



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

Date: Nov. 26, 2019
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Nov. 26, 2019, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board accepts awards for county's annual financial report, budget presentation

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted two awards Nov. 26, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award for the county's 2017 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), and the GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the county's 2019 budget.

This is the 33rd consecutive year the county has received the CAFR award. The award is intended to recognize and encourage excellence in financial reporting by state and local governments. In Minnesota, 18 of the state's 87 counties received the certificate of achievement. Nationally, 547 of the country's 3,031 counties received the certificate of achievement.

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 when the county issues bonds.

The County Board also received the GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the county's 2019 Budget. The 2019 award marks the 22nd consecutive year of receiving the award. To receive the award, the 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. To receive the award, the county

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document 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 board also reviewed the 2018 financial information for the annual newspaper insert, which contains financial summary information required by the state. The financial statement shows that the county maintains almost five months of expenditures in the all governmental funds. The county will publish its financial statement in the Stillwater Gazette and the Forest Lake Times, showing the county's 2018 revenue and expenses, fund financial statements, and disbursement of county funds of more than \$5,000.

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



The Washington County Board of Commissioners received the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award for the county's 2017 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report Nov. 26. The board is with the staff of the county's Department of Accounting & Finance, including, in front with plaque, Tabatha Hansen, director, and Carl Jacobson, principal accountant.



The Washington County Board of Commissioners received the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the county's 2019 budget Nov. 26. With the award are Commissioner Weik, District 5, Commissioner Wayne Johnson, District 4, Shannon Gamble, Office Specialist, Commissioner Fran Miron, District 1, Janna Oman, budget/financial analyst, Commissioner Gary Kriesel, District 3, Larry Phillips, budget/financial analyst, and Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2.

Taphorn receives achievement award for work at CDA

Melissa Taphorn, deputy executive director of the Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA), has received the Minnesota Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) Outstanding Achievement Award because of her affordable housing and leadership accomplishments over the last year at the CDA.

Taphorn was recognized by the Washington County Board of Commissioners for her award Nov. 26. Taphorn is responsible for administering the agency's housing finance programs, including the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program as a sub-allocator, the Community Development Block Grant

Program, and the Home Investment Partnerships program, as well as the agency's gap financing program called the GROW program.

The Minnesota Outstanding Achievement Award was established in 1985 to recognize an individual member of the chapter who, in their housing and or community development career, has had outstanding achievements during the past year, and shows promise of continued success.

Because of Taphorn's expertise the agency has:

- awarded 100% of its tax credit allocation for the last six years, creating an average production of 45 units of workforce housing every two years;
- significantly improved the agency's Qualified Allocation Plan to incent longer-term affordability on tax credit applications;
- authored the agency's new income averaging policy after reaching out to advocacy groups and private developers for their input;
- underwritten more than 550 units of affordable senior housing;
- received no findings on the most recent CDBG and HOME Program audit; and
- received positive reviews and no findings on the HUD Counseling Agency for the last program year.

Taphorn's application for the award was supported by her colleagues in other jurisdictions, as well as nonprofit and private partners, and Taphorn's staff.

CDA Executive Director Barbara Dacy said, "I rely on her expertise on a host of issues from development financing, to grant administration and compliance, and homeownership issues. Her passion and devotion to our industry, her commitment to self-improvement as a leader, and her record of accomplishment lead me to say: All signs point to 'promise of continued success.'"



Melissa Taphorn, deputy executive director of the Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA), was honored by the Washington County Board of Commissioners Nov. 26 for receiving the Minnesota Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials Outstanding Achievement Award. Shown are commissioners Lisa Weik, District 5, Gary Kriesel, District 3, and Wayne Johnson, District 4, Taphorn, Commissioner Fran Miron, District 1, Barbara Dacy, CDA executive director, and Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2.

Marine Library will receive \$6,000 from Jordan bequest

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed Nov. 26 to provide the City of Marine on St. Croix with \$6,000 from the Jordan bequest to be used for materials and services at the Marine Community Library.

In 2001, Elizabeth Jordan made a bequest in her will to the Washington County Library to be used for the Marine Library branch. In 2012, an agreement was reached between the City of Marine and the county that, upon request of the city, the county would disburse funds from the bequest to support the Marine Community Library. Through a joint powers agreement between the city and the county, the city residents have maintained access to the county library system and continue to pay the county library tax. A separate non-profit organization, the Marine Library Association (MarLA), maintains a small community library, which includes privately-purchased materials, as well as materials and services provided by the county library.

This request from the city follows directives related to disbursements made to the Jordan bequest as specified in the joint powers agreement.

Contact: Amy Stenftenagel, Library Director, 651-275-8521

Watershed management organization to receive money in lieu of phosphorous mitigation

Washington County will pay the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) \$118,720 as a cash-in-lieu payment for the South Third Street reconstruction project completed in Stillwater in 2018 to assist with lessening the phosphorous runoff into the St. Croix River.

The County Board agreed to the payment Nov. 26.

County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 23, or South Third Street in Stillwater, was reconstructed in 2018. The reconstruction project included new concrete pavement, revised curb lines, improved parking areas, underground utilities, a new retaining wall, and subgrade improvements.

As part of this project, the MSCWMO required storm water runoff treatment. The primary goal of the requirement is to reduce phosphorus in the runoff that eventually makes it way to the St. Croix River. However, with this project, given the steep grades, the fully-developed downtown area, including several historic properties, and the presence of shallow bedrock in some areas, the project team was not able to meet the minimum treatment standards as required.

Working with the watershed, the county identified an alternative to meet the requirements and obtain a permit, which would allow the project to move forward. The county became a cost-share partner in

a different project nearby that significantly improved overall water quality in the region that will reduce the phosphorous deposited in the St. Croix River. This represented a net overall benefit to the region and more than offset the original requirements related to the Third Street project.

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

Sheriff's Office will receive money from county's fund balance for equipment

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will receive \$46,125 from the county's Public Safety Radio Fund to purchase a new vehicle and a precision instrument.

The County Board approved the fund transfer Nov. 26.

The Sheriff's Office needs to purchase a new vehicle for use by the Public Safety Systems Manager.

The current vehicle assigned is a 2008 Crown Victoria with 160,000 miles, which has been experiencing issues with the transmission and is in need of replacement. The new vehicle would be a Ford Explorer for \$32,920. The Sheriff's Office plans to use \$10,000 from its adopted fleet capital budget to pay for a portion of the vehicle.

In addition, the Sheriff's Office will also use \$23,205 from the Public Safety Radio Fund to purchase a portable instrument used to check and analyze antenna systems at tower sites, to map radio system coverage, and to locate sources of radio interference. This instrument may also be used to troubleshoot antenna problems in squad cars, making it useful for the fleet vehicle technician as well. The quoted price of \$23,205 is for a factory refurbished unit, which is 25% off list price.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

County Board reviews Community Corrections' comprehensive plan

The Washington County Board of Commissioners reviewed a recommended comprehensive plan for the Department of Community Corrections Nov. 26.

The county's Community Corrections Advisory Board prepared and requested the approval of the Comprehensive Plan for 2020-2021. The plan is a state requirement, and is used by the Commissioner of Corrections to determine if the county is providing services that comply with the state's Community Corrections Act.

The county's Community Corrections Advisory Board is made up of members of law enforcement, prosecution, the judiciary, education, corrections, ethnic minorities, social services, and a lay citizen. The report noted crime trends in the county for 2017. The Part I crime rate, the more serious crimes, increased slightly in 2017. Overall, the 10-year trend remains down in this category. The Part II crime rate, those that are less serious, increased slightly in 2017. Overall, the 10-year trend remains flat. Disorderly conduct offenses account for the largest number of Part II crimes in Washington County. Some of the strategic plan highlights include peer support for employees who experience adverse work situations, the completion of a recidivism outcome study for clients using Dosage Probation, and review of technology that enhances the safety of victims of domestic violence. Goals of the department are to reduce recidivism, facilitate behavior change, assist clients in meeting the expectations of the court, and create pathways for clients to re-enter the community.

Contact: Terry Thomas, Interim Community Corrections Director, 651-430-6951

County's Board sets commissioner salaries for 2020

The Washington County Board of Commissioners set salaries for the commissioners for 2020 Nov. 26.

The 2019 salary for Washington County Commissioners is \$69,000, and based on a review of several factors, the County Administrator recommended that the 2020 salary for county commissioners be increased by 2.5%, to \$70,725. This is the same amount that was bargained for all employees.

State law requires that the County Board set salaries, benefits, and expense reimbursement for its members prior to Jan. 1 of the effective year.

County policy establishes guidelines to be considered when setting salaries for the county commissioners, such as the salaries and per diems paid by metropolitan counties and similar-sized counties, the wage increases approved through county union bargaining agreements, and the salary increases approved by the state compensation council for legislators, judges, heads of state, and metropolitan agencies.

The policy directs that, unless decided otherwise by the board, the salary for the office of county commissioner should increase each year by the same amount as the general adjustment approved for

the majority of county employees in the union bargaining agreements. The general adjustment for 2020 is 2.5%.

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County Board sets salaries for attorney, sheriff, administrator

The Washington County Board of Commissioners set salaries for 2020 for two elected officials and the county administrator Nov. 26.

The County Board set the salaries of:

- Attorney Pete Orput, at \$187,365, a 4% increase;
- Sheriff Dan Starry, at \$168,033, a 4% increase; and
- Administrator Molly O'Rourke, at \$192,158, a 4% increase.

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