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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the June 28, 2016, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board approves labor agreement with member of LELS Local 215

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a tentative labor agreement June 28 for 2016-2018 with the county's Sheriff's Office licensed sergeants represented by Law Enforcement Services, Inc., (LELS) Local 215.

Through collective bargaining, Washington County and LELS have reached a tentative three-year agreement from Jan. 1, 2016, through Dec. 31, 2018, that includes:

- a provision in which the group moves off of a step system and onto an open range minimum/maximum compensation system effective January 2016;
- a provision in which employees promoted to sergeant will be given a minimum of 4 percent to 5 percent pay differential;
- a 2 percent general adjustment effective in January 2016, a 2 percent general adjustment effective in January 2017, and a 2 percent general adjustment effective in January 2018;
- for 2016, 2017, and 2018, on their promotion anniversaries, employees below the maximum of the compensation range shall be eligible for a 3 percent range adjustment not to exceed that year's range maximum;
- for 2016, 2017, and 2018, employees whose range adjustment would otherwise put the salary

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over the maximum will instead be eligible for a 0 percent to 5 percent increase based upon the employee's performance evaluation, to be applied to first bring the salary up to the maximum and any balance to be paid as a lump sum; and

- a .5 percent lump sum payment in January 2017 and a .5 percent lump sum payment in January 2018 will be made in exchange for the group to convert off of the vacation and sick leave system onto the county's paid time off system

There are also provisions for county contributions to medical insurance in the agreement and clothing allowances.

Contact: Jan Webster, Human Resources Director, 651-430-6075

Fees that support Law Library will go up

The Washington County Board of Commissioners authorized the county's Law Library Board to increase fees that support the county's Law Library June 28.

The Law Library Board of Trustees made a request that the Law Library's criminal and civil court filing fees increase from \$10 to \$12 per case, and that the board institute a new \$2 fee to be added to parking tickets processed through the District Court, effective July 1.

County law libraries are governed by state law. Most of the cost of operating the law library is paid for by court fees collected from those using the court system. The county's property tax levy is used for the cost of maintaining the space that houses the library in the Government Center in Stillwater. A county is not required to have a law library, but if it does, the Law Library Board of Trustees, with the approval of the county commissioners, must assess the financial cost of maintaining a law library and set the law library fee to cover the expenses.

Contact: Keith Ryskoski, Library Director, 651-275-8501

County will continue to do property assessment in county communities

Washington County staff will continue to do the property assessment in communities in the county, after the County Board approved assessment agreements with those communities June 28.

The communities in which the county will perform assessment services are Bayport, Baytown Township, Birchwood, Cottage Grove, Denmark Township, Grey Cloud Township, Hastings, Lake

St. Croix Beach, Lakeland, Lakeland Shores, Landfall, Mahtomedi, Newport, Pine Springs, St. Mary's Point, St. Paul Park, Stillwater, Stillwater Township, West Lakeland Township, White Bear Lake, and Willernie.

State law allows a county and its cities and townships to enter agreements for the county to provide for the assessment of property in the municipality or town by the county assessor.

Washington County provides local assessment services for approximately 80 percent of the parcels in the county. Most existing assessment agreements expire June 30, 2016.

Fees for assessment services are set by the county board and reviewed during the annual budget process.

Contact: Jennifer Wagenius, Property Records and Taxpayer Services Director, 651-430-6182

County will receive funds to assist in planning for emergencies

Washington County will receive almost \$180,000 from the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to assist it in public health emergency preparedness.

The County Board approved an agreement with the agency, and the state Department of Health, which will administer the program, June 28.

The money will continue to allow the county to plan, train, and exercise so that the county is ready and able to respond in the event of a health emergency. These activities are extended to community partners, such as local medical providers, school districts, police, fire and emergency medical services, and non-profit organizations.

The grant period is July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017.

Contact: David Brummel, Public Health and Environment Deputy Director, 651-430-6662

County Board approves changes to master plan for Central Greenway Regional Trail, Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved changes to the county's plans for the Central Greenway Regional Trail and the Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park June 28.

The Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan proposes a separated trail connection between Lake Elmo Park Reserve and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, which are about 10 miles apart.

The proposed route uses existing and new trail sections for the alignment. It also proposes common signage throughout the corridor.

The Master Plan Amendment for Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park proposes recreational amenities and incorporates a natural resource restoration and management vision, plus provides information on modifications relating to a stormwater conveyance system in the park. The plan will set the groundwork for improvements scheduled in the coming years. It establishes a new park entrance road, and updates an existing network of hiking, biking, and ski trails. While it introduces new development ideas and concepts, it also conserves remaining natural areas for wildlife habitat. The new entrance, which will be moved to County State Aid Highway 19 on the west side of the park, and the plan proposes public restrooms, a play area, a picnic shelter, and an overlook tower. The plan also calls for prairie restoration in the area.

The plan for the area around the lake in the park proposes public restrooms, a play and picnic area, improved trail connections, and a canoe launch.

There are also future considerations in the plan, such as whether there should be “adventure recreation” in the park, such as a zip line, and whether there should be camper cabins.

The master plan also emphasizes the trail network in the park, with the retention of the paved trail, and realignment of turf trails to create a loop system, and one-way trails for skiing.

The inclusion of the South Washington Watershed District’s stormwater conveyance structure through the park is also part of the plan. When it is built, the paved trail through the park will be realigned.

The plan will be sent to the Metropolitan Council for further review.

Contact: John Elholm, Parks Planning Manager, 651-430-4303

County Board receives legislative update from county association staff

Keith Carlson, executive director of the Minnesota Inter-County Association, provided an end-of-legislative session update to the Washington County Board of Commissioners June 28.

The association, known as MICA, is a group of 12 counties that works to communicate with state legislators on issues that have an impact on county government.

Carlson reported that a bonding bill, also containing a one-time transportation funding proposal, did not pass the Legislature, so will not provide funds for transportation.

Also, the governor “pocket vetoed” a tax bill over a drafting error that was estimated to include \$102 million in funding. If that bill had not been vetoed, Washington County would have received additional county program aid of about \$520,000 in 2017.

Carlson said that the major question for the 2017 legislative session will be whether the Legislature will pass a long-term transportation funding bill. Other questions are whether the county will receive any increased county program aid, whether the state would reimpose levy limits on how much property taxes a county may collect, whether a metro sales tax will be available for transit or other transportation programs, and the status of MnSURE and its funding.

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

County Board endorses state law related to economic development authority

The Washington County Board of Commissioners gave its approval June 28 to a new state law that gives the county expanded economic development authority and powers.

The County Board adopted an economic development strategic plan in May 2014. The impetus came from discussions and research conducted by a work group comprised of local economic development practitioners from throughout the county.

The economic development strategic plan focuses on the development of high-level strategies for encouraging economic development within the county and the structure needed to carry out an expanded county role.

Based on the recommendations within the strategic plan, the County Board requested state law changes needed to add economic development powers to the existing law outlining the responsibilities of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). A bill with those proposed changes was introduced and approved during the 2016 legislative session.

The new law adds economic development authority powers and renames the HRA as the Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA). The law also requires the County Board to approve the law, prior to the next legislative session, before it can be effective.

Following local approval of the law, the county economic development director will begin meeting

with local municipalities, county commissioners, and others involved in economic development efforts within the county to implement the recommendations contained in the strategic plan.

The county will also address any concerns or issues that were raised by cities or townships during the legislative process and while gathering local support for the passage of the legislation.

Contact: Kevin Corbid, Deputy Administrator, 651-430-6003

County Board approves change of school districts for split lot

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the transfer of a lot in Lake Elmo to School District 832 June 28, as the lot was split by two school districts.

State law allows a property owner whose parcel is split by a school district boundary to petition the county to have the boundary line adjusted. The boundary for school districts 622, the North St. Paul-Maplewood district, and 832, the Mahtomedi district, splits the parcel.

In 2013, the county geographical information system identified the home on this parcel as in District 622 and the parcel was classified as in District 622 for tax and voting purposes.

Property owners asked that the portion of the lot in District 622 be transferred to District 832 so that the entire parcel will be in District 832.

Contact: Joanne Helm, Property Records and Taxpayer Services Deputy Director, 651-430-6195

Alliant Engineering, Inc., will design Stagecoach Trail improvement project

Alliant Engineering, Inc., will do the engineering design and project coordination for the Stagecoach Trail/North County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 21 pavement management and safety improvement project, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract with the company June 28.

The road work will be on the portions of the roadway that go through Bayport, Baytown Township, Oak Park Heights, and West Lakeland Township. It will include an intersection study, bypass lane evaluation, and pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.

The project involves a new pavement surface, increasing intersection safety, and improving pedestrian and bicyclist accommodations. The contract is not to exceed \$398,585.

Alliant will coordinate public engagement, and provide preliminary design, environmental documentation, and drainage analysis.

Overall project funding is through state aid. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2018.

Contact: Frank Ticknor, Design Engineer, 651-430-4319