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Date: May 11, 2021
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the May 11, 2021, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board recognizes Apraxia Awareness Day

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized May 14 as Apraxia Awareness Day in Washington County at its meeting May 11.

Childhood apraxia of speech is a misunderstood and challenging speech disorder. Now going into its ninth year, Apraxia Awareness Day May 14 aims to unite community members, children with childhood apraxia of speech, and their friends and family to be an unstoppable, united force, advocating for children with childhood apraxia of speech.

The board noted that the speech disorder affects 1 in 1,000 children, and causes children to have significant difficulty learning to speak. Without appropriate speech therapy intervention, children with apraxia will have diminished communication skills, but are also placed at high risk for secondary impacts in reading, writing, spelling, and other school-related skills. The board encouraged residents of Washington County and Minnesota to work within their communities to increase awareness and understanding of childhood apraxia of speech.

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

County Board names residents to citizen advisory groups

The Washington County Board of Commissioners made reappointments and an appointment to citizen advisory groups May 11.

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The reappointments are:

- Pamela Skinner, Oakdale, who was reappointed to a 10th term as manager on the Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District, to a term expiring Feb. 23, 2024; and
- Wade Johnson, May Township, Paul Richert, Marine on St. Croix, and Andrew Weaver, May Township, who were reappointed as managers on the Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District with terms expiring June 21, 2024.

The board also appointed Holly Johnson, Mahtomedi, to a partial first term expiring Dec. 31, 2023, as the District 2 representative on the University of Minnesota Extension Committee.

Contact: Alyssa Soderlund, Administrative Assistant, 651-430-6015

County Board reviews applications for temporary liquor licenses

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an application for a temporary one-to-four day liquor license May 11 for the Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce for an event at the Washington County Fairgrounds June 19.

The fairgrounds are in Baytown Township.

The board also approved a temporary liquor license for VFW Post 323 for an event Aug. 4-8 during the Washington County Fair.

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.

Contact: Christine Piskura, Taxpayer Services and Elections Division Manager, 651-430-8272

Valley Paving will do pavement preservation project on Olinda Trail in Scandia

Valley Paving Inc. will do the roadway rehabilitation of County State Aid Highway (Olinda Trail North) in Scandia, after the Washington County Board of Commissioner approved a \$2.69 million contract with the company May 11.

The project will resurface the pavement from 900 feet north of Old Marine Trail to 554 feet south of 240th Street, which is the county line. The project will also replace curb and gutter in downtown

Scandia just north of Highway 97. New signing and striping will be completed along the project area. The new pavement surface will improve the ride quality and safety along the roadway.

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

County Board will conduct public hearing June 1 on coordinating citizen boards

The Washington County Board of Commissioners will conduct a public hearing June 1 to review and consider amendments to the Washington County Development Code to enable coordination of membership between the Planning Advisory Commission (PAC) and the Board of Adjustment and Appeals (BAA) as recommended by the Planning Advisory Commission.

The County Board set the hearing May 11. The hearing will be during the County Board's regular meeting in the Board Room of the Government Center, 14949 N. 62nd St. N. in Stillwater. The ability to attend virtually by those residents who wish to do so will be made available before the meeting.

In 2018, a significant amount of Land Use authority was assumed by townships, resulting in a reduction in the volume of work for the PAC and BAA, with less frequent meetings. That created practical challenges for the efficient functioning of the committees and for making effective use of residents' time who serve as members. The County Board has reviewed the potential changes, and set the public hearing to receive public comments on the changes.

To implement the changes, sections of the Washington County Development Code that set out the makeup of the two boards need to be repealed and replaced. The County Board referred the issue to the PAC for its study, report, and recommendation. At its meeting in April, the PAC made a recommendation to the County Board to repeal and replace sections of the Development Code by ordinance.

Under the merger, the county will maintain the two boards, with identical membership, with seven members each. Meetings will be conducted on the same date, one after the other.

After the public hearing, the County Board can consider the input gathered before officially repealing and replacing sections of the code by ordinance. The transition to the new configuration of the PAC and BAA would occur as individual appointments expire or resignations occur, and no current member will be asked to relinquish an appointment.

Contact: Kurt Howard, Planner II, 651-430-4307

Shafer Contracting Co. Inc. will make improvements on Woodbury Drive

Shafer Contracting Co. Inc. will do improvements on Woodbury Drive, or County State Aid Highway 19, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$7.5 million contract with the company May 11.

The project, which is in Woodbury, will reconstruct the highway from a two-lane undivided highway to a four-lane divided highway from St. Ambrose Road to Dale Road. The work will also add trails to both sides of the county highway and construct a roundabout at Dale Road.

The County Board also approved a maintenance agreement with the City of Woodbury to set out the long-term maintenance responsibilities of the county and city for items constructed in the project.

The City of Woodbury approved the agreements April 28.

Contact: Morgan Abbott, Engineer II, 651-430-4359

Shafer Contracting Co. Inc. will construct Highway 36/Manning Avenue interchange

Shafer Contracting Co. Inc. will construct the Highway 36/Manning Avenue interchange at the intersections of Stillwater, Lake Elmo, and Grant, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$21 million contract with the company May 11.

Washington County was awarded federal and state funds to lead the development and construction of a grade-separated interchange at the intersection of state Highway 36 and Manning Avenue/County State Aid Highway 15.

The project is funded by federal grants, state grants, highway state aid, Minnesota Department of Transportation funds, and funds from the City of Stillwater and the City of Lake Elmo.

The project will:

- improve capacity, safety, and traffic operations;
- maintain and improve local access;
- maintain federal requirements for funding;
- provide a northwest frontage road connection;
- maintain multi-use trail connection; and
- maintain long-term transportation goals.

It is expected that the construction will create 230 jobs, with 18% committed to disadvantaged business enterprises. It is also expected that there will be five trainees on site that will receive 2,000 hours of on-the-job training. The project's Equal Employment Opportunity Goals anticipate that 22% of the work will be done by people of color, with 15% of the work being done by women.

Construction will start in mid-May and is expected to continue into 2022.

The board also approved construction cost and maintenance agreements with the City of Stillwater and the City of Lake Elmo.

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

County Board sets public hearing for June 1 on transportation tax

The Washington County Board of Commissioners set a public hearing May 11 for June 1 to receive public comment on an update to the county's Transportation Sales, Use & Excise Tax.

The hearing will be during the County Board's regular meeting in the Board Room of the Government Center, 14949 N. 62nd St. N. in Stillwater. The ability to attend virtually by those residents who wish to do so will be made available before the meeting.

The board reviewed the proposal at a workshop April 13. The board had previously studied the proposal for nearly a year during 2019, but suspended discussion once the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in March 2020.

Generally referred to as the Local Option Sales Tax, it allows local governments to levy a sales and use tax of up to .5% and a vehicle excise tax of up to \$20 per vehicle. Washington County currently has a .25% sales and use tax, and a \$20 vehicle excise tax. Fifty-one other counties in the state have similar taxes. The County Board must conduct a public hearing to raise the tax.

The revenue raised by the tax may be used for roads or bridges, and for both capital and operating costs of transit projects. The board has reviewed a list of projects that would benefit from the increased sales tax. If the tax were to be increased, it is estimated that it would raise \$21 million in 2022, as opposed to the \$10.8 million that was raised by the tax in 2020.

Previously, the county was part of the Counties Transit Improvement Board, which imposed a .25% sales and use tax, and a \$20 per vehicle excise tax. That board was disbanded in 2017, and Washington County maintained the taxes, and approved the uses of the funds raised.

Transportation funding from state sources is not keeping pace with the expense of building roads and bridges, and the proceeds from both the motor vehicle leased tax and the wheelage tax are not increasing. With Washington County's population growth, the county is responsible for expanding highways to meet that growth, and rebuilding interchanges to improve safety for the traveling public. General road maintenance is also falling behind, and the pavement on county roads is deteriorating more quickly than there are resources to repair it. Other road projects in the county are backlogged.

Contact: Wayne Sandberg, County Engineer/Deputy Public Works Director, 651-430-4339