



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

Date: Nov. 16, 2021
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Nov. 16, 2021, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County will provide employee vaccine incentive program, add sick leave for vaccinations

Washington County employees will receive a \$500 incentive to get vaccinated against COVID-19, and will have up to 16 hours of sick leave available to them, should they need it to receive and recover from vaccination.

The County Board approved the actions Nov. 16.

The federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) published its emergency temporary standard (ETS) on COVID-19 vaccination and testing, which applies to employers with more than 100 employees. Under the proposed ETS, employers, including the county, would be required to either implement a mandatory vaccination program, or a voluntary vaccination with mandatory weekly testing program for all employees by Jan. 4, 2022. While numerous lawsuits have been filed to prevent or delay the implementation of the vaccination mandate, regardless of the outcome of those efforts, it is in the best interest of Washington County to encourage as many employees as possible to be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus.

A vaccination incentive program that leads to additional staff becoming vaccinated would reduce the county costs of a testing program, if required; reduce lost work time from illness and/or isolation required because of exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual; and allow the county to continue to staff essential county operations.

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

Contact: Angie Nalezny, Human Resources Director, 651-430-6075

County approves collective bargaining agreement with LELS

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a bargaining agreement with Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS) Local #214 Deputy Sheriff Unit Nov. 16 for the year ending Dec. 31, 2021.

The county's tentative agreement with the Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS) Local #214 Deputy Sheriff Unit and specific items were awarded by an arbitrator, with the following terms:

- a one-year contract in effect from Jan. 1, 2021, through Dec. 31, 2021;
- on the first pay period following the effective date of the contract, a one-time 2% lump sum of salary will be paid;
- on the first pay period following the effective date of the contract, a one-time \$1,000 lump sum will be paid;
- effective Dec. 31, 2021, a 2% market adjustment to the salary range maximum will occur for the job classification; and
- the uniform allowance for 2021 shall be \$880.

The contract also sets out the county's contribution to health insurance premiums.

Contact: Angie Nalezny, Human Resources Director, 651-430-6075

State will resume using Stillwater license center space as a driver exam station

Starting Dec. 1, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety will resume using space in the Stillwater License Center for a driver exam station, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an agreement with the department Nov. 16.

The Department of Public Safety, Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) has historically used space within the Stillwater License Center for a driver exam station. That activity ceased at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. DVS is now planning to resume services at the Stillwater License Center and has requested a lease agreement for the space for two days a week. The term of the lease is five years, starting Dec. 1, and continuing through Nov. 30, 2026, with an option to renew for an additional two years.

Allowing DVS to use the space provides residents with a convenient local access to driver exam services.

The county provides this space to the state at no cost.

Contact: Debra Ledvina, Property Records and Taxpayer Services Director, 651-430-6182

AMI Consulting Engineers will design St. Croix Bluffs boat launch improvements

AMI Consulting Engineers will design the St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park boat launch improvements, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$199,850 contract with the company Nov. 16.

St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park provides public access to the nationally-recognized wild and scenic St. Croix River via the boat launch. The bottom of the existing boat launch has a steep slope that is susceptible to erosion and has been scoured from users power-loading their boats. When water levels are low, users have a hard time launching their boats with the steep slope and boat trailers are bottoming out, causing damage to trailers and axles.

The project will improve the functionality of the launch area, and will:

- replace the bottom portion of the concrete boat launch;
- dredge the harbor and channel;
- resurface the parking lot;
- add a new fishing pier in the harbor with an ADA accessible trail connection from the parking lot; and
- add new vault toilets.

Information from the engineering design will allow the county to prepare plans and bidding documents for the project.

Contact: Andrew Giesen, Engineer II, 651-430-4336

County Board receives report on attempted suspicious financial transaction

The Washington County Board of Commissioners received a report Nov. 16 on an attempted “phishing” effort to redirect a county payment to a fraudulent account.

County staff worked in concert with the county's bank to stop the attempted transaction before there was any loss of funds, Administrator Kevin Corbid reported to commissioners. A criminal investigation was opened by the Sheriff's Office and is on-going. County staff have provided an update to the county's Audit Committee on the steps that have been taken to further protect the county from this type of criminal activity and other cyber attacks, including implementation of technology tools to identify and block phishing attempts, and hiring and training Information Technology staff to monitor threats and take protective measures and train all county staff on how to detect and prevent fraud from occurring.

Contact: Kevin Corbid, Administrator, 651-430-6002