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Date: Aug. 18, 2020
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Aug. 18, 2020, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board approves budget for Recycling & Energy joint activities

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the 2021 joint activities budget Aug. 18 for the Recycling & Energy (R&E) Board to carry out recycling and waste management programs in Washington and Ramsey counties.

The budget was recommended by the R&E Board, which is a joint board with members from both counties. The recommended 2021 budget is \$1.9 million. The County Environmental Charge, which is a service charge on trash collection, funds the budget.

The Joint Powers Agreement creating the R&E Board retains the County Board's authority to approve the joint activities budget of the R&E Board, which is a two-year budget. While the 2020-2021 budget was approved by the R&E Board and the County Board in 2019, there is an opportunity to adjust the budget for the second year of the budget if needed.

The R&E Board approved and recommended July 23 that each county board approve the 2021 Joint Activities Budget with no changes.

Contact: Nicole Stewart, Environmental Resource Manager, 651-430-6713

County Board sets public hearing on establishing county conservation areas

The Washington County Board of Commissioners set a public hearing on establishing county conservation areas at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 15, in the Board Room of the Government Center in Stillwater.

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The Government Center is at 14949 N. 62nd St. N. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the public who wish to share their comments and concerns are encouraged to submit them in writing prior to the hearing via email at Publicworks@co.washington.mn.us, via telephone by calling 651-430-4300, or by U.S. Mail sent to Washington County Public Works Department, Parks Division, 11660 Myeron Road N., Stillwater, MN 55082.

Comments and concerns received before 2 p.m. Sept. 14 will be provided to each commissioner.

Additionally, members of the public may attend and testify at the hearing; however, the number of members of the public allowed in the Board Meeting Room at any one time may be limited due to COVID-19. Further questions, or requests for assistance with instructions, may be made by calling 651-430-4300.

Washington County Parks Ordinance specifies rules and regulations to provide for the safe and peaceful use of park lands; for the education and recreation of the public; for the protection and preservation of property, facilities, and natural resources; and for the safety and general welfare of the public.

The public hearing will allow residents to provide their input to the County Board regarding changes to the Parks Ordinance.

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

Sheriff's Office will add deputy to serve City of Lake Elmo

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will add a deputy-patrol officer to provide additional law enforcement services for the City of Lake Elmo, at the request of the city.

Lake Elmo, which contracts with the Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services, will pay the cost of the additional deputy. The County Board approved hiring the additional deputy Aug. 18.

The City of Lake Elmo wants to maintain the quality of law enforcement services provided by the Sheriff's Office and is adding to its current contract for law enforcement services. The city has a 10-year population growth rate of 15.93%, an annual growth rate of 1.93%, and is closing in on a population of 10,000 people. The growth in population naturally results in higher call volumes and follow-up workloads for the five current Lake Elmo contract deputies.

The city has asked that the new deputy be added by Oct. 1.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

County Board reviews 2019 performance measurement report

The Washington County Board of Commissioners received the 2019 Performance Measures and Indicators Report Aug. 18, along with an update on countywide performance measurements and quality improvement efforts.

Since the mid-1990s, Washington County has tracked, reported, and monitored performance measures to support decision-making and to drive continued improvement in its core functions and the services it provides.

A performance measurement from the current report highlighted for the board are efforts by the county's Information Technology Department to maintain safety and security in the county's technological infrastructure.

The complete report can be found at www.co.washington.mn.us/performanceasures.

Contact: Amanda Hollis, Senior Planner, 651-430-6021

County Board continues review of the county's 2021 budget

The Washington County Board of Commissioners continued its review of the county's 2021 budget Aug. 18.

The board received its first overview of the 2021 recommended operating and capital budgets Aug. 4. The board will review the budgets over the next several months, conducting workshops presenting individual department budgets through August and September. The board heard budget recommendations from the Community Corrections, Community Services, and Public Health & Environment departments Aug. 18.

The board is expected to adopt a preliminary 2021 levy Sept. 15. Once the County Board sets the preliminary levy, it may lower it, but cannot raise it in the final budget.

The County Board will conduct a public hearing on the budget after 6 p.m. Dec. 1, and is scheduled to adopt a final budget for 2021 Dec. 15.

The recommended budget calls for a .63% increase in the county's tax levy, which, when combined with the growth in the county's tax base, would translate into an almost 5% decrease in the county's

tax rate. Should the recommended levy be approved, the impact on the owner of the median valued home in the county, which is \$308,000, would see a decrease of \$21 a year in county taxes. The recommended levy would fall from \$431 per capita in 2020 to \$429 in 2021.

Components of the 2021 recommended budget would be a net levy of \$115.2 million; non-levy revenue of \$115.5 million; operating expenditures of \$195.3 million; and capital expenditures of \$48.2 million.

The county's estimated market value of taxable property increased by almost 5% since 2020 for taxes payable in 2021, with new construction valued added at \$620.2 million, and the median value change of 2.2% on existing homes.

All budget workshops are webcast, and archived meeting webcasts are on the county's website, www.co.washington.mn.us, found by searching "County Board Meeting Webstream," and then finding the individual meeting date.

Additional information on the proposed 2021 budget may be found on the county's website www.co.washington.mn.us by searching "budget."