

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

Date: June 2, 2020
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the June 2, 2020, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board approves agreement for haying at Big Marine Park Reserve

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed June 2 to a lease with Mike Slater to maintain grassland at Big Marine Park Reserve.

Slater will help maintain grassland within the park by haying cool and warm season grasses during specific times of the year to maximize plant structure, species diversity, and wildlife habitat. Slater will also work with the county's natural resource coordinator to improve the grasslands by inter-seeding native grasses and forbs into areas after they are hayed to help increase native plant diversity.

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

Sheriff's Office staff will use HERO Center for training

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will use the public safety training HERO Center in Cottage Grove for training, after the County Board approved a \$150,000 annual membership agreement with the agency's management June 2.

The Sheriff's Office is in need of dedicated training space for legislatively mandated training requirements of the Minnesota POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training Board.) The Sheriff's Office currently uses facilities that do not completely meet the needs of the county's deputies and correctional officers. Membership at the HERO Center will make Washington County a priority member, with dedicated time and space at the regional state-of-the-art immersive public safety training facility in Cottage Grove.

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This public safety training facility will meet the long-term needs of the Sheriff's Office. Furthermore, the HERO Center provides the necessary space to provide scenario-based training in the area of mental illness, conflict management, and recognizing and valuing community diversity and cultural differences.

The agreement will have an automatic 3% increase each year.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

Sheriff's Office partners with Ramsey County to purchase rescue vehicle

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will partner with the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office for the purchase and use of an armored multi-terrain rescue vehicle, after the County Board approved an agreement with Ramsey County June 2.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office has partnered with the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office to share the expenses and responsibilities associated with the purchase, maintenance, operation, and storage of an armored multi-terrain rescue vehicle called a ROOK. The equipment provides safety for officers, as well as the public in highly dangerous environments.

The ROOK will be accessible to both agencies locally, and will also be a resource regionally. The equipment could be used for any natural disaster or other emergency which may include flooding, and rescue in wind damaged areas.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office received a 2019 Urban Area Security Initiative grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety that helped to pay \$110,000 of the purchase price. The remaining \$13,000 was paid by forfeiture funds. The two counties will divide responsibility for the equipment based on a formula based roughly by population.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

County Board honors Family Child Care Provider of the Year

The Washington County Board of Commissioners honored Brenda Ewy of St. Paul Park as the 2020 Washington County Child Care Provider of the Year June 2.

Each year, professionals select from nominations one provider who meets several criteria, including being in the field for at least three years; promoting quality child care as a profession and in the

community; meeting annual state training requirements and having future goals to further enhance their competency as a child care provider; having a positive impact on the lives of the young children; and demonstrating professional skills in child care.

This year, it is especially important to recognize the child care providers for continuing to care for children in the midst of a global pandemic. The child care providers continue to care for children so essential workers may provide service to the community related to the health and safety of others. Child care providers were deemed essential by Gov. Tim Walz during the pandemic, and are always considered essential in Washington County.

Ewy noted this time of trauma for the community, and the importance for child care programs to remain open during this time, stating early childhood education and continuity are important for children during these uncertain times.

Ewy runs Brenda Ewy's Daycare in St Paul Park. She was nominated by two of her client families who recognize that Ewy makes an impact on the lives of the children she serves. Ewy started providing day care as a means to stay home with her children. She grew attached to the "littles" in her care, and wanted to see them through to their school-aged years. Then she had new "littles" who needed her, bringing her to 25 years of being licensed to provide child care in Washington County. Ewy has planned activities for the children in her care each day. She also values the importance of "child led" care in which the children may shape their learning and play to meet their needs. She focuses on the process rather than the product, emphasizing creativity in children.

For 25 years, Ewy has been successful by setting new goals for herself periodically, and she now uses online resources for network and information. During these years of service, Ewy has had many families make an impact on her own family. Children from her day care were involved in her sons' weddings.

One of the families who nominated Ewy for this award shared that they started with her after switching from another day care. They said it was the best decision they ever made, noting that Ewy is like a second mother to their children. Their children are better listeners, better helpers and more respectful people, thanks to Ewy.

The other family who nominated Ewy noted that her day care has a structure of a mix of activities, creativity toys, learning toys, and outdoor toys/play area. They said that they feel that Ewy’s “environment is conducive and understanding of cultural diversity.”

Ewy shared some words on the acceptance of the Provider of the Year Award, saying that 25 years in childcare would not have been possible without the help of her family and husband Rick. She also thanked the childcare providers in the Cottage Grove area who gave her confidence, supported her, and provided ideas that expanded her horizons and get out of her comfort zone.

Contact: Rebecca Motzko, Social Services Supervisor, 651-430-6476



The Washington County Board of Commissioners honored Brenda Ewy of St. Paul Park as the 2020 Washington County Child Care Provider of the Year June 2. Ewy accepted the award at the board meeting, and was congratulated by Commissioner Wayne A. Johnson, District 4.