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

Date: Nov. 14, 2017
Contact: Yvonne Klinnert, Public Information Manager
Phone: 651-430-6026, after hours 952-807-3723
E-mail: yvonne.klinnert@co.washington.mn.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Nov. 14, 2017, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County retains highest rating possible from two ranking agencies

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed Nov. 14 to award the sale of general obligation bonds to Stifel Nicolaus & Company that will refinance current county debt.

In October, the county board approved the sale of bonds to refinance a portion of the existing bond issuances from 2007 and 2011. The county's municipal advisor identified an opportunity for the county to reduce the interest payments on the existing debt. The refinancing will save the county more than \$5.7 million in interest costs over the life of the debt.

The municipal advisor Springsted Incorporated, conducts the bond sale by taking competitive bids in their offices, which it did Monday, Nov. 13.

In preparation for the bond sale, both Moody's and Standard and Poor's bond ratings agencies reviewed Washington County's bond rating, and reaffirmed the county's AAA bond ratings. In addition, both rating agencies assigned an outlook of "stable" to their ratings, meaning both agencies expect the county's strong fiscal performance to continue and, if so, the county is likely retain its AAA ratings in future years. Washington County is one of a small group of counties nationwide that enjoys a AAA rating from both major rating agencies.

The documents issued by the agencies call out the county's strong economy and tax base, strong fiscal management with healthy reserves, strong liquidity, and strong management and governance framework.

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

Government Center • 14949 62nd Street North — P.O. Box 6, Stillwater, Minnesota 55082-0006

Phone: 651-430-6001 • Fax: 651-430-6017 • TTY: 651-430-6246

www.co.washington.mn.us

Equal Employment Opportunity / Affirmative Action

An analyst reviewing the bond ratings told Kathy Aho, the county's municipal advisor from Springsted, "The county has one of the most robust management teams that I've worked with." He went on to say the credit is strong, the management team is strong, the financials are strong, the flexibility is strong, and the economy is strong.

Contact: Tabatha Hansen, Accounting and Finance Director, 651-430-6027

County Board receives 2 GFOA awards

The Washington County Board of Commissioners received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the county's 2015 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report Nov. 14.

The certificate of achievement was awarded to 17 of Minnesota's 87 counties for 2015, and 18 percent of counties nationally.

The county also received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the county's 2017 budget from GFOA. The budget presentation award was given to six of Minnesota's 87 counties, and 8.4 percent of counties nationally.

This is the 31st consecutive year the county has received an award for the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The award is intended to recognize and encourage excellence in financial reporting by state and local governments. The county's consistent participation in the program demonstrates its commitment to quality financial management practices and open and clear communication with its residents. The award has a direct impact when rating agencies assess the county's financial practices during the bond issuance process.

The financial report showed that the county increased its net position in 2016 by \$7.2 million over 2015. The county's total fund balance increased, while its expenditures increased over the previous year.

The County Board also received the GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the county's 2017 budget. The 2017 award marks the 20th consecutive year of receiving the award. To receive the award, the county's budget document is submitted to the Government Finance Officers Association and it goes through a number of peer reviews to determine if the quality of the document meets the nationally recognized standards for effective budget presentation. The county must meet all

14 mandatory criteria on which it is rated. The award program began in 1998 and is the only national awards program in governmental budgeting. The budget document serves as a policy document, financial plan, operations guide, and a communication device.

The County Board also received a review of the 2016 financial information provided in the annual newspaper insert, which is the publication of financial summary information required by state law.

Contact: Carl Jacobson, Accounting Principal, 651-430-6044



The Washington County Board of Commissioners received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for the county's 2015 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report with county staff Nov. 14. County staff who worked on the report included Theresa Robitaille, Larry Phillips, Paul Merryfield, Michele Abrahamsen, Carissta Arndt, Dorothy Henderson, Dave Wilwert, Tabatha Hansen, with Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2, Dee Bernard, Carl Jacobson, with

commissioners Lisa Weik, District 5, and Fran Miron, District 1, Betty Quinn, Donna Sipola, Jennifer McLaren, and commissioners Gary Kriesel, District 3, and Karla Bigham, District 4.



The Washington County Board of Commissioners received the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the county's 2017 budget Nov. 14 with county staff. Receiving the award were Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2, Melinda Kirk, budget/financial analyst, commissioners Fran Miron, District 1, Lisa Weik, District 5, and Gary Kriesel, District 3, Stephanie Kammerud, office specialist, and Commissioner Karla Bigham, District 4.

County Board will conduct public hearing on county fee schedule Dec. 12

The Washington County Board of Commissioners will conduct a public hearing on the county's 2018 fee schedule Dec. 12.

The County Board set the hearing Nov. 14. The fees are set for county-provided services.

The hearing will be during the regular County Board meeting at 9 a.m. in the Board Room of the Government Center, 14949 62nd St. N. in Stillwater.

The fee schedule is updated each year.

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

County will receive grants to protect, improve water resources

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted natural resources block grants from the Minnesota Board of Water Resources (BWSR) Nov. 14 to be used to protect and improve county water resources in 2018 and 2019.

The Natural Resources Block Grant (NRBG) is a composite of base grants available to counties to assist programs that protect and improve water resources. Individual programs under this grant include Comprehensive Local Water Management; Wetland Conservation Act; Department of Natural Resources Shoreland Management Program; and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS) Program.

To be eligible for the NRBG, a county must have a locally-adopted and BWSR-approved comprehensive local water management plan and submit an annual report. The county is responsible for providing the required match of \$69,033.

Funding of \$152,051 for 2018 and 2019 for each program area is:

- Comprehensive Local Water Management of \$16,188 to the county for public health;
- Wetland Conservation Act of \$83,102 to the Washington Conservation District;
- Shoreland Management Program of \$5,230 for the county's survey and land management;
- Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems of \$18,600 for public health;
- Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems Upgrade Funds of \$25,931 for public health; and
- Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems Incentive Funds of \$3,000 for public health.

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

County will act as sponsor for Grant, Marine requests for road aid money

Washington County will act as sponsor to request money from the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) on behalf of the cities of Grant and Marine on St. Croix.

The County Board agreed to be the sponsor Nov. 14.

Minnesota cities, counties, and townships may apply for funding support for transportation infrastructure projects on local roads as part of the LRIP.

Approximately \$25.3 million in state bond funds has been made available for constructing or reconstructing local roads. Funding may be requested for projects that will reduce traffic crashes on rural county state aid highways, for projects on local roads that have regional significance, or for the local share of a trunk highway project.

The City of Grant is applying for the use of LRIP funding in 2019 for the reconstruction of McKusick Road from Highway 96 to County State Aid Highway 15 (Manning Avenue). Likewise, the City of Marine on the St. Croix is applying for the use of LRIP funding in 2019 for the reconstruction of Judd Street within the Village Center, Maple Street, and Linden Street in the city. Both cities will complete the preparation and submittal of the application.

Grant and Marine on St. Croix are not state aid cities because they have populations of less than 5,000, and therefore must have the county sponsor the projects. Sponsorship includes the County Board's support, and must agree to being the fiscal agent on behalf of the community, and oversee the projects' plans and progress.

Contact: Kevin Peterson, Engineer II, 651-430-4330

County will receive funds to pay for wear, tear for detour from Highway 95

Washington County will receive \$23,700 from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to compensate it for the use of its roadways as a detour while MnDOT does work on Highway 95 during the summer of 2018.

The County Board approved the agreement Nov. 14.

MnDOT will be improving Highway 95 (Manning Avenue) from just north of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 22 (70th Street South) to CSAH 18 (Bailey Road). The improvements include widening shoulders, adding right turn lanes, improving drainage, resurfacing the roadway, and

installing centerline and shoulder "mumble strips," a new design of rumble strips which produce significantly less noise when driven onto by a distracted or fatigued driver.

It is in the public interest for traffic to be detoured onto county highways to accomplish the improvements. The state will compensate the county \$23,700 for the road life consumed by the detour by means of the "Gas Tax Method," which factors in traffic counts, road length, and duration of the detour. The detour will send traffic onto CSAH 22 (70th Street South), CSAH 19 (Keats Avenue South/Woodbury Drive), and CSAH 18 (Bailey Road) in Cottage Grove and Woodbury.

Contact: Joe Gustafson, Traffic Engineer, 651-430-4351

TurnKey Corrections will provide inmate services at Washington County Jail

TurnKey Corrections will be the Washington County Jail's new provider of inmate services and commissary products, after the County Board approved an agreement with the company Nov. 14. Inmate services include vending machines, inmate tablets, email, phone PINs, and commissary services. Turnkey will install 11 kiosks in the jail and one in the lobby. The kiosks will handle all services offered by the provider, including commissary ordering, account balances, inmate messaging, and email. The initial term of the agreement is five years.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

County Board reviews budgets for watershed management groups

The Washington County Board of Commissioners reviewed budgets and activities for the county's watershed management organizations Nov. 14, as well as the Washington Conservation District.

The County Board does not direct the watershed districts, or their activities, so the budget review was for information only.

The county's watershed districts, which are authorized by state law and whose boards are appointment by the County Board are:

- Brown's Creek (BCWD);
- Carnelian Marine St Croix (CMSCWD);
- Comfort Lake-Forest Lake (CLFLWD);
- Ramsey-Washington Metro (RWMWD);

- Rice Creek (RCWD);
- South Washington (SWWD); and
- Valley Branch (VBWD).

There is also one joint powers watershed management organization in the county, the Middle St. Croix.

Watershed organizations manage both water quantity and water quality. Water quality is important for public health, quality of life, tourism, recreation, and economic vitality. The primary pollutants of concern in Washington County are phosphorus and sediment. The organizations also emphasize the connection between surface water and groundwater.

Budgets for the organizations are driven by watershed management plans. Each organization looks at projected activities required to meet its goals, strategies, and implementation plan, and plans its budget in accordance. Budget levels fluctuate depending on grants, status of projects identified in watershed plans, and interaction with local partners, such as cities, throughout the year.

Public hearings for the budgets are in August and September, and the final budgets are certified by Dec. 15. They are supported by property taxes.

The individual organization's proposed 2018 budgets are:

- Brown's Creek, \$1,121,790, a 27.9 percent reduction from 2017
- Carnelian Marine St. Croix, \$706,689, a 2 percent increase over 2017;
- Comfort Lake-Forest Lake, \$2,290,223, a 20.6 percent increase over 2017;
- Ramsey Washington Metro, \$12,482,336, a 15.9 percent increase over 2017;
- Rice Creek, \$7,555,051, an 18.7 percent decrease from 2017;
- South Washington, \$3,948,388, a 1.3 decrease from 2017; and
- Valley Branch, \$1,299,800, a 16 percent increase from 2017.

The organizations highlighted selected projects from the previous year, done in conjunction with governmental units and other agencies, including:

- stormwater runoff retrofit on McKusick Road in Stillwater by Brown's Creek Watershed District;

- stormwater quality improvements at Arcola Mills in Stillwater Township by the Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District;
- a stormwater harvesting and reuse project at Forest Hills Golf Club by the Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District;
- Greeley Gully Stabilization in Stillwater by the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization;
- Woodbury Elementary School retrofit project by the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District;
- the Forest Lake High School reuse irrigation project by the Rice Creek Watershed District; and
- the Grey Cloud Crossing by the South Washington Watershed District.

The county's water consortium topics in 2016 and 2017 covered St. Croix River stewardship, legislative discussions, and input on the county's comprehensive plan that is being updated.

The Washington Conservation District also presented its proposed 2018 budget. The district oversees administration for two of the county's watershed organizations, performs water and conservation monitoring, and provides technical assistance to landowners and education and outreach. It is also implementing the county's waterway buffer program, and works on aquatic invasive species prevention.

It is using a \$300,000 federal grant to reduce phosphorous in the St. Croix River, and additional grants to work on water quality throughout the county.

Contact: Stephanie Souter, Senior Planner, 651-430-6701