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

**Date:** Aug. 15, 2017  
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Aug. 15, 2017, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

#### **County will seek funds from highway freight program for Highway 36 upgrade**

Washington County will apply for a \$3 million grant from the state's Highway Freight Program for the planned Highway 36 and County State Aid Highway 15 (Manning Avenue) interchange project, after the County Board approved the application Aug. 15.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation announced the availability of the funds. The estimated cost of the Highway 36/Manning Avenue project is \$25 million, which includes the cost of construction, right-of way acquisition, and engineering. The project is scheduled for 2019. It will be paid for with federal grants, state aid, state bonds, and local contributions.

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act created a new funding program that provides money to Minnesota to make improvements to the state highway system that benefits freight movement; \$20.8 million is available in this year's solicitation. All public roads, including county and city roads, are eligible for the money.

**Contact: Don Theisen, Public Works Director, 651-430-4304**

#### **Sheriff's Office renews mutual aid agreement with St. Croix County**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners renewed the county's Sheriff's Office mutual aid agreement with St. Croix County, Wisconsin, Aug. 15.

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

Under the agreement, the Washington County Sheriff's Office and the St. Croix County Sheriff's Office will provide law enforcement aid and assistance to each other during natural and man-made disasters.

Neither of the agencies possesses all of the necessary resources to cope with every possible law enforcement emergency or disaster by itself. An effective and efficient response can be better achieved by using the collective resources of both agencies.

**Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601**

### **Sheriff's Office will continue to work with federal DEA for drug diversion**

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will continue to work with the United States Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), after the County Board renewed the agreement Aug. 15.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will work with the DEA for the fifth year to staff a task force focusing on the large scale diversion of pharmaceutical drugs. This DEA Tactical Diversion Squad is housed at DEA headquarters in Minneapolis and investigates the diversion, illegal distribution, and theft of pharmaceutical drugs by doctors, pharmacies, and other health care providers.

The Sheriff's Office provides one deputy to the task force. The DEA provides transportation, equipment, office space, and technical and administrative aid, and covers any overtime costs up to \$18,042 for the deputy, an increase of \$289 from the previous year.

The term of the contract is from Oct. 1, 2017, to Sept. 30, 2018.

**Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601**

### **Communities will receive recycling grants**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved grants to county communities Aug. 15 to support curbside recycling.

Washington County offers municipal recycling grants to cities and townships in the county to pay residential recycling program expenses. Grant funding levels are dependent on recycling activities. A

base amount is provided to cover administrative and basic recycling expenses and is determined by the number of households in a community. A second level of funding is targeted to specific grant projects related to achieving recycling goals. A third level of funding is tied to targeted projects, such as multifamily recycling and away-from-home recycling.

During 2017 and 2018, the City of Cottage Grove is eligible to receive up to \$117,760; the City of Forest Lake is eligible to receive up to \$70,316; the City of Hugo is eligible to receive up to \$61,616; the City of Oakdale is eligible to receive up to \$114,872; the City of Stillwater is eligible to receive up to \$70,340; and the City of Woodbury is eligible for up to \$161,892.

Other cities and townships also receive grant funding in amounts less than \$50,000, which don't require board approval.

Funds are used to administer the recycling program, conduct waste education in schools, and develop and promote additional recycling opportunities for residents. The funding source includes the Local Recycling Development Grant (a metropolitan landfill surcharge), and the County Environmental Charge.

**Contact: Nicole Stewart, Environmental Program Coordinator, 651-275-7284**

### **County renews environmental health mutual aid agreement**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the Twin Cities Public Health and Environmental Health Entities in the Minnesota Mutual Aid Agreement Aug. 15, a renewal of the agreement.

The mutual aid agreement is between Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties, and the cities of Bloomington, Brooklyn Park, Edina, Maplewood, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, St. Paul, Richfield, Wayzata, and the University of Minnesota to make personnel, equipment and other resources available to governmental units in the event of an emergency, training, drill or exercise.

Washington County has been a participating member in a public health and environmental health mutual aid agreement since February 2007.

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

## **County will receive \$35,000 for pollinator seed production initiative**

Washington County will receive a \$35,000 grant from Great River Greening to fund the purchase of pollinator seed to restore 25 acres of pollinator prairie in Lake Elmo Park Reserve.

The County Board approved the grant agreement Aug. 15. Great River Greening is an environmental conservation nonprofit working throughout Minnesota with a mission to inspire and lead local communities in restoring and conserving the land and water that enrich people's lives. Great River Greening is the recipient of a \$200,000 grant from the Butler Family Foundation with the goal of increasing locally-sourced seed for pollinator plant species and pollinator habitat within the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area.

The county's Parks Division, as a part of its regular work, will plant the seed and maintain the pollinator prairie habitat on the 25 acres of converted crop land. Should resources be available to collect the pollinator seed, as a part of the agreement, Great River Greening receives 30 percent of the seed harvest for restoration projects.

**Contact: Dan MacSwain, Natural Resources Coordinator, 651-430-4323**

## **County continues review of 2018 county budget**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners continued its review of the county's 2018 budget Aug. 15, specifically reviewing recommended budgets for the public safety departments of the County Attorney's Office, Department of Community Corrections, and the Sheriff's Office.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners began the 2018 county budget review during a workshop Aug. 8, reviewing a recommended budget that would allow the county to continue to serve a growing and aging population, and address a growing demand for services.

The recommended budget reflects increased funding for service mandates imposed by the state, but not funded or fully funded by the state; road construction and preservation; the continuation of a major crimes unit in the County Attorney's Office; technology improvements to ensure efficient operations, protect critical technology infrastructure, and secure private data; and the return of the Lake Elmo Library to the county system.

The recommended levy increase for 2018 would result in an annual property tax increase of about \$35 for the owner of the median valued home, which is \$257,000, assuming that home's value increased 4.9 percent during the past year. That dollar amount includes a \$3 increase in the voter-approved Land and Water Legacy program.

The County Attorney's Office is recommending an annual budget of just more than \$6 million, most of which is paid for with the county's property tax levy. Of that, \$5.5 million pays for personnel services.

The Attorney's Office has seen an increase in referrals, from 1,429 referrals in 2014, to 2,010 referrals in 2016, which results in increased complaints and citations.

The office has been focusing on sex trafficking in the community, primarily by disrupting the market and demand for sex trafficking. The approach by the office has been to organize and train law enforcement officers in a victim-centered approach, and to create awareness in the community. The result has been increased sex trafficking prosecutions.

The Attorney's Office has also seen an increase in the number and complexity of child protection cases – a 46 percent increase in the number of child protection cases from 2014 to 2015 and a 64 percent increase in the number of child protection cases from 2015 to 2016.

The office's Civil Division has been instrumental in the transfer of the Newport Resource Recovery Facility from private to public ownership, and in providing legal services to Public Works as it implements its transportation plan.

The County Attorney's Office stresses its community outreach with community educational programs, and internships, as well as partnerships that it maintains with other county departments.

The county's Department of Community Corrections is recommending a \$10.9 million budget, \$7.7 million of which is supported by the county's property tax levy. The majority of the department's budget would be spent on personnel. Of the rest, \$1.1 million would be spent on juvenile placement, and \$345,000 would be spent on community-based treatment. Other expenses are crime diversionary programs and domestic violence services. The department's Juvenile Division provides services for more than 1,000 clients; the Adult Division provides services for more than 12,000 clients.

The department uses programs such as Dosage Probation, which focuses on long-term behavior change, which saved more than 40 years of probation supervision in the first 18 months of the

program, and the Sentence to Service program, which will contribute more than 80,000 hours to community service in 2018, and save \$1.1 million in the cost of jail beds.

The Sheriff's Office recommends a 2018 budget of \$33.6 million, to support county jail operations, patrol, investigations, special services, and administration. More than 75 percent of the Sheriff's Office is funded by the property tax levy, and almost 80 percent of the funds are used for personnel. Other sources of revenue includes grants for high intensity drug trafficking areas, and contracted police services. The Sheriff's Office is recommending adding a 911 dispatcher. Other increased costs include the cost of body-worn cameras and increased jail inmate medical costs.

While crime rates are holding steady, and decreasing in some areas, new crime trends the Sheriff's Office is seeking to combat include technology crimes, using computers and cell phones; increased human trafficking and violent crimes; and crimes against the elderly, such as scams and fraud.

The Sheriff's Office highlighted its community engagement, and recent accomplishments, including the growing collection of drugs in its "Take it to the Box" initiative, the use of Naloxone to combat opioid overdoses, and the jail's "Assisting Children of Incarcerated Parents" and Female Offender Creating Writing Program.

The County Board will continue to review budgets of individual departments during workshops in August and September, before setting a preliminary levy Sept. 26. The board will continue to review the budget until it adopts the 2018 budget Dec. 12. All budget meetings are open to the public, and will be in the Board Room of the Government Center, 14949 62<sup>nd</sup> St. N. in Stillwater. They are also webstreamed on [www.co.washington.mn.us](http://www.co.washington.mn.us), and the meetings are archived on the website. Find them by searching "County Board" on the website.