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Date: Sept. 6, 2022
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Sept. 6, 2022, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board makes appointments to citizen advisory boards

The Washington County Board of Commissioners made several appointments to citizen advisory boards Sept. 6.

Appointments to the Library Board are:

- Sarah Jansen, Lake Elmo, appointed to a partial term expiring Dec. 31, 2023, as the District 3 representative; and
- Kathleen Fink, Woodbury, appointed to a partial term expiring Dec. 31, 2022, as an at-large representative.

In addition, Clark Schroeder was appointed to a partial term expiring Dec. 31, 2024, as a family member representative on the Mental Health Advisory Committee, and Erik Nimlos was appointed to a partial term expiring Dec. 31, 2023, as the hydrogeology representative on the Groundwater Advisory Committee.

Contact: Holly Hess, Administrative Assistant, 651-430-6015

County Board approves lawful gambling application for Carpenter nature center

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an application Sept. 6 for an Exempt Permit of Minnesota Lawful Gambling received from Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center to conduct a raffle at the nature center in Denmark Township Sept. 11.

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State law requires the approval of off-site gambling applications by the County Board for events when they are in townships. After board approval, the application is sent to the Minnesota State Gambling Board for its consideration.

Contact: Christine Piskura, Taxpayer Services & Election Division Manager, 651-430-8272

County Board approves pulltab application for Yellow Ribbon event

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an application from the Bayport American Legion Post 491 Sept. 6 to conduct an off-site gambling pull-tab booth during the Yellow Ribbon Randy Kopesky Veterans Event at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Baytown Township Sept. 17.

State law requires the approval of off-site gambling applications by the County Board for events when they are in townships. After board approval, the application is sent to the Minnesota State Gambling Board for its consideration.

Contact: Christine Piskura, Taxpayer Services & Election Division Manager, 651-430-8272

County Board agrees to use proceeds from tax-forfeited land for parks

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed Sept. 6 to set aside 20% of the proceeds of the sale of tax-forfeited land to be used for buying and maintaining county parks.

The ownership of property that forfeits because of the non-payment of property taxes rests with the State of Minnesota and the county is tasked with the management and disposition of the property.

When a tax-forfeited property is sold to a governmental agency or the public, the proceeds are deposited into the county's tax-forfeited sale fund.

From the net proceeds, the distribution as established in state law is:

- 20% of fund proceeds to the county for acquisition and maintenance of county parks and recreational areas in counties that have passed the appropriate resolution annually; and
- of the remaining funds, 40% is distributed to the county general fund, 40% to the school district, and 20% to the city or township.

The financial implications for the county vary by year, depending on the amount of sale proceeds from tax-forfeited land and maintenance costs.

Contact: Christine Piskura, Taxpayer Services & Election Division Manager, 651-430-8272

County will purchase land along Bailey Road in Woodbury to expand campus

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed to purchase land at 11039 Bailey Road in Woodbury Sept. 6 for the expansion of the public service campus.

The land is next to the county's Public Works South Shop and Environmental Center. The county will pay \$840,150 for the land.

Washington County has been planning for a future public service campus in the southeast corner of Bailey Road, or County State Aid Highway 18, and Cottage Drive for several years. The property east of the Washington County campus property is listed on the market and the county was notified by the owner's representative that it was for sale.

The County Board reviewed the property and recognized the inclusion of this property would benefit the overall operations of the campus, and made an offer and negotiated to purchase the property.

The county agreed to a no-cost lease of the property to the owner for 90 days after closing. The owner shall remain responsible for costs related to utilities, routine maintenance, and insurance during the term of the lease.

Washington County will use a combination of the County Environmental Charge and Public Works fund balance to pay for the purchase of the property. The fund balance amount to be used is a portion of the proceeds from the sale of eight acres near the current campus property to Xcel Energy in 2019.

Contact: Sharon Price, Senior Right-of-Way Specialist, 651-430-4391

Sheriff's Office receives \$3,000 from Walmart for Shop with a Cop

The Washington County Sheriff's Office received \$3,000 from Walmart for its Shop with a Cop program, and the County Board accepted the donation Sept. 6.

Walmart donated \$3,000 to this event, which occurred last December. The event helps build positive relationships between deputies, correctional officers, and children while pairing them to shop together during the holiday season. This ensures the children have a gift to open for Christmas and creates a bonding experience with law enforcement and the communities the Sheriff's Office serves.

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

County Board declares September Workforce Development Month

The Washington County Board of Commissioners proclaimed September as Workforce Development Month Sept. 6.

The month is a time to honor workforce development leaders and staff across Minnesota, as well as draw attention to the resources available to those looking for work and to employers who need workers.

Workforce development professionals throughout the state are working to connect all Minnesotans who need work with employment and to help employers reach often-overlooked labor pools.

The board approved a resolution in accordance with Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz authorizing September 2022 as Workforce Development Month.

The resolution noted that investment in the education, training, and career advancement of Minnesota's workforce is crucial to the ability of the state to compete in the global economy and to achieve economic equity, and that engaging all Minnesotans who need to work in the labor force in a meaningful way and providing fulfilling employment is critical to the strength of Minnesota's employers, industries, residents, and communities. The resolution also noted that by 2025, one in four Minnesotans will be from a community of color or indigenous population, and that bringing all Minnesotans who need sustainable wage employment into the workforce will help address employment and economic disparities based on race, disability, age, veteran status, national origin, or justice involvement.

At the same time, there will be unprecedented changes in the state demographics between 2015 and 2035, including more than a half-million people reaching age 65, causing a decline in the working-age population from 62% to 57%, meaning employers and Minnesota's workforce development system must work together to create an inclusive workforce where all are welcome as all sectors require workers with in-demand skills to meet the needs of businesses and communities.

The members of Minnesota's workforce development system, including industry partners, workforce development entities, education, labor, and community-based organizations are critical to prepare a workforce to meet the labor needs.

The Washington County CareerForce works to engage customers, achieve equity, and focus on flexibility to provide the tailored resources to help meet the needs of all Minnesota employers and Minnesotans seeking employment.

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

County Board recognizes September as National Preparedness Month

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized September as National Preparedness Month Sept. 6.

National Preparedness Month creates an opportunity for every resident of Washington County to prepare their homes, businesses, and communities for emergencies, including natural disasters. Investing in disaster preparedness can help save lives and reduce economic devastation. All residents are urged to make preparedness a priority and work together as a team to ensure that individuals, families, and communities are prepared for disasters and emergencies.

The theme for 2022 is “A Lasting Legacy, The life you’ve built is worth protecting. Prepare for disasters to create a lasting legacy for you and your family.”

Emergency preparedness includes planning, training, exercises, and outreach. Projects around the county paid for with federal dollars for mitigation were noted, spanning \$3.2 million across the county.

Personal preparedness is also stressed, for residents to have an emergency kit available, as well as a communications plan and a financial plan. Preparedness can include being aware of the weather and staying tuned to weather communications.

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

County Board continues review of 2023 budgets

The Washington County Board of Commissioners continued reviewing recommendations for the county’s 2023 budget Sept. 6.

The board received the overall budget recommendations Aug. 2. The recommended budget would be supported by the county’s net levy, as well as non-levy revenue sources. Under the budget recommendations, the county net levy would increase 4.9% over 2022, to \$126.6 million, and non-levy revenue would be \$108.3 million, a decrease of 18.6% from 2022.

The board heard recommendations for budgets for the county’s Library, Law Library, and Property Records and Taxpayer Services Department Sept. 6.

As in nearly all counties, property owners in Washington County have experienced increased property values from the rise in sales prices, especially for residential properties. The median value of a home in the county went up about 20% between 2021 and 2022. The recommended levy combined with the rising valuations results in the county's tax rate decreasing by 13.9%.

Should the recommended budget and levy be approved, the median valued home in the county, which is \$386,500, assuming that its value increased by 20% in the past year, would be taxed \$910 for 2023 by the county, a \$46 or 5.4% increase over 2022.

After reviewing the recommended budgets, the County Board will set a proposed levy and adopt a proposed budget for 2023 Sept. 27; after the proposed levy is set, it may be reduced but not raised in the final budget, which will be approved Dec. 13.

An evening public budget meeting will occur at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6, in the Board Room of the Government Center in Stillwater. The public is invited to attend to comment on the 2023 budget.

The budget workshops may be viewed through webstreaming of the County Board meetings. See the county website at www.co.washington.mn.us and search "County Board." See budget materials on the same website by searching "budget."