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Date: Dec. 6, 2016
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Dec. 6, 2016, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board asks for comments on 2017 proposed budget, property tax levy

The Washington County Board of Commissioners again asked for comments from the public Dec. 6 on the county's recommended 2017 budget and levy.

One resident spoke at the meeting to express concern about watershed districts having taxing authority.

The board will consider final adoption of both the budget and the property tax levy on Dec. 13. After certifying the proposed levy Sept. 13, the board could reduce the proposed levy, but not raise it.

The board has been reviewing the 2017 recommended budget since mid-summer. The proposed budget would increase the county net tax levy by 3.49 percent, to \$96.1 million, and is based on the county receiving non-levy revenue of \$102.5 million, an increase of 8.94 percent over 2016.

Operating expenditures are expected to be \$165.3 million, an increase of 5.46 percent, and capital expenditures are expected to be \$28.3 million, an increase of 6.26 percent.

If the budget is approved with the recommended increase in the property tax levy, the owner of the county's median-valued home of \$243,200, which is up 1.1 percent in value from 2016, would pay a county property tax increase of about \$6, or about .8 percent, for 2017.

The board will review and adopt the final budget Dec. 13.

All budget meetings are open to the public at the Government Center in Stillwater during regular board meetings Tuesday mornings, are cablecast on local cable channels, and are webstreamed

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through the county's website. The webstreamed meetings are also archived on the website at www.co.washington.mn.us. Budget presentations may also be viewed on the website by searching the word "budget."

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

Nelson Nygaard will complete transit study in Washington County

Nelson Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc., will complete a transit study in Washington County, reviewing transit needs for seniors, persons with disabilities, and other transit dependent populations after the County Board approved a \$158,986 contract with the company Dec. 6.

A federal grant will pay for all but \$56,300 of the cost of the study.

Nelson Nygaard Consulting was chosen to do the study from among six agencies that responded to the county's request for applicants.

The need for transit assistance is seen in the county's changing demographics, such as:

- the percent of adults older than 65 in Washington County is expected to increase 290 percent between 2010 and 2030;
- in 2010, 36 percent of seniors lived by themselves;
- more than 7.5 percent of the population lives with a disability;
- residents are more likely to have a disability as they age;
- Washington County residents have identified in a residents' survey the ease of travel by public transit as their biggest concern; and
- 70 percent of residents surveyed indicated the likelihood of using transportation services.

Nelson Nygaard was chosen for its experience leading mobility management projects in Minnesota and across the nation. The company has expertise in accessible transportation and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and a full understanding of mobility management in Minnesota.

The scope of work for the study includes:

- understanding the existing transportation services for people with disabilities, seniors, low-income residents, and other transportation-disadvantaged markets;
- listening to communities throughout Washington County to identify their priorities and concerns;

- inventorying and quantifying resources used to provide transportation services;
- highlighting service gaps and other obstacles to travel, as well as future transportation needs;
- synthesizing other approaches used by communities in Minnesota and elsewhere to address the gaps and obstacles;
- identifying strategies for Washington County and build consensus on strategic approaches; and
- evaluating and recommending strategies for Washington County to address those needs, based on a number of factors, including cost and funding potential.

Preliminary results of the study are expected to be available by the end of March, with final results available Aug. 15, 2017.

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

County will continue program to combat aquatic invasive species

Washington County will continue to use state funds to fight aquatic invasive species (AIS) after the County Board renewed an agreement with the state's Department of Natural Resources Dec. 6.

In the 2014 legislative session, a county aid program was created to help prevent the spread of AIS in lakes and rivers. Based on the number of its watercraft trailer launches, 22, and watercraft trailer parking spaces, 350, Washington County will receive \$132,169 in local AIS prevention aid in 2017.

A county plan or resolution must be submitted to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources by the last day of each calendar year before funds may be distributed the following year.

Contact: Colin Kelly, Senior Planner, 651-430-6011

County will work with Rise, Inc., to provide employment services

Washington County residents who have a serious mental illness may have the opportunity to receive supported employment services through Rise, Inc., after the County Board approved an \$80,526 contract with the organization Dec. 6. This funding comes from the existing Adult Mental Health Grant.

The contract is from Dec. 1 through Nov. 30, 2017. Rise, Inc., will provide Supported Employment Services to individuals residing in Washington County who have a mental illness and are receiving case management services.

To comply with the goals of recent state mandates, the county is working toward creating more employment opportunities for persons with mental illness. The Minnesota Olmstead Plan "is a groundbreaking, comprehensive plan to provide people with disabilities opportunities to live, learn, work, and enjoy life in integrated settings." The plan has the objective of ensuring that people with disabilities have choices for competitive, meaningful, and sustained employment in the most integrated setting; and to change the prevailing attitudes, expectations, and beliefs about the integration of people with disabilities into the competitive workplace.

Rise, Inc., provides employment opportunities for people with mental illnesses who may not be best served through a traditional job placement. The main focus of the program is to provide employment placement and support services with a focus on individual choice, community integration, and independence.

Rise, Inc., will serve adults, age 18 and older, who are Washington County residents. The employment consultant will maintain a caseload of up to 20 individuals at a time.

Contact: Derek Gilde, Social Services Supervisor, 651-430-6551

County will have partners for carrying out SHIP tasks

Washington County will work with partners to carry out its Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) projects, after the County Board approved agreements with the American Lung Dec. 6. The county has been awarded \$521,487 for implementation of the 2016-2017 Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) grant through the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). The purpose of SHIP is to improve the health of all Minnesotans, and thereby decrease health care costs through evidence-based practices for physical activity, nutrition, and tobacco use. SHIP activities are required in four sectors: schools, health care, worksites, and community.

The American Lung Association will engage health care or allied providers and multi-unit housing sites to provide training and resources for evidence-based tobacco cessation activities and housing strategies for reducing exposure to second-hand smoke. The county will receive reports on the

association's progress. In addition, information will be used to report progress for the Community Health Improvement Plan addressing chronic disease, including tobacco use. The contract is for \$55,760.

In addition, Arcadia Research and Evaluation, LLC, will work with Washington County to evaluate the county's SHIP. The firm's contract is for \$57,800. Arcadia Research and Evaluation will establish relationships with local and state stakeholders; provide oversight of the online grant monitoring system; facilitate a data collection process; assist with setting target and key outcome indicators; and collaborate with the county and MDH for timely and accurate monthly, quarterly and annual reports. In addition, local results will be used to support progress for the Community Health Improvement Plan.

Contact: Jean Streetar, Public Health Program Manager, 651-430-6786

County will continue to work with Washington Conservation District

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an annual agreement with the Washington Conservation District Dec. 6 for services that allow the county to comply with the Wetland Conservation Act.

The county contracts with the Washington Conservation District for local administration of the act. In 1991, reacting to public concern about Minnesota's disappearing wetlands, the Wetland Conservation Act was adopted as one of the most sweeping wetlands protection laws in the country. To retain the benefits of wetlands and reach the Legislature's goal of no net loss of wetlands, the Wetland Conservation Act requires anyone proposing to drain, fill, or excavate a wetland first to try to avoid disturbing the wetland; second to try to minimize any impact on the wetland; and finally to replace any lost wetland acres, functions, and values.

The Natural Resources Block Grant provides limited funding to counties to implement the Wetland Conservation Act. The county is responsible for providing the required cash or in-kind match, as specified by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.

This is an annual agreement for 2017 between the county and the Washington Conservation District. Funding for the contract is:

- Natural Resources Block Grant of \$41,551; and

- a match from the County Environmental Charge of \$18,000.

In addition, the County Board approved a contract with the Washington Conservation District to provide technical assistance and educational services to promote and apply soil and water conservation practices throughout the county.

That \$250,000 contract provides partial funding for the organization's administrative services, and services for local water management, land and water treatment, and public education. This is the same amount as agreed to in 2016. Included in the agreement is funding for the East Metro Water Resources Education Program.

The work will be completed throughout 2017.

Contact: Jessica Collin-Pilarski, Senior Planner, 651-430-6703

County receives grant for public health emergencies preparedness

Washington County will receive an additional \$14,130 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through a program administered by the Minnesota Department of Health to prepare for and respond to health emergencies.

The grant period is from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017, with a total grant agreement funding of \$769,380. The County Board accepted the funds Dec. 6.

The county has received these funds since 2013. Grant funds continue to allow the county to plan, train, and perform public health emergency preparedness activities, such as outbreaks of infectious diseases. Activities include community partners, such as local medical providers, school districts, police, fire and EMS, and non-profit organizations.

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

County Board agrees to purchase right-of-way for CSAH 13, CSAH 24, 14 projects

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed to buy right-of-way along County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 13 in Oakdale and Lake Elmo Dec. 6 to complete a pavement management and safety improvement project, and right-of-way in Baytown Township to complete a railroad crossing improvement.

The improvements together with the mill and overlay of CSAH 13 are set to begin in 2017.

The estimated cost of the right-of-way for CSAH 13 is \$520,000 and is funded by state aid.

The improvement of the intersection at CSAH 24 and 14, together with correcting the at-grade railroad crossing, is also set for construction in 2017.

The estimate for the right-of-way at CSAH 24 and 14 is \$350,000 and is funded by state aid.

Contact: Frank Ticknor, Design Engineer, 651-430-4319, and Andrew Giesen, Engineer, 651-430-4336

Sheriff's Office will receive grant for boating equipment

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will receive a boating grant of \$21,750 from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resource (DNR) after the County Board accepted the grant Dec. 6.

The money is from the 2016 Federal Boating Supplemental Grant through the DNR.

The Sheriff's Office will use the money to purchase a new rescue boat with motor to replace the office's 1999 Zodiac that is at the end of its service life.

Contact: Sheriff Bill Hutton, 651-430-7601