

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

Date: June 21, 2022
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the June 21, 2022, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board appoints Rosemark to homelessness prevention committee

Samuel Rosemark was appointed to a first term expiring June 30, 2025, as the District 2 representative on the Family Homelessness Prevention Assistance Program Committee by the Washington County Board of Commissioners.

The appointment was made June 21.

Contact: Holly Hess, Administrative Assistant to the County Board, 651-430-6015

County receives funds for housing support

Washington County will receive \$297,300 over the next two years to support the management of the Housing Support program, emergency shelter planning, and outreach after the County Board accepted the grant from the state Department of Human Services June 21.

The Department of Human Services, through its Community Living Infrastructure Grant, allocated funds to develop community living infrastructure throughout the state to support people with disabilities and housing instability who want to live in the community. Potential activities paid through this program include outreach, housing resource specialists, and funding to administer and monitor the Housing Support Program.

Washington County uses this funding to manage the Housing Support program, and for emergency shelter planning, and outreach services through its Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST).

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The Housing Support Program assists eligible households through financial grants and supportive services to find and maintain independent living in the community of their choice. This contract includes funds for direct household/individual assistance and includes an increase of almost \$36,000 for the biennium.

Contact: Sarah Tripple, Community Services Division Manager, 651-430-6480

County will use HealthPartners donation to enhance community health

Washington County will use a \$15,000 donation from HealthPartners to enhance individual and community health, after the County Board accepted the donation June 21.

The county will use the HealthPartners donation to support the HOPE, or Healthy Opportunities for Everyone through Equity, project. HOPE is a health equity data-driven project designed to identify areas within Washington County where residents are experiencing poor health outcomes. Activities are organized into three phases: Phase 1 includes mapping social determinants within the county; Phase 2 is finding lived experience of residents experiencing poor health outcomes; and Phase 3 is identifying priorities for action.

The donation from HealthPartners will be used to fund project ideas generated in the planning phase to advance health equity and improve the health of those Washington County residents experiencing health disparities.

Contact: Rebecca Leighton, Public Health Program Supervisor, 651-430-6786

K9 retires from Sheriff's Office

Ownership of K9 Vader from the Sheriff's Office was transferred to his handler, Sgt. Allen Degel, by the Washington County Board of Commissioners June 21.

It is common practice for working K9s to be transferred to their handlers once the K9s retire.

The Sheriff's Office retired K9 Vader from active duty June 3. Vader served until the age of seven, with his handler Allen Degel, who was promoted to the rank of sergeant in 2021. Degel has agreed to accept ownership, liability, and medical care for Vader during his retirement at no cost to the county. Vader had many successes and the Sheriff's Office thanked him for his dedicated service and wished him the best in retirement.

Contact: Laura Perkins, Law Enforcement Public Information Officer, 651-430-7994

County recognizes child care provider of the year



Margie Lapinski, third from right, with the County Board and some of her charges and their parents, was recognized as the 2022 Washington County Child Care Provider of the Year June 21.

Margie Lapinski was recognized as the Washington County Child Care Provider of the Year June 21. Each year, Washington County recognizes family child care providers for excellence in providing at-home child care. Individuals in the community nominate providers and the applications are reviewed by an ad hoc committee comprised of Washington County Child Care Council members. Once the nominations are reviewed, the committee submits the chosen individual to the Washington County Community Services Child Care Licensing Program.

Lapinski runs Margie's Daycare in Woodbury, providing care to the children of the community since 2010; however, she was providing child care to young children since 1992, when she was first licensed with Ramsey County.

Lapinski is Four Star Rated by Parent Aware. She is also in the process of obtaining her Child Development Associate certificate, which is obtained after taking much coursework in child development and is expected to have it completed within the month.

Lapinski has a structured infant/toddler and preschool curriculum in her program and encourages imagination and creativity in her young learners. She also spends a lot of time outside with children where they run through the sprinkler and play with water balloons.

When Lapinski was nominated, the parent shared her appreciation for the care their child receives. The parents stated, “She is truly one of the kindest and most caring people I’ve ever met and that shows in her individual attention to each child.”

The County Board publicly acknowledge the achievement and success of at-home child care providers in Washington County and recognized Lapinski as a provider who stood out in her career as an early childhood educator and caregiver over the last year.

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

Housing grant request amended to add American Rescue Plan Act funds

The Washington County Board of Commissioners amended the county’s 2021 Annual Action Plan for the HOME Investment Partnership Program American Rescue Plan June 21, to include American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

After the grant request is prepared, it will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

ARPA provides for additional funding to the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) and designated as “HOME-ARP” funds. Washington County has been allocated \$1.4 million in additional funding through its housing consortium. Once approved, applications will open to provide supportive services for the HOME-ARP qualifying populations. They are:

- homeless;
- at risk of homelessness;
- victims of domestic violence;
- other populations requiring services to prevent homelessness; and
- veterans, if they also qualify in one of the four criteria listed above.

The housing consortium also moved \$362,653 to a rental development project in Washington County for the acquisition and rehabilitation of a duplex that will be done through the Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties, or CAP Agency.

Contact: Karly Schoeman, Community Development Agency Deputy Executive Director, 651-458-6556

JL Theis Inc. will replace signals, construct trail at I-694, CSAH 14

JL Theis Inc. will replace traffic signals and build a trail connection at Interstate 694 and County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 14 after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$1.7 million contract with the company June 21.

The project will include the replacement of the signal at CSAH 14 and both I-694 ramp intersections, and add Flashing Yellow Arrows (FYA) for left turns. The project will also fill in a gap in the trail along CSAH 14 from Hadley Avenue to east of the I-694 ramps.

This project was identified as a high-priority project in the MOVE Washington County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and, when completed, will allow for dedicated non-motorized travel on a continuous trail along the south side of CSAH 14 from Granada Avenue to Ideal Avenue.

Funding will come from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the City of Oakdale, and Washington County highway state aid funding.

Contact: Mitch Bartelt, Engineer II, 651-430-4349

County Board proclaims July as Park and Recreation Month in county parks, trails

The Washington County Board of Commissioners proclaimed July as Park and Recreation Month in the county June 21, and proclaimed the first non-holiday Tuesday of every month a Free Tuesday, waiving the vehicle permit required to enter Washington County parks.

Washington County has eight parks, two regional trails, one conservation area, and the Historic Courthouse, which is managed as a park. They span 4,773 acres of public land, and received 2 million visits in 2021. The parks are the setting for a range of recreational activities, including camping at Lake Elmo Park Reserve and St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park. Several of the parks are also home to beaches

and a swim pond at Lake Elmo Park Reserve. The parks host a number of events throughout the year, including star watch events, the Bluegrass Festival, and hiking and paddleboarding, among others. Equity initiatives include adding an equity coordinator position to the parks staff, adding a “parks-on-the-go” vehicle to introduce parks programs around the county, rental equipment for paddling programs, and accessibility improvements.

The parks staff also works with partners throughout the county to restore and protect the natural resources in the parks. For example, 100 acres of prairie was restored at Lake Elmo Park Reserve between fall 2021 and spring 2022.

Park and Recreation month will bring an awareness about the parks and trails available in Washington County. They are important to establish and maintain the quality of life in the county by contributing to the health of residents and to the economy and environmental well-being. This can lead to preventing chronic disease and provide recreational services to those who are mentally or physically disabled, and can also help improve their mental and emotional health.

Parks and recreation programs increase the county’s economic prosperity through increased property values, tax base expansion, increased tourism, reduced crime, and business retention and attraction. Parks and natural recreation areas improve water and air quality and provide wildlife habitat. They also ensure the ecological beauty of the county and provide a place to connect with nature and outdoor recreation.

Contact: JJ Williams, Parks Guest Services Supervisor II, 651-430-8245