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

Date: Nov. 28, 2017
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Nov. 28, 2017, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

Sewell will serve on Valley Branch Watershed District board

David Sewell, Lake Elmo, will serve on the Valley Branch Watershed District board, after being appointed by the Washington County Board of Commissioners Nov. 28.

Sewell will serve a three-year term expiring in 2020.

Watershed district governance, required by state law, helps to control or alleviate damage by flood waters; improves stream channels for drainage or navigation; reclaims or fills wet or overflow lands; oversees water supply for irrigation; regulates the flow of streams; diverts or changes water courses; provides and conserves water supply; and provides for the protection of groundwater and regulation of groundwater use.

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

County Board will conduct public hearing Dec. 19 on bonds to finance The Glen

The Washington County Board of Commissioners will conduct a public hearing Dec. 19 on the sale of \$8 million in tax-exempt bonds by the Dakota County Community Development Agency to finance The Glen at Valley Creek, a 42-unit multi-family senior rental development for low- and moderate-income residents.

The hearing, which was set Nov. 28, will be conducted during the regular board meeting at 9 a.m. in the Board Room on the fifth floor of the Government Center, 14949 62nd St. N., Stillwater. While

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Washington County must conduct the public hearing, the county will not be responsible for any costs related to the bonds.

The bonds shall be limited obligation bonds issued by the Dakota County Community Development Agency, and the principal and interest shall be paid from the revenue from the project, and paid by the developer.

The Glen at Valley Creek is planned for 7987 Afton Road in Woodbury.

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

Washington County will join litigation related to opioid crisis

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed Nov. 28 to retain an outside law firm on contingency to commence civil litigation against opioid drug manufacturers and wholesale distributors.

More than 60 similar lawsuits have been filed by states, counties, and cities around the United States. Such litigation seeks to hold manufacturers responsible for misconduct related to opioid oversupplying portions of the market. Any relief obtained would directly serve Washington County and its residents.

No lawsuit has been filed to date by any governmental entity in Minnesota, although several Minnesota counties and cities are considering litigation. In late October, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared the opioid epidemic to be a public health emergency.

The board was provided with statistics regarding the opioid crisis in Minnesota, including:

- In 2016, there were 153 accidental opiate-related deaths in Minnesota, compared with 97 in 2015.
- According to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), 23 Washington County residents died of drug overdose in 2016; 11 of these deaths were attributed to opioids.
- The rate of opioid overdose deaths in Washington County is 4.6 per 100,000 persons. The state rate is 7.1 per 100,000.
- Falls, motor vehicle injuries, and poisoning are the leading causes of unintentional injury deaths in Minnesota. Falls and poisonings have been on the rise, fueled, respectively, in part, by an aging population and abuse/misuse of prescription drugs.

- Drug-related deaths are included in the "poisoning" category of unintentional deaths.
- MDH data on opioid overdose deaths from 2000-2016 shows 99 deaths in the county. The last five years show a significant change in the trend: six deaths in 2012; seven deaths in 2013; 14 deaths in 2014; 10 deaths in 2015; and 11 deaths in 2016.
- The greatest number of opioid-involved deaths continues to be due to commonly prescribed opioids (e.g., oxycodone, hydrocodone).
- In 2016, in the Twin Cities area, opioid overdose deaths were driven by heroin and synthetic opioids. Heroin-involved deaths increased by 41 percent. Synthetic opioid involved deaths (e.g., fentanyl) increased 142 percent.
- Minnesota Student Survey data for Washington County shows that 6.6 percent of 11th grade students reported that they had used prescription pain relievers at least once in the past 12 months, 5 percent reported using psychedelics, 4.6 percent used over-the-counter medications, and 7.3 percent used prescription drugs, such as Ritalin. This compares to 44.4 percent using alcohol, and 26.9 percent using marijuana.
- In 2016, 6.6 percent of 11th grade boys and 7.2 percent of 11th grade girls reported they had used prescription drugs "not prescribed for you" in the past 30 days.
- In Washington County in 2016, there were 12 arrests for synthetic narcotics, 21 for opium, cocaine, etc., compared to 444 for marijuana and 371 for "other," including methamphetamine.

Contact: Pete Orput, County Attorney, 651-430-6124

County park land will continue to be farmed in 2018

Farmers will continue to farm portions of Washington County Parks that are not ready for park development, after the County Board approved contracts with them for next summer Nov. 28.

When Washington County acquires farmland within a regional parks, some of the land is often kept agricultural until it's needed for park purposes. Washington County has 269.7 acres of land that is leased for farming, 158.8 in Lake Elmo Park Reserve and 110.9 acres in St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park.

David See Farms will farm the land in Lake Elmo Park Reserve, and Gordon Tank and Myron Tank will farm the land at St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park.

As part of Washington County's commitment to pollinators, the county is including a provision in the 2018 farmland lease that prohibits the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, which are linked to declines in wild bees and butterflies.

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

Short Elliott Hendrickson will do final design engineering for CSAH 17 in Lake Elmo

Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH) will do the final design engineering for the next phase of the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 17/Lake Elmo Avenue road project, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$148,700 amendment to the company's original project contract Nov. 28.

Washington County has partnered with the City of Lake Elmo to coordinate improvements to the Lake Elmo Avenue (CSAH 17) corridor. The project includes installation of sanitary sewer and water main, reconstruction of roadways, and stormwater management.

The next phase of the project is work on CSAH 17 from CSAH 10 (10th Street North) to 600 feet south of 30th Street North, through the residential area of Lake Elmo east and south of the city. The project will improve operations and safety along the corridor and improve pavement quality and life while accommodating current and future traffic.

The project will be paid for with highway state aid funds. Construction is expected next summer.

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

County Board adopts 2018 legislative agenda

The Washington County Board of Commissioners adopted a 2018 legislative agenda Nov. 28. Each year, the County Board adopts position statements on state legislative issues that impact Washington County. The county's legislative agenda includes priority items that are specific to county interests. The platform items list a position statement, supporting information, likely supporters and potential opposition, and the financial impact. This year's platform includes positions related to state and federally mandated programs, transportation and transit issues, parks funding,

election improvements, licensing fees, funding for local public health and aquatic invasive species prevention, data practices, housing, and taxation.

The county legislative agenda will include the adopted platforms from the Association of Minnesota Counties and the Minnesota Inter-County Association.

Contact: Molly O'Rourke, Administrator, 651-430-6002