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

**Date:** April 11, 2017  
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the April 11, 2017, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

#### **County will hire staff member to work to prevent homelessness**

Washington County will add a person to work with the county's Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH), after the county received a grant of \$98,250 from the state to fund the position through June 30, 2018.

The County Board approved the new position April 11.

The current county Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST) staffing doesn't have the personnel to fully use the PATH expansion grant that the county received. With the addition of a staff person, the HOST team will be better able to provide the services outlined in the grant. The additional person will allow HOST to increase its outreach, housing search, and tenancy support to assist with county residents who are homeless or are in the position of imminent homelessness.

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

#### **County Board recognizes the 9-1-1 public safety dispatchers for National Public Safety Telecommunicators week**

The Washington County 9-1-1 public safety dispatchers were recognized by the County Board April 11 in honor of National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

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

In 1994, a presidential proclamation was made to designate the second week in April as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. The week honors all those who help those in need through the use of telecommunications.

The County Board thanked and honored the men and women who serve everyday as public safety dispatchers in Washington County by adopting a resolution proclaiming the week of April 9 - April 15 as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in Washington County.

**Contact: Sheriff Bill Hutton, 651-430-7601**

### **County Board proclaims April as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners proclaimed April as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month April 11.

Each year in April, the President of the United States issues a proclamation to announce National Child Abuse Prevention Month. States and local governments are encouraged to support such proclamations to encourage public awareness of child abuse and neglect, recommit state and local resources to the cause, and promote community involvement through state and local activities.

National Child Abuse Prevention Month is a time to acknowledge the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect, and to promote the social and emotional well-being of children and families. During April, and throughout the year, communities are encouraged to share child abuse and neglect prevention awareness strategies and activities, and promote prevention across the country.

In proclaiming the observance, the County Board also thanked and honored all of the county employees who work every day to help parents and families counter the problem of child maltreatment and abuse.

**Contact: Sarah Amundson, Community Services Division Manager, 651-430-6597**

**SRF Consulting Group, Inc., will do construction engineering support for CSAH 13 project**

SRF Consulting Group, Inc., will do construction engineering support for Washington County's County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 13 pavement and safety improvement project.

The County Board approved the \$64,723 contract April 11. The money will come from state aid and city funds.

The project is on CSAH 13 (Ideal Avenue North/Olson Lake Trail North) between CSAH 35 and 34th Street North (formerly Highway 5) and borders the cities of Lake Elmo and Oakdale.

The project will improve operations and safety along the corridor by laying new pavement, increasing intersection safety, evaluating options for improvements to pedestrian and bicyclist accommodations, and enhancing surface water drainage management. It will also provide options for local residents to connect to city sewer systems.

SRF Consulting Group, Inc., is under contract to perform preliminary design engineering, project coordination, final design, and right-of-way services. This contract adds construction engineering support services not included in the original contract.

The overall project, which will cover 1.7 miles, will cost \$3.47 million. Construction is expected to begin in May and be complete in November.

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

### **County Board honors employees for exemplary service**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners celebrated the county's third annual Employee Recognition Awards honors for exemplary performance April 11.

Employees were honored in the areas of customer service, employee engagement, innovation, teamwork, and excellence in county government. Throughout 2016, county employees were able to nominate fellow employees for the service awards. The nominations were reviewed by a panel of employees, before recommendations were sent to county administration and the County Board.

The Customer Service Award honors an individual or team whose performance exemplifies the county value of ensuring services delivered to the public are up to the organization's highest standards and consistently meets or exceeds the needs of external customers.

The recipient of the Customer Service Award is Jim "Gus" Wilks. Wilks was nominated for the work he does as a custodian at the Woodbury Service Center. Wilks was nominated not once, not twice, but

three times in the Customer Service category. From greeting customers walking through the door, to anticipating the needs of employees, to taking care of building needs, his nominations said he is always going the extra mile for the customers and employees of Washington County.

The Employee Engagement Award honors an individual or team who encourages and promotes an environment within the county where all employees are committed to the mission of the organization and motivated to work hard and perform their best. The recipients of the Employee Engagement Award are members of the Public Works “Works” team.

The Public Works “Works” team was nominated for its efforts to improve department performance measurement, lead quality improvement efforts, and foster employee engagement. The team developed and created a new department mission, “Plan, build, and maintain a better Washington County,” and a set of values that was used as a cornerstone for designing the new North Shop employee engagement hallway. The group engaged employees and created opportunities for employees to understand and participate in decisions that affect them.

Public Works “Works” team members are Ann Pung-Terwedo, Brian Bloemendal, Hally Turner, Kristen Linn, Kyle Stember, Michael McGuire, Mike Keller, Nicki Castro, Rachelle Goodall, Amanda Raleigh, Rita Conlin, Carol Hanson, Steve Hansen, Kevin Glazek, Laura Kearns, and Elise Gardner.

The Innovation Award honors innovation and creativity in delivering services in a more efficient or effective manner. The recipient of the Innovation Award is Patrick Brinkman. Brinkman was nominated for his work in creating the county’s electronic timecards. Brinkman’s primary job duty is assisting employees with Information Technology service desk calls, so the timecard project was done in between responding to service calls. Brinkman went above expectations when he created an application that not only removed the need for paper, but also automated the employee timecard signature process. Brinkman listened closely to employees and crafted a timecard application that is intuitive and simplifies the employee’s process of reporting their time.

The Teamwork Award honors a team of employees who have worked collaboratively to deliver exceptional services or bring about a new program, process, procedure, or method of service delivery. The recipients of the Teamwork Award are members of the Purchasing Card project team. Staff from Accounting and Finance and Information Technology were nominated for their work on the U.S.

Bank Purchasing Card project. The project was initiated to automate and streamline the county's purchasing card process, taking the county from a 16-year-old manual paper process to an online system.

Purchasing card team members are Ann Hudson, Sarah Anderson, Jennifer Stanley, Carissta Arndt, Jennifer McLaren, Bonnie Depuydt, Patrick Brinkman, and Nate Rivard.

The Excellence in County Government Award honors an individual or group of individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to Washington County and contributed to meeting the county's vision as a great place to live, work, and play...today and tomorrow. The recipient of the 2017 Excellence in County Government Award is Sue Fennern.

Fennern was nominated for her work and dedication to the county and county employees. She has been a pillar at Washington County for more than 40 years, delivering quality service on every project she touches. Over the course of her career, Fennern has worked with all departments in the county.

Fennern helped establish the Human Resources department and has worked on countywide projects, including employee recruitment and hiring, department mergers and reorganizations, employee compensation and classification studies, and job description reviews, to name a few. In addition, Fennern is currently shepherding a team of county employees to implement a human resources information system. Fennern is responsive to all department requests and is always willing to take on new projects no matter how challenging they may be.

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



**Cutline: Sue Fennern was honored at the annual Washington County Employee Recognition event for Excellence in County Government April 11. Congratulations were offered by Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2, County Administrator Molly O'Rourke, Commissioner Fran Miron, District 1, with Fennern, and commissioners Lisa Weik, District 5, and Gary Kriesel, District 3, and Karla Bigham, District 4.**

### **County Board reports on administrator's performance evaluation**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners Chair Lisa Weik reported April 11 on a performance review that the board conducted for Administrator Molly O'Rourke.

The board conducted the closed-door review April 4.

Weik reported that the board gave O'Rourke high marks for her performance for her work, which involves building relationships and partnerships across the county and in the community. She also received high marks for the county retaining its high bond rating, the positive responses recorded on

the county's residential survey, and the number of efficiencies that O'Rourke has introduced to county business.

Weik noted that O'Rourke stepped seamlessly into her current position, when she was promoted five years ago. She noted O'Rourke's respect for others in her work, and her ability to hear all sides of a situation. She also noted the strong leadership that O'Rourke provides to the county's department head, who, in turn, work to fulfill the county's vision, mission and goals.

### **Regional Rail Authority approves funding for Red Rock planning, supports implementation plan**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners, sitting as the Washington County Regional Rail Authority (WCRRA) April 11, approved funding for continued planning for the Red Rock Corridor. It also voiced its support for the findings of the Red Rock Corridor Implementation Plan. The implementation plan concludes an 18-month study, and details a phased approach to build out bus rapid transit in the southeast metro. Part of the implementation plan is to build corridor ridership, and improve local bus service. Long-term plans will be to monitor ridership to see when to implement bus rapid transit in the corridor.

Also part of the implementation plan is "small area plans," which are plans to assist cities with station area planning ahead of their comprehensive plan updates, which will be due to the Metropolitan Council at the end of 2018. The WCRRA approved a \$150,000 contract with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., to create the "small area plans,"

The WCRRA is leading the planning for the proposed stations at 80th Street and Jamaica Avenue in Cottage Grove and in St. Paul Park. The plans should allow for a better plan for transit service based on market demand. The small area plans are to be completed by the end of 2017.

The \$150,000 is funded by a Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) grant of \$135,000, and the required local \$15,000 match is from the WCRRA.

The Red Rock Corridor is a proposed 20-mile bus rapid transit route, connecting the Twin Cities' southeastern suburbs to St. Paul. The transitway will originate in Hastings and stop at several locations in the southeast metro area before connecting to Union Depot in St. Paul.

**Contact: Hally Turner, Public Works Planner, 651-430-4307**

## **Regional Rail Authority gives up title to 2 pieces of land not needed for projects**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners, sitting as the Washington County Regional Rail Authority (WCRRA) April 11, agreed to give up title to two parcels of land, one near the Newport Transit Station and one near the Hardwood Creek Trail.

In 2010, WCRRA purchased 2222 Maxwell Ave. in Newport for the 2014 construction of the Newport Transit Station. The WCRRA has excess real property near the station no longer needed for the transit station. The Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA) expressed an interest in purchasing an option for the property for redevelopment. An appraisal was done on the property, which will be sold to the CDA for \$1.54 million, which is 95 percent of the appraised value. A portion of the proceeds will be returned to the County Transit Improvement Board (CTIB), according to the grant agreement between the WCRRA and CTIB when the property was purchased in 2009, and a portion will go to the WCRRA fund balance.

The WCRRA also agreed to a quit claim on land adjacent to the Hardwood Creek Trail in Forest Lake. In 1994, the WCRRA purchased a little more than nine miles of former railroad corridor from Burlington Northern Railroad Company, which is approximately 100 feet wide and extends from 145th Street in Hugo to the Chisago County line. The land is now the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail.

The City of Forest Lake owns property adjacent to the Hardwood Creek Trail in Forest Lake and wants to sell its property for redevelopment. There is a possible ambiguity in the west line of the city's land that can be cleared up with the quit claim, which will allow the city to move forward with the sale and redevelopment of the property.

There is no money involved in this transaction.

**Contact: Jan Lucke, Transportation/Transit Manager, 651-430-4316**