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

Date: July 3, 2018
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the July 3, 2018, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board approves plat in Denmark Township

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a 14-lot plat in Denmark Township July 3.

Laws Valley View Addition is north of 131st Street Court South, east of Mary Avenue South, and southwest of Highway 61.

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

Appointments made for canvassing boards for primary, general elections

Washington County commissioners will serve on canvassing boards for the state primary and general elections later this year. The County Board made the appointments July 3.

A canvassing board is required by state law, which also sets out the membership. The county canvassing board consists of the county auditor, the court administrator of the district court, the mayor or chair of the town board of the county's most populous municipality, and two members of the county board selected by the board from its members who are not candidates at the election.

Three members constitute a quorum.

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The Primary Election will be Aug. 14, and the canvass board will meet to canvass those results Friday, Aug. 17. Commissioners Gary Kriesel, District 3, and Lisa Weik, District 5, will serve on that canvassing board.

The general election will be Nov. 6 and the canvass board will meet to canvass those results Thursday, Nov. 15. The canvass board will meet at noon Thursday, Nov. 15, in conference room Lower Level 12 of the Washington County Government Center in Stillwater. Commissioners Jack Lavold, District 4, and Fran Miron, District 1, will serve on the county general election canvass board.

Contact: Jennifer Wagenius, Property Records and Taxpayer Services Director, 651-430-6182

County Board supports Forest Lake Safe Routes to School application

The City of Forest Lake is applying for a Safe Routes to School grant for a Highway 97/Goodview Avenue pedestrian grade separation project, and the Washington County Board of Commissioners offered a letter of support for the project July 3.

The grant would pay for the installation of an underpass for pedestrians to cross Highway 97 under the west leg of the Highway 97 and Goodview Avenue/Eighth Street intersection. The underpass would tie into the existing trail on the northwest corner and include connections to the existing trail on the southwest corner and also a connection along Highway 97 to the west where the trail currently ends. The improvement will provide safer access to the schools and a greater trail network for pedestrians and bicyclists in the city.

The trail will close a gap in the existing trail network and will link to the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail. The improvements are consistent with the Washington County's plans.

Contact: Wayne Sandberg, County Engineer and Deputy Public Works Director, 651-430-4339

Washington County will increase wheelage tax starting next year

The Washington County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved increasing the county-wide wheelage tax July 3 to \$20 per vehicle starting in January 2019.

The wheelage tax is a "user fee," meaning that those who use the roads pay for the benefit. With the increased tax, the county would have enough money from the wheelage tax to maintain the current

roadways in the county, and then be able to use money from the state for road construction and expansion.

The tax is collected when license plate tabs are renewed. Proceeds are used for road and bridge repair within the county. More than 60 miles of roads in the county have been improved with wheelage tax revenue since 2007. Beginning in January 2018, counties were given the authority to raise the fee up to \$20 per vehicle. Motorcycles, mopeds, trailers, and non-motorized campers are excluded.

The wheelage tax will generate approximately \$4.4 million annually that all stays in Washington County to improve the road system. Use of the wheelage tax has eliminated the need to raise the property tax to fund pavement preservation on county roads.

State and local revenue for road maintenance and improvements has not kept pace with the county's project needs, and costs are increasing. The revenue from the wheelage tax can be used on any county roadway without restrictions imposed by the state.

Travel on county roads continues to increase, up 12.5 percent since 2013. Construction materials costs have increased 22.8 percent since 2009, and labor costs have increased 17 percent.

Contact: Wayne Sandberg, County Engineer and Deputy Public Works Director, 651-430-4339