



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

Date: Oct. 6, 2020
Contact: Yvonne Klinnert, Public Information Manager
Phone: 651-430-6026, after hours 952-807-3723
E-mail: yvonne.klinnert@co.washington.mn.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Oct. 6, 2020, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County will allow certain property owners additional time to pay fall property taxes

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed to allow certain property owners additional time to pay the second half of their 2020 property tax without penalty due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency at its meeting Oct. 6.

Many small businesses and homeowners have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to that impact, the County Board agreed to a 30-day extension of the due date for the payment of the second half of property taxes. Property taxpayers who own non-escrow properties who pay on or prior to Nov. 16 for the following classifications will not be charged any penalty:

- commercial/industrial properties with 2020 total tax due of \$100,000 or less; and
- residential properties and rural vacant land.

Residential properties includes both homesteaded properties and non-homesteaded properties.

Property tax payments made by lending companies, banks, or mortgage companies of funds collected via escrow payments from property owners would not be eligible for this extension and are expected to be made on or prior to the Oct. 15, 2020, deadline.

Agricultural property owners are not eligible for the 30-day extension as the due date for those owners to pay second half property taxes is already Nov. 16 under state law.

All property owners who are able to pay their second half property taxes by the due date are encouraged to do so to help support the county, school, and city continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A great place to live, work and play...today and tomorrow

If property owners have questions about whether their property qualifies for the extension of payment to Nov. 16, 2020, they should call 651-430-6175 or email taxes@co.washington.mn.us.

Contact: Jennifer Wagenius, Deputy Administrator, 651-430-6007

County Board appoints members to watershed district boards

The Washington County Board of Commissioners appointed members to two watershed district boards Oct. 6.

The appointments are:

- Michael White, Scandia, appointed to the Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District to a first term expiring June 21, 2023.
- Jeffrey Roach, Marine on St. Croix, appointed to the Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District to a first term expiring June 21, 2023.
- Stephen Schmaltz, Forest Lake, appointed to the Comfort Lake - Forest Lake Watershed District to a third term expiring Sept. 23, 2023.

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 will receive additional money to shelter people during pandemic

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted \$438,615 from the state Department of Human Services Oct. 6 to pay for shelter for households experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The money will be used to shelter people through 2020. Funds will cover the cost of hotel rooms and staff time to manage shelter operations.

Contact: Sarah Tripple, Community Services Planning & Program Manager, 651-430-6480

County Board approves plat of McDonalds Farm in Stillwater Township

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a plat of the McDonalds Farm in Stillwater Township Oct. 6.

McDonalds Farm is an abstract plat in Stillwater Township southwest of Myeron Road and north of 103rd Street North. It is a seven-lot plat.

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

Portion of proceeds from tax-forfeited lands will support parks

Twenty percent of the proceeds of tax-forfeited land in Washington County will be used to support the county's parks, after the County Board approved the plan Oct. 6.

State law allows the County Board to set aside up to 20% of the net proceeds from the sale of tax-forfeited property for the acquisition and maintenance of county parks or recreational areas.

The ownership of property that forfeits because of the non-payment of property taxes rests with the state, and counties are tasked with the management and disposition of the property. When a tax-forfeited property is sold to a governmental agency or the public, the proceeds are deposited into the county's tax-forfeited sale fund.

From the net proceeds, 20% goes to the county for acquisition and maintenance of county parks and recreational areas. Of the remaining funds, 40% goes to the county general fund, 40% to the school district, and 20% to the city or township.

How much the county receives varies by year depending on the amount of sale proceeds from tax-forfeited land and maintenance costs.

Contact: Debra Ledvina, Property Records and Taxpayer Services Director, 651-430-6182

Munneke reappointed Washington County assessor

Bruce Munneke will continue to be the Washington County assessor, after the County Board reappointed him to the post Oct. 6.

The term of the office of the county assessor is four years; the new term will begin Jan. 1, 2021. The commissioner of the state Department of Revenue must confirm the county assessor's reappointment before it becomes effective.

Contact: Debra Ledvina, Property Records and Taxpayer Services Director, 651-430-6182

Roadways around Lake Elmo, Baytown Township will get new designations

With the completion of the rerouting of Manning Avenue along the borders of Lake Elmo and Baytown Township, the roadways will receive new designations.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the new designations Oct. 6. The roadways named Stillwater Boulevard North, Manning Avenue, and 40th Street will be known as Washington County State Aid Highway 14 in the City of Lake Elmo, and the roadways Stillwater Boulevard North and Manning Avenue will be known as Washington County State Aid Highway 15 in the City of Lake Elmo.

Construction of the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 15 and CSAH 14 Realignment Project changed the alignment of both CSAH 14 and 15.

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

Sheriff's Office will provide resource officer to Mahtomedi schools

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agree to a four-year contract Oct 6. with the Mahtomedi public school district to allow the Sheriff's Office to provide services to the district.

Under the contract, a deputy will have the primary responsibility of serving as a resource person to faculty, students, and school administrators in the prevention and diversion of juvenile behavior problems. The deputy will serve as the full-time school resource deputy during the school year. The school district pays the county the direct costs and expenses of the law enforcement services.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

Sheriff's Office receives grant to enhance DWI enforcement

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will receive a \$124,458 grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety to enhance Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) enforcement.

The County Board accepted the grant Oct. 6.

The grant funds the salary and training of one officer for one year with the purpose of identifying and arresting intoxicated drivers between Oct. 1 and Sept. 30, 2021. The first grant allowed for the creation of a new full-time position. This grant will continue the position for a third year.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

County Board recognizes Cybersecurity Awareness Month

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized October as Cybersecurity Month Oct. 6.

The federal Department of Homeland Security and the National Cyber Security Alliance have sponsored October as National Cybersecurity Awareness Month since 2004. Cybersecurity Awareness Month is designed to educate public and private sector partners with the goal to raise awareness about risks surrounding information security.

Washington County's Information Technology Department works diligently to ensure the protection of the county's data systems and information. In 2020, cybersecurity risks continue to be addressed through updated training for employees, advancing threat detection capabilities, and continuous improvement to incident response. Cybersecurity efforts have significantly focused on ensuring the security and integrity of election systems and data.

Contact: Renee Heinbuch, Information Technology Director, 651-430-6421

County Board declares Oct. 5-9 Customer Service Week in Washington County

The Washington County Board of Commissioners declared Oct. 5-9 as Customer Service Week in honor of the county's Property Records and Taxpayer Services staff.

The board made the declaration Oct. 6.

In 1992, the first full week in October was proclaimed National Customer Service week by the U.S. Congress to recognize the work of customer service professionals throughout the year and the importance of that work in a wide range of businesses, including government.

The employees in Property Records and Taxpayer Services serve county residents on a daily face-to-face basis at a number of locations throughout the county, and their high quality service is recognized and appreciated.

Contact: Debra Ledvina, Property Records and Taxpayer Services Director, 651-430-6182

Deputy recognized for DWI enforcement, presented with ‘All Star’ bat

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized Deputy Michael Ramos Oct. 6 for his work in enforcing driving while intoxicated (DWI) laws.

Ramos has been recognized by the state Office of Traffic Safety. Mike Hanson, director of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety, and Bill Hammes, Office of Traffic Safety Law Enforcement Liaison, both attended the meeting to recognize Ramos. Both emphasized the dangers of driving while intoxicated, and the numbers of lives saved by Ramos for removing intoxicated drivers from the roadways. Hanson praised Ramos’ work, saying that someone in his position must both know well how to deal with people, and know the law.

Hanson also praised Washington County leadership, saying, “Good officers are the product of good leadership.”

In October 2018, the Washington County Sheriff’s Office was awarded a DWI grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety, to fund a full-time deputy to locate and arrest impaired drivers on Washington County roads. Ramos was selected to be the first deputy in this position. Ramos has been recognized by the Office of Traffic Safety on a number of occasions and has been responsible for removing more than 200 impaired drivers from the roadways. The Office of Traffic Safety is recognizing Ramos' continued efforts, and presented an “All Star” bat to him.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601



Bill Hammes, Office of Traffic Safety Law Enforcement Liaison, recognizes Deputy Michael Ramos, along with Mike Hanson, director of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety, presenting Ramos with an “All Star” bat.