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

Date: Nov. 15, 2016
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Nov. 15, 2016, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County will continue to work with other metro counties to administer 911

Washington County will continue to work with eight other metropolitan counties and the City of Minneapolis to administer a regional 911 system, after the County Board extended a joint powers agreement with the other entities Nov. 15.

The joint powers agreement forms the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board (MESB). The current agreement was set to expire Dec. 31.

The MESB was formed to obtain economic and operational advantages by enabling its members to jointly plan, coordinate, and administer a regional 911 system, emergency medical services, and a regional radio system in the metropolitan area.

Changes to the agreement include language specifying that each member pays its own costs. The annual membership fee assessed for participation is based on a formula, and Washington County's 2017 fee is \$102,599, a 2.1 percent increase from 2016.

Contact: Molly O'Rourke, Administrator, 651-430-6002

County Board will accept comment on county's 2017 fee schedule Dec. 13

The Washington County Board of Commissioners will receive public comment on the county's proposed revision to its fee schedule for services Dec. 13.

The board set the hearing Nov. 15.

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Comment will be taken during the board's regular meeting at 9 a.m. in the Board Room of the Government Center in Stillwater.

The county fee schedule, which is included in a county policy, is updated annually. All fee changes must be approved by the County Board. By law, the fee schedule can only be adopted after a public hearing.

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

County Board accepts state grant to pay for mental health services

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted adult mental health grants from the state Nov. 15, to fund programs in 2017 and 2018.

The county will receive \$2,162,826, to be split evenly over the two years of the grant.

The Adult Mental Health Grant Agreement supports continued efforts to provide community-based services to individuals who are identified as seriously and persistently mentally ill. Community-based services include housing subsidies, support for the homeless, in-home skills development, community-based nursing services, crisis intervention training, psychiatric services, flex fund expenditures for traditionally non-reimbursed client needs, funding for a community-based club house program, residential crisis stabilization services, mobile crisis services, and support for the Mental Health Alliance.

In addition, the grant supports county case management staff.

Contact: Kathy Mickelson, Community Services Division Manager, 651-430-6532

County Board approves agreements for care in group residential settings

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved agreements with several organizations Nov. 15 that will provide room, board, and services for low-income adults with disabling conditions. The agreements are for 2016 through 2018 for customized living, community residential, and family foster care settings that accept group residential housing (GRH) payments for room and board. The program is funded by the state.

Adults with a disabling condition are placed in a licensed or registered setting that holds a formal agreement with the county. The current rate for GRH is \$891 per person per month. GRH providers

may offer an array of services, but at a minimum they must include housing, utilities, household furnishings, toiletries, and food. There are different components to the care.

Providers who will provide GRH in a community residential setting are Paraklatos, Inc., DBA PKT Enterprises, MSOCS, Metro Social Services, Inc., Meridian Services, Inc., and New Challenges.

The service of 24-hour customized living is designed for persons in need of regular supervision and assistance with daily activities such as medication administration, personal care, and housekeeping.

These individuals are assessed by county staff and are determined not to need the level of care provided in a skilled nursing home, but they are unable to remain safely in their own homes. Each client receives individualized services based on their level of need. Those providers who will provide customized living are Community Living Options, New Perspectives Mahtomedi, LLC, Oak Green Commons, LLC (Oak Park Senior Living), and Presbyterian Homes & Services.

The service of housing with services is a setting in which the funds from the Adult Mental Health Grant will pay for housing support services. These are activities that will assist the client in being able to maintain their housing, including transportation, budgeting, connecting with community resources, finding employment, independent living skills, etc. Canvas Health will be a provider.

Adult foster care providers offer food, lodging, protection, supervision and household services. The home is the primary residence of the license holder and the license holder is the primary care giver.

Adult foster care homes may serve individuals with developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury, mental health conditions, physical impairments, and the elderly. Adult foster care setting providers will be Nickle Senior Care, Ronda L. Nelson Foster Care, Francene and Dan Myhra "Just Like Home," Xong K. Mouacheupao, Marzouk Adult Foster Home, Seiler's, Evermay M. Wanless, Wetterstrom Foster Home, and Wolfgram Adult Foster Home.

Contact: Sarah Tripple, Planning and Program Manager, 651-430-6480

County acquires right-of-way to reconstruct CSAH 4 in Marine on St. Croix

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the acquisition of right-of-way and drainage easements Nov. 15 as part of the reconstruction of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 4 in Marine on St. Croix.

The CSAH 4 Corridor Management and Safety Improvement Project in Marine on St. Croix includes

rehabilitation of the pavement on Ostrum Trail (CSAH 4) from the railroad bridge to Broadway Street, and reconstruction of the Broadway Street/Maple Street roadway from Ostrum Trail to Highway 95. There is a need for temporary easements, permanent drainage easements, and permanent right-of-way acquisition along the corridor to construct the roadway.

The reconstructed area will use a hybrid approach to construction with both ditch and curb and gutter drainage. The goal of the project is to address the need for improved stormwater drainage and treatment, and improve pedestrian accessibility along the roadway while preserving the historic character of the area.

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2017 and be substantially completed in one season. The estimated cost of the right of way is \$350,000, funded by county bond proceeds.

Contact: Cory Slagle, Assistant County Engineer, 651-430-4337

County will request state funds to expand services to homeless

Washington County will apply for state funds to expand its services to people who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless, after the County Board agreed Nov. 15 to submit the request to the state.

The request will go to the Minnesota Department of Human Services and its Project for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) Outreach Services. The grant would fund the program from January 2017 through June 30, 2018.

The county has a \$40,000 PATH grant, which pays for a half-time staff person. The additional grant would allow the county to expand current services. PATH focuses on outreach and general case management to persons who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness who have a serious mental illness. The program's goal is to assist individuals to find housing, and connect with needed services, especially mental or chemical health resources.

The county will ask for \$124,000 for 18 months to pay for staff, direct assistance funds, and administration costs.

Contact: Therese Gilbertson, Social Services Supervisor, 651-430-4129

County Board reviewed final recommended 2017 budget before Dec. 6 public hearing

The Washington County of Commissioners took a final look at the 2017 recommended county budget during a workshop Nov. 15 in anticipation of the county budget public hearing at 6 p.m. Dec. 6.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners began reviewing the recommended 2017 budget in August, a budget that allows the county to “stay the course” on initiatives it began in 2016, and asks taxpayers for a county property tax increase of about \$6 for the median-valued home in the county.

That is a .8 percent county property tax increase for 2017.

The requested levy increase is 3.49 percent, which was the same increase requested for county taxes paid in 2015 and 2016. However, the county’s tax base has grown 3 percent over the past year, and the new construction valued at \$363 million will absorb the majority of that levy increase. The county’s median-valued home is \$243,200, up 1.1 percent in value from 2016.

The recommended budget calls for operating expenses of \$165 million, an increase of 5.2 percent from 2016. Non-levy revenue is expected to be \$102.5 million, an increase of 8.9 percent from 2016. Even with the recommended increase in the levy, the county’s operating costs per capita and personnel costs per capita would remain low, compared to other counties in the metropolitan region. Also, the county’s recommended levy increase over the past five years is less than the combination of increases in population in the county and inflation.

The board reviewed the 2017 budget during workshops in August and September, and set a preliminary levy Sept. 13. The budget may continue to be adjusted until December, when it is adopted, but the levy can only be decreased, not increased, after it was set in September.

The public is invited to the 6 p.m. public hearing on the budget Dec. 6 in the Board Room of the Government Center in Stillwater. It is expected that the 2017 county budget will be adopted Dec. 13.

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