenditures for Land and Water Legacy projects**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners acted on Land and Water Legacy Program projects April 28.

The Land and Water Legacy Program is a voter-approved program that allows the county to acquire and improve land and interests in land, for the purposes of improving water quality of rivers, lakes and streams; protecting drinking water sources; purchasing parklands; preserving wetlands and woodlands; and protecting land along water bodies from development.

The board approved an \$85,000 contribution toward a conservation easement purchase on 19 acres at 13645 Valley Creek Trail S. in Afton, one of the program's top 10 high priority areas. Valley Creek flows through the property and is formed by spring-fed ponds, two of which are on this site, making it one of the headwaters of the creek. Valley Creek is also a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources trout stream providing habitat for three species of trout and other wildlife.

This project is being completed in partnership with the Minnesota Land Trust.

The second project approved April 28 is in Hugo. The county was approached by a landowner willing to place a conservation easement on 79 acres at 9822 152nd St. N. in Hugo in the Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District. The project is also in the county's top 10 high priority protection areas, called the Keystone Woods and is the second parcel in Keystone Woods being placed under

permanent protection. The conservation easement will be co-held by the county and the Minnesota Land Trust.

The property has high-quality natural features, including forested uplands, mixed emergent swamp, rich fen, cattail marsh, and a wetland. The property hosts abundant wildlife and tree canopy.

The County Board previously approved a \$167,100 Land and Water Legacy Program contribution toward the project. This action formally adopts the conservation easement. The project will be completed in early May.

The board also approved an update to the 2020 Glacial Valley Park (GVP) and Interpretive Area's Natural Resources Management Plan. The South Washington Watershed District Greenway Corridor Plan envisioned a greenway corridor running north-south through the center of the district to the Mississippi River, including key parcels in Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park and Woodbury's chain of lakes. In the early 2000s, the watershed district acquired 160 acres of farmland in this area, now identified as Glacial Valley Park, as green infrastructure to provide infiltration and conveyance of stormwater flows generated from flooding.

At that time, conservation easements were placed over portions of the property by the county and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to assure the area remains a permanently protected natural area and the GVP management plan was completed. This County Board approved an update to the original GVP management plan and facilitates transitioning of the area to a public park. The plan allows for public access and features such as a new gateway, pavilion, amphitheater, benches and trails. The plan also incorporates expanded plant diversity and innovative conservation grazing practices to improve soil and water-holding capacity, reinvigorate plant life, and invite a return of greater ecological diversity and health. A variety of plant communities and more than 1,000 oak trees have already been planted in the area.

**Contact: June Mathiowetz, Senior Planner, 651-430-6016**

### **County receives \$43,420 to shelter those who are homeless during pandemic**

Washington County will receive \$43,420 to assist those who are experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic, after the County Board accepted the money from the state April 28.

The Minnesota Legislature passed a \$330 million emergency funding package in late March that was signed by Gov. Tim Walz March 28. The legislation included \$26.5 million to support homelessness providers' COVID-19 response.

The county requested \$43,420 to provide services for one month to approximately 16 households experiencing homelessness. Funding will be used for:

- \$37,920 to expand shelter capacity and quarantine options through hotel vouchers;
- \$2,000 to purchase hygiene or sanitation supplies so that the Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST) can comply with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance; and
- \$3,500 to support the Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST) staffing needs for homeless programs.

The county will request funding on an ongoing basis until the funds run out.

**Contact: Tom Adkins, Community Services Director, 651-430-6461**

### **County approves liquor, bingo licenses applications**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved liquor license applications for an event center, and temporary liquor license applications for community groups April 28, as well as an application for bingo at the county fair.

The applications are:

- an on-sale and Sunday liquor license from Keystone Weddings and Events LLC in May Township, at 12169 Keystone Ave. N.;
- an application for a one-to-four-day temporary liquor license from the VFW Post 323 for the Washington County Fair July 29 through Aug. 2; and
- an application for a one-to-four-day temporary liquor license from the Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce for an event to take place Aug. 8.

Washington County processes all liquor licenses for the townships in the county. The county Sheriff's Office, County Attorney's Office, and the Public Health & Environment Department complete compliance/verification checks.

The County Board also received an application from Afton Bayport Lakeland Lions Club to conduct excluded bingo at the Washington County Fair July 29 through Aug. 2.

A licensed organization may conduct lawful gambling on a premise other than the organization's permitted premises if it has submitted an application and lease agreement, and received a permit in connection with a fair, church festival, or a civic celebration.

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

**Contact: Steve Gransee, Taxpayer Services & Election Division Manager, 651-430-8272**

### **County will receive \$750,000 to use for residential household hazardous waste program**

Washington County will receive \$750,000 from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to be used for the county's household hazardous waste program, including the Environmental Center and one-day community collection events.

The County Board accepted the money April 28.

The state requires counties to include a household hazardous waste management plan in their solid waste management master plans.

This state funding source was initiated in 1989 when the Minnesota Legislature adopted a comprehensive set of laws geared toward improving the solid waste management and recycling in the state. The grants are provided to metropolitan counties for recycling programs, as well as waste reduction, management of household hazardous wastes, and problem materials.

**Contact: Jeff Travis, Senior Environmental Program Manager, 651-430-4033**

### **U of M will do buckthorn management program at Lake Elmo Park Reserve**

The University of Minnesota will do a research project on managing buckthorn with trees at the Lake Elmo Park Reserve, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the use of the park April 28.

The research project involves planting small quantities of buckthorn seeds in a controlled manner in infested areas, then planting trees at varying densities to see what will outcompete the buckthorn. The goal of the program is to develop more sustainable ways to keep buckthorn out of Minnesota forests where people, grazing, and fire are not used to control it.

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

### **County Board recognizes Arbor Day, Arbor Month**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners proclaimed April 24 Arbor Day and May as Arbor Month in Washington County April 28.

National Arbor Day and Arbor Month help bring awareness to the value and benefits that trees provide to communities.

Emerald Ash Borer will eliminate many green and white ash trees that are abundant in Washington County's boulevards, residential yards, and natural areas. The proclamation also brings attention to the impact Emerald Ash borer will have, and encourages communities and residents to prepare.

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

### **WSB & Associates will do survey, staking for construction projects**

WSB & Associates will do surveying and staking for a number of Washington County summer road projects, after the County Board approved a \$231,250 contract with the company April 28.

The county's 2020 construction program will include 14 projects valued at more than \$35 million.

Because of the projected construction workload for 2020, it was determined that construction surveying and staking for projects would be best managed through a consultant contract. Those projects that will be managed by WSB & Associates are:

- County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 18 (Woodlane to Radio Drive) management and safety;
- CSAH 13/18 landscaping;
- Highway 36/CSAH 13 landscaping; and
- CSAH 21 culvert replacement.

The county's construction engineer and project engineer will provide guidance and oversight for the consultant work.

**Contact: Allan Brandt, Engineer II, 651-430-4348**

### **Dresel Contracting Inc. will reconstruct culvert under Manning Avenue**

Dresel Contracting Inc. will replace a culvert under County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 15, or Manning Avenue, north of Highway 96, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$642,562 contract with the company April 28.

The project will replace the existing box culvert that is near the end of its life cycle, and improve poor pavement and subbase conditions. The new culvert will be extended outside of the highway clear zone, improving safety.

The project is funded by the wheelage tax.

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

### **SRF Consulting Group will do preliminary design for Manning Avenue**

SRF Consulting Group will do preliminary design services for the Manning Avenue South Segment, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$320,260 contract with the company April 28.

The current alignment of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 15, or Manning Avenue, near the cities of Grant, Stillwater, and Oak Park Heights is offset and not contiguous, requiring motorists to enter onto and off of Highway 36 to continue on Manning Avenue. The county will design and construct a new roadway alignment connecting CSAH 15 allowing through traffic to avoid Highway 36.

The main objectives of this project are:

- design and construction of a new Manning Avenue highway segment south of Highway 36, which ties into the proposed interchange at Manning and Highway 36;
- necessary drainage and surface water management improvements;
- new regional trail and pedestrian ramp facilities; and
- new access locations for proposed developments.

This project will include project management, public and agency involvement, data collection, utility coordination, wetland delineation, environmental review, traffic analysis, roadway design, layout, and outside funding research.

SRF Consulting Group Inc. was chosen for this project because of its familiarity with the area from its engineering work on the Highway 36 at Manning Avenue interchange project.

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

### **Sheriff's Office will receive funds to gather statistics for FBI**

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will receive \$8,000 to pay for gathering and reporting crime statistics to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, after the County Board approved an agreement to allow the county to receive the money April 28.

The FBI is requiring all states to submit crime statistics in the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) format by Jan. 1, 2021. The Sheriff's Office is collaborating with the CentralSquare RMS Enterprise vendor and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to configure and implement the reporting system to meet the federal mandate.

The BCA has \$8,000 available to cover a portion of the costs of Washington County law enforcement agencies implementing the system and become certified to report in the NIBRS format.

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

### **County Board recognizes Washington County law enforcement staff with proclamations**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved proclamations honoring the county's law enforcement officers April 28.

The County Board proclaimed May 3-9 as Correctional Officers Week, and May 10-16 as National Law Enforcement Week. The board also proclaimed May 15 as Law Enforcement Memorial Day. Washington County extends its appreciation and thanks to the dedicated law enforcement community for the vital contribution its members make to the public safety and wellbeing of all residents.

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

### **County Board approves Community Development Agency's housing financing program plans**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners reviewed the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan April 28, and approved its submission to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Consolidated Plan is a five-year plan which describes the community needs, resources, and priorities to be addressed with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) program funds. The Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA) administers the CDBG and HOME programs on behalf of the county.

Every five years, a Consolidated Plan must be prepared, which evaluates the community's needs and CDBG and HOME funding priorities. Each year, an Annual Action Plan must be prepared detailing intended use of the CDBG and HOME funds granted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The funded activities must address the priorities identified in the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan. The 2020 CDBG projects approved are:

- Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity rehabilitation at three scattered sites in Washington County, using \$240,000;
- home improvement loan program, available throughout Washington County, using \$278,787 for 10 loans;
- playground renovation at Landfall, using \$44,200; and
- county homelessness prevention programs, using \$108,962 to serve 540 people.

The 2020 HOME projects approved are:

- Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity construction for two to four scattered sites in Washington County, using \$166,028; and
- Two Rivers Community Land Trust acquisition and rehabilitation of one home, using \$90,000.

Funds in the amount of \$45,806 are set-aside for an affordable housing project developed by a Community Housing Development Organization.

The 5-year Plan and the 2020 Action Plan were developed with community input and the CDBG Citizen Advisory Committee review.

The County Board also approved the housing tax credits allocation plan for 2021 and 2022.

During the past five years, the program has been used to create 2,586 new or rehabilitated affordable apartments in the county, 344 workforce apartments, and 655 senior apartments.

It is a public-private partnership, in which the CDA allocates federal tax credits, which are sold by the developer to investors, who then may claim tax credits for 10 years. It is estimated that the CDA will

be able to allocate \$606,480 in tax credits for 2021, and \$597,816 for 2022. The allocation plan prioritizes long-term affordability commitments and deeply affordable rent structures. Applications are due July 16 with housing tax credit awards announced in October.

**Contact: Melissa Taphorn, Community Development Agency Executive Director, 651-202-2821**

**Valley Paving Inc. will do County Road 75, Grey Cloud Island Trail pavement project**

Valley Paving Inc. will repave County Road 75 and Grey Cloud Island Trail through St. Paul Park and Grey Cloud Island Township, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$1.24 million contract with the company April 28.

The project will replace the pavement surface the length of County Road 75, and, in partnership with St. Paul Park and Grey Cloud Island Township, replace the pavement surface on Grey Cloud Trail within the city and township limits.

The project will be paid for with proceeds from the wheelage tax. The County Board also approved cooperative agreements with both the City of St. Paul Park and Grey Cloud Island Township for the construction costs of Grey Cloud Island Trail.

**Contact: Nathan Arnold, Engineer II, 651-430-4384**