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

**Date:** Sept. 12, 2017  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Sept. 12, 2017, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

### **Pena will serve on Community Development Block Grant advisory committee**

Luis Pena, Cottage Grove, will serve on the Washington County Community Development Block (CDBG) Grant Citizen's Advisory Committee as the District 4 representative, after the County Board made the appointment Sept. 12.

Pena will serve a partial term that will expire Dec. 31, 2019.

The citizen advisory committee is established to provide public input to and increase the accountability of the CDBG and HOME programs in Washington County. The purpose of the CDBG program is to develop strong urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

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

### **County staff will do family services outreach**

Washington County staff will do parent outreach, after the County Board approved a change Sept. 12 in the positions that do family service and parent support outreach in the county.

Washington County began offering Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP) services in 2012 after receiving a five-year grant. In 2013, the state Legislature provided statewide funding for the program.

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Washington County has used contracted vendors to provide PSOP. Since 2012, four outside agencies have had contracts to provide PSOP at various times. People Incorporated was the last agency providing the service, and recently informed the county of its intent to discontinue PSOP services. Now, the county will begin providing the service.

PSOP is an early-intervention service for families who have children 10 years of age and younger. Most families are offered the program as a result of a screened out child maltreatment report, but some are referred independently. The goal of PSOP is to provide social work services to prevent families from entering or re-entering the child protection system.

Washington County's grant award to provide PSOP services in 2017 was \$134,400, and the grant award for 2018 is \$104,913. On average, there are 22 families receiving PSOP case management.

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

### **County Board approves plat in Denmark Township**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a plat for Homestead Estates Second Addition in Denmark Township Sept. 12.

The one-lot plat is north of 80<sup>th</sup> Street South and west of County State Aid Highway 21 (St. Croix Trail South).

**Contact: Nancie Schwintek, Property Records and Taxpayer Services Division Manager, 651-430-6758**

### **Washington County working through transition of waste management coordinating board**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved changes Sept. 12 in agreements that the county holds with other metropolitan counties to coordinate waste management efforts.

Since 1993, metropolitan counties have been part of a regional Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board Joint Powers Agreement, meant to coordinate and improve operation of the solid waste system in the metro area and develop policies and actions to ensure implementation of a realistic, consistent, and coordinated regional solid waste management system.

In the past, the agreement has led to numerous accomplishments, including:

- state indemnification of household hazardous waste (HHW) collection activities and facilities for metro counties;
- HHW reciprocal use;
- regional solid waste hauler licensing;
- product stewardship in the way that items such as paint and e-waste are handled;
- legislative coordination; and
- best practices research and coordination.

However, several changes during the past year have prompted a change in how the joint powers agreement is managed, including:

- county programs have matured;
- a shift from regional to county accountability;
- Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment (SCORE) funding is now sent directly to counties;
- the private firm that has managed the joint powers organization, Richardson & Richtor and Associates, will not pursue a continued contract;
- the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board purchased the Recycling & Energy Center in Newport, and
- there is now stronger coordination between Ramsey and Washington counties than has been true in the past.

After reviewing the changes that the joint powers agreement members have undergone, and reviewing the goals that the counties will have in the future regarding the waste management efforts, it was recommended that the counties create new joint powers agreements, one for legislative and policy development, and a second to coordinate regional hauling. The former would most likely be with Hennepin and Ramsey counties.

Additional tasks that would still be coordinated by the counties would be to continue separate HHW reciprocal agreements; arrange for annual training for inspectors; and manage a business waste recycling and disposal guide.

**Contact: Judy Hunter, Senior Environmental Program Manager, 651-430-4031**

### **County Board accepts funds for Sheriff's Office Explorer program**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted \$1,603.87 from the Sheriff's Office Explorer Program members Sept. 12, money raised at the fast pitch booth at the Washington County Fair.

The money will be used for training programs for the Explorers.

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

### **Sheriff's Office will receive Toward Zero Deaths grant**

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will receive a \$199,875 Toward Zero Deaths grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, after the County Board accepted it Sept. 12.

The Toward Zero Deaths grant dollars will be used to reimburse overtime costs associated with assisting the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety, in coordinated patrol saturations. The saturations will include Driving While Intoxicated (DWI), distracted drivers, speed, and seat belt enforcement. The overtime cost will cover work performed by the Washington County Sheriff's Office and the police departments of Stillwater, Bayport, Woodbury, Forest Lake, Oak Park Heights, Cottage Grove, and St. Paul Park.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will be the fiscal agent for the grant, which extends from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30, 2018.

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

### **Sheriff's Office will work with other counties to transport detainees**

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will work with other counties' sheriff's offices to transport detainees from each county, after the County Board approved a mutual aid agreement Sept. 12.

The aid agreement states that the county sheriff will make equipment and personnel available to Dakota, Carver, Ramsey, and Scott counties. Each county agrees to assist other counties with the transport of detainees by making equipment and personnel available upon request with no compensation.

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

## **County Board conducts public hearing on waste designation**

The Washington County Board of Commissioner conducted a public hearing Sept. 12 to gather testimony on a county ordinance for waste designation.

No residents spoke at the hearing. After the hearing was closed, the board adopted the ordinance.

Waste designation is used in Minnesota law to allow counties to require all or a portion of solid waste to be delivered to a designated waste management facility. Designation relates to what happens to waste after it is collected – it does not affect who collects the trash or when it is collected.

Ramsey and Washington counties have submitted amendments to their respective solid waste master plans and a joint waste designation plan was approved by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency last year.

The two counties have determined that designation is necessary to ensure that acceptable waste from the counties is managed in a manner that ranks higher on the state's waste management hierarchy.

The Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board (R&E Board) and the counties have invested a significant amount of time and capital into development of a comprehensive waste management program. The R&E Board and the counties aim to designate waste to assure management of waste in accordance with the hierarchy, and to have certainty of a long-term supply, as well as flexibility to continue to improve upon the regional waste management system over time as new technologies or opportunities arise.

State law requires, as part of the process to implement designation, a period of time to implement waste designation. Entering into negotiated waste delivery agreements with waste haulers for the voluntary delivery of all acceptable waste generated in the two counties is a preferred way to achieve more certain deliveries to the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center.

Waste designation is scheduled to go into effect Jan. 1, 2018.

**Contact: Judy Hunter, Senior Environmental Program Manager, 651-430-4031**

## **County Board approves budget for Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board Joint Activities Budget**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$2.8 million 2018-2019 Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board Joint Activities Budget Sept. 12.

The Joint Powers Agreement creating the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board (R&E Board) provides that the County Board retain the authority to approve the budget for the board. The budget is used to administer and carry out joint waste management activities, and includes non-facility related activities of the R&E Board. They include five program areas: project management, non-residential recycling, general outreach, policy evaluation, and hauler rebates. The main cost is the hauler rebate program. Over the past five years, hauler rebates have comprised 48 percent to 67 percent of the total Joint Activities Budget.

The County Environmental Charge funds are used to support the budget.

**Contact: Judy Hunter, Senior Environmental Program Manager, 651-430-4031**

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

The Washington County Board of Commissioners continued its review of the county's 2018 budget Sept. 12, specifically reviewing recommended budgets for the Public Works Department and the Regional Railroad Authority.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners began the 2018 county budget review in August, 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 is estimated to lead to a 1 percent reduction in the county property tax rate, which would be the fourth year out of the last five in which the county tax rate would be reduced.

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, and corresponding tax rate reduction, 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 board reviewed specific components of the Public Works Department and Regional Railroad Authority budgets Sept. 12.

The Public Works Department has both operating and capital expenses. It is expected that the county will receive \$4.53 million in state aid maintenance funding. Of that, it is expected that \$992,000 will be used for the staff that will deliver the county's proposed transportation projects in 2018. Also, \$618,000 is budgeted for salt for highway snow and ice removal, an almost \$100,000 reduction from 2017; the \$350,000 projected for gasoline and diesel for the county's vehicle fleet is also \$18,700 less than budgeted in 2017. The \$1.72 million utilities budget for the county's buildings is also budgeted for a \$212,000 reduction from 2017.

The department's budget includes almost \$600,000 for parks seasonal staff to keep the parks fully staffed during the busier summer months. It also calls for a different business model for the Historic Courthouse, which will no longer host weddings in 2018. The operating budget requests the addition of a fleet technician, a building services project specialist, a building services technician, and a custodian.

The requests for replacements and additions to the county's fleet includes 27 items that range from a new dump truck that will also plow snow, to pickup trucks, to water tanks for natural resource management, and a hay rake. The requests total \$842,300. Projects and restoration in parks across the county are proposed to cost \$795,100. The parking ramp attached to the Law Enforcement Center next to the Government Center is also scheduled to be refurbished for \$1.35 million.

Road and bridge projects are budgeted for \$26.6 million; half of the revenue will come from state aid, about a fifth will come from partner cities, and the rest will come from the county's wheelage tax and state grants. Two-thirds of that money will be spent on road construction, a fifth will be spent on acquiring right-of-way, and the remainder will be spent on consultant services.

The Washington County Railroad Authority levy is proposed to be \$776,800, which is the same amount that was levied in 2017. About half the money is spent on personnel who are working on transportation projects in the county, and the other half is spent on services, such as memberships in

coalitions also working on the projects, and consulting services. Also, \$90,000 is proposed to be spent on operating the Hardwood Creek and the Newport transit stations in the county.

The County Board will be setting a preliminary levy Sept. 26. The board will continue to review the budget until it adopts the final 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.