

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

Date: March 22, 2022
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the March 22, 2022, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board makes reappointments to water resource groups

The Washington County Board of Commissioners made reappointments to the South Washington Watershed District and the county's Groundwater Advisory Committee March 22.

Brian Johnson and Kevin Chapdelaine were reappointed to additional three-year terms on the watershed district; the terms will go through May 1, 2025.

The board also reappointed members to the county's Groundwater Advisory Committee. The members will serve terms through Dec. 31, 2024. Members are:

- Brian Zeller, a water management representative;
- Jim Westerman, a municipal government representative;
- Bob Fossum, a citizen representative;
- Brian Johnson, a watershed representative;
- Dave Schulenberg, a well-drilling representative; and
- Elden Lamprecht, an agriculture representative.

Contact: Jennifer Ochocki, Coordinator to the County Administrator, 651-430-6010

County will use portion of American Rescue Plan Act funds for broadband, small business support

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

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed March 22 to update the county's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support additional internet broadband access in county communities, and assist small businesses.

Spending the ARPA funds that the county received is guided by direction from the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Under that guidance, the county changed the scope of the ARPA project plan to include broadband providers under the broadband matching grant program. A number of the areas in the county don't have access to high-speed internet. This program would provide matching funds for city, township, and broadband providers to provide additional services to residents.

An additional project will be added to the ARPA project plan to provide support to small businesses. Washington County will work with the Washington County Community Development Agency to assist small businesses with recovery from the pandemic and help navigate their growth.

The Elevate Business Program is a small business technical assistance program for existing Washington County private business CEOs who are recovering from the pandemic. The program will be learning-based and focused on pandemic recovery through peer-to-peer networking and technical assistance from expert advisors. The county will allocate \$100,000 per year for two years, for a total of up to \$200,000, to this project.

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

County Board endorses presidential proclamation on child abuse prevention month

The Washington County Board of Commissioners endorsed the observance of National Child Abuse Prevention during April 2022 at its meeting March 22.

Each year in April, the President of the United States issues a proclamation to announce National Child Abuse Prevention Month. States and local governments are encouraged to support such proclamations to encourage public awareness of child abuse and neglect, recommit state and local resources to the cause, and promote community involvement through state and local activities.

National Child Abuse Prevention Month is a time to acknowledge the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect, and to promote the social and emotional well-being of children and families. During April, and throughout the year, Washington County encourages all individuals and organizations to play a role in making Washington County a

better place for children and families. Ensuring that parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to care for their children can help prevent child abuse and neglect by creating strong and thriving children, youth, and families in the community.

Research shows that protective factors are present in healthy families. Promoting these factors is among the most effective ways to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect. The factors are:

- nurturing and attachment;
- knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development;
- parental resilience;
- social connections;
- concrete supports for parents; and
- social and emotional competence of children.

The board also thanked and honored all county employees who work every day to help parents and families counter the problem of child maltreatment and abuse. County residents are also urged to use this opportunity to recognize this month by dedicating themselves to the task of improving the quality of life for all children and families.

Contact: Sarah Amundson, Community Services Division Manager, 651-430-6597

County will continue to work with Tree Trust for summer projects

Washington County will continue to work with Tree Trust this summer to provide work for at-risk and low-income youth to do landscaping work in county and city parks and facilities.

The County Board approved a \$120,000 contract with the non-profit March 22.

The county receives funding from state and federal sources to provide employment and training services to dislocated workers, adults, youth, and seniors. One such program is the Summer Youth Employment Program.

Each summer, at-risk and low-income youth are served by providing career readiness training, specialized employment opportunities, and support in achieving educational credentials. Workshops held throughout the summer help youth learn about budgeting, employer expectations, and how education connects to work. In addition, youth work on supervised crews completing landscaping projects that improve the community environment and help build youth competencies. Each crew is

comprised of eight youths led by a crew leader. Costs include youth participant wages, supervision, transportation, equipment, supplies, and more.

Tree Trust has partnered with the county for many years. Tree Trust determines the worksites each summer. Previous worksites have included Pine Tree Pond Park, where a staircase was built, Carver Lake Park, where a trail was built, Lake Elmo Park Reserve, where a boardwalk was built, St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park Reserve, where an amphitheater was built, and more. By participating in these programs, youth gain job skills and increase confidence in their abilities.

Contact: Rick Roy, Workforce & Veteran Services Division Manager, 651-275-8660

Washington County will participate in monarch conservation program

Washington County will participate in the Monarch Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) Program, after the County Board approved participation March 22.

The CCAA program is a voluntary conservation agreement that encourages land managers to adopt conservation measures to benefit the monarch butterfly.

Over the past several years, the population of monarch butterflies has continued to decrease. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has stated that monarch butterflies could be added to the Endangered Species list at any time. Entering into this voluntary program is beneficial for the county in that it enables the county to proactively adopt conservation measures now, so the county is protected against additional regulatory actions that may occur once the monarch butterfly is listed as an endangered species.

The cost of applying for this program is approximately \$5,700, with an annual fee of approximately \$2,100.

Contact: Mindy Leadholm, Right of Way Specialist, 651-430-4361

County will sell fuel to Bayport law enforcement through state contract

Washington County will sell fuel to the City of Bayport for use in law enforcement vehicles through the county's state contract, after the County Board approved an agreement with the city March 22.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office has a contract with the state for the Fixed Fuel Program for participants in the metropolitan area. The city needs to buy 87 octane gasoline to operate its squad

cars and SUVs for law enforcement. The Sheriff's Office will provide up to 650 gallons of gasoline a month to the City of Bayport for \$2.57 per gallon, plus applicable taxes. Any gallons after the designated amount per month will be charged the same amount charged to Washington County by Mansfield Oil.

The contract runs from Feb. 1 through Jan. 31, 2023.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

County Board receives annual report from mosquito control district

Stephen Manweiler, executive director of the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District, delivered an annual overview of the agency's work in Washington County, along with a review of the district's budget to the County Board March 22.

The district provides comprehensive mosquito control, and public education about mosquitoes and mosquito- and tick-borne diseases. It also performs tick-borne disease surveillance and black fly control.

The agency provides both larval control and adult mosquito control. It also monitors the distribution of deer ticks in the metropolitan area and does surveillance of black flies in district streams and controls the flies in major rivers in region, including in the Mississippi.

The 2021 season was one of the driest years since 1986, and so there were fewer mosquitoes and required less mosquito control.

The mosquito control district has a budget of \$19 million for 2022, of which \$1.6 million is levied in Washington County, an increase of almost \$9,000 from the previous year.

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

Engineering plans go ahead for trail in Newport along CSAH 38

TKDA will do final engineering for a multi-use trail segment along County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 38 within the City of Newport, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$189,900 contract with the company March 22.

This section of county highway was re-built in 2003, in conjunction with the Wakota Bridge project, led by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Due to right-of-way challenges at the time,

pedestrian accommodations were not installed in this area leaving a gap in the multi-use trail north and south of the project. Washington County successfully secured \$460,000 in federal grants through the Regional Solicitation program to construct the trail.

Washington County, in partnership with the City of Newport, has completed preliminary engineering and public engagement to identify how to close this trail gap. The Newport City Council supported the design at its July 15, 2021, meeting.

The most recent TDKA contract includes project coordination, final engineering, public engagement, construction plans and specifications, and utility coordination for the project, which is scheduled for construction in 2023.

TKDA was selected for this final engineering phase of this project based on its satisfactory work on the preliminary facets of the project, and the knowledge developed of the corridor, stakeholders, community, city staff, and permitting agencies.

The contract will be funded using highway state aid funds.

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

County Board commits up to \$800,000 for conservation at Mississippi Dunes

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a letter of support for a City of Cottage Grove request for state funds through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and committed up to \$800,000 in matching funds from the Washington County Land and Water Legacy Program for the conservation of 20 acres of the Mississippi area Dunes March 22.

The City of Cottage Grove has requested a letter of support and matching funds for its grant application to the DNR for the Mississippi Dunes land protection project. This is a potential Land and Water Legacy Program project for which the county would receive and hold a permanent conservation easement over the project area for its contribution. The City of Cottage Grove will own and manage the area, and cover the cost of future park infrastructure.

The project is at 10351 Grey Cloud Trail S., Cottage Grove, in southern Washington County on the Mississippi River and Mooers Lake and across the river from the future Grey Cloud Island Regional Park. It is adjacent to a future 12-acre expansion of the nearby DNR's 237-acre Grey Cloud Dunes

Scientific Natural Area and nearby Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. It is south of a proposed 400-plus home development on the other Mississippi Dunes parcels.

The Cottage Grove Mississippi River Access Strategy Report identifies the Dunes property as the top priority for public access. According to the Land and Water Legacy Program's criteria, the project is ranked very high overall. It has 1,868 feet of shoreline on its 20 to 26 acres; and ranks very high for habitat quality on the eastern portion dry prairie, and for its multiple wooded sites. Further, it has a unique location next to Grey Cloud Slough, is an important wildlife corridor with core habitat areas; will protect surface water; hosts rare, endangered species; and is located along the Mississippi Flyway for birds and waterfowl. The open and natural character of the property also provides scenic views for the general public from the adjacent Scientific Natural Area, future trails, the river, and planned adjacent housing.

Contact: Jan Lucke, Deputy Administrator, 651-430-6003