



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

Date: April 23, 2024
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the April 23, 2024, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota.

County Board recognizes exemplary performance by county staff

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized county staff April 23 for exemplary performance with the county's annual Employee Recognition Awards.

The awards recognize employees in the categories of customer service; diversity, equity, and inclusion; employee engagement; innovation; teamwork; and excellence in county government. Employees are nominated by their peers, and nominations are reviewed by an employee review committee. Final recipients are approved by the County Board's Personnel Committee.

The employees recognized and their category of recognition are:

Customer Service – Kristine Krawczewski, Senior Service Representative, Property Records and Taxpayer Services

Kristine Krawczewski exemplifies quality and dedicated customer service with many acts of kindness and going the extra mile. Whether working with patrons applying for or renewing passports, renewing tabs, and taking payment for taxes, Krawczewski treats customers with dignity and patience, even in the face of frustration.

Krawczewski is an approachable ally in what can be a confusing passport application process and turns what may begin as a negative experience into a positive one. She consistently goes above and beyond her duties to help guide visitors to the Forest Lake Service Center to the department they are searching for.

Krawczewski's dedication to customer service not only speaks to her character but truly models the county's mission, vision, and values.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Elena Schewe, Parks Equity Coordinator, Public Works

As the Parks Equity Coordinator, Elena Schewe has worked to increase park access and advocate for historically underserved communities.

Outreach efforts have resulted in events like the partnership with South Washington Community Education to bring a group of adult English Language Learners to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park for a guided hike and bonfire. All but one of these students had never been to the park. Schewe was integral to the Connect events, a series of free get-togethers in the parks that are open to everyone with the goal of welcoming Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) into outdoor spaces.

Schewe and Parks leaders are also working to increase access for residents with different ability levels, with two new all-terrain wheelchairs now available for use at Lake Elmo Park Reserve and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.

Schewe is actively reducing barriers to county services and building a vibrant community that practices engagement, representation, and service to all members inclusively and equitably with dignity and respect.

Employee Engagement – Rebecca Leighton, Public Health Program Supervisor, Public Health & Environment

In her position as Public Health Program Supervisor in Public Health & Environment, Rebecca Leighton is the supervisor of the Healthy Communities team. The team focuses heavily on community partnerships and relationship building, which requires a great deal of technical and relational support. Leighton is excellent in both categories. She responds quickly and effectively on technical matters, such as contract requests and facilitating meetings with Minnesota Department of Health and other stakeholders.

She treats her team as competent professionals and allows each person to shine with their unique sets of skills, expertise, and interests. Leighton sets a good example as the team leader for building trust and

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communication during team meetings and on special projects. Her team members thrive independently, while always being able to approach Leighton as a colleague, advocate, and friend. Rebecca is an outstanding model of employee engagement.

Innovation – Charlie Parent, Senior Engineer Technician, Public Works

As a Senior Engineer Technician in Public Works, Charlie Parent works tirelessly to improve processes with GIS spatial data and mapping. He is an emerging leader in State-Wide GIS data management sharing his techniques and experience to help other counties develop similar systems.

One example of this work was Parent's effort to create and support a GIS database to catalog over 15,000 County Highway signs with information like type, date installed, and quality. This database allows staff to efficiently assess and replace highway signs as necessary to keep county roads safe corridors for travel. Beyond his work with GIS, Parent took on the role of Public Works' IT Technician. In this role, Parent has made several significant improvements that have helped the department run more efficiently, reduced downtime, and saved taxpayer money.

Parent's drive to continuously improve processes makes him an incredible asset to the Public Works Department and Washington County who is worthy of an Employee Innovation Award.

Teamwork – Jail Decision Points Program Team: Correctional Officer Denise Eichten, Correctional Officer Sergeant Kevin Madigan, Community Corrections Supervisor Sharon Currier, Evidence Based Practices Coordinator David Fink, and Probation Officers Kelly Albrecht, Jeunai Boche, Scott Dawson, Erik Hansen, Maggie Heller, Brian Hibbs, Adam Johnson, Sufian Kalil, Brenda Liebsch, Jack Lutz, Susan Morrow, Jessica Reeves, Jennifer Rice, Jessica Rumpel, Meghan Quinn, Scott Wahl, Olivia Wilkins

This group brought Community Corrections' Decision Points program to the County Jail.

Since 2016, Community Corrections and the Sheriff's Office have collaborated to bring valuable cognitive skills programming to individuals serving jail sentences. Community Corrections generally delivers these classes that teach problem-solving skills and restructuring of problematic thinking patterns. This type of programming is known to reduce rates of reoffending by 25–30%.

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With the adoption of the Decision Points program, the county had a flexible program perfect for the jail setting. Decision Points helps participants master four decision making skills and avoid falling into “trouble cycles” where one decision creates compounding problems.

Delivering this program two days per week takes the dedication of many people. Jail Program Coordinator Denise Eichten has been the cornerstone of this partnership. She coordinates enrollment and has participated as a co-facilitator of every group since the partnership began. Cognitive Skills Program Manager Erik Hansen ensures participants receive proper credit on their probation. This partnership also relies on the many probation officers who volunteer to co-facilitate the groups and provide inmates with this valuable program alongside Denise.

Since implementing the program, 163 inmates have graduated from Decision Points. Once released, these inmates can apply what they learned, increasing their ability to reenter society successfully.

Excellence in County Government

Julie Sorrem, Risk and Benefit Manger, Human Resources

Julie has worked for Washington County since 1997, all of that time in positions related to Risk Management and Employee Safety. In 2019, in addition to her Risk and Safety program management role, she took on management and administration of the county’s Employee and Retiree Benefits Program. As Risk & Benefits Manager, Julie provides leadership, guidance and support to staff and management on a wide variety of complex risk management and benefit programs. Over the years, Julie has built trusted relationships with every Washington County department for both routine and special projects. She is detail-oriented, diligent, and puts in extra effort and time to accomplish tasks. Julie carries out the county’s vision and mission in all parts of her daily work. She has the highest commitment and dedication to the county and always keeps in mind that we exist to serve our residents and clients.

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Sergeant Chris Howard, Sergeant Matt Wieland, and Public Safety Administrative Technician Courtney Schroeder, Sheriff's Office

Sgt. Howard, Sgt. Wieland and Courtney are all members of the Sheriff's Office CORE Wellness Steering Committee. In late 2023, they worked collaboratively to secure a grant for \$20,000 and worked with a third-party clinician vendor to roll out the first ever "Check-up from the neck up" mental health clinician visit for every member of the Sheriff's Office. The program has been successful in opening the door for Sheriff's Office staff to access mental health services in a neutral, stigma-free environment. Because of their work nearly 270 employees attended learning sessions that opened the door for discussions on employee mental health, reduced the stigma of mental health support, and paved the way for easy access to services. These are critical supports for our employees who are navigating human violence daily.

Each of these award winners are also individual contributors to the success of our organization.

Sgt. Howard has dedicated 25 years to serving the public in Washington County. He was hired at the county in November 1999 as a 911 Dispatcher and transitioned to become a patrol deputy in 2004. During his career, he has provided contracted law enforcement services to the City of Scandia, served as a general patrol deputy, worked as a K9 handler to K9 Blaze from 2007 to 2015, and worked as an investigator in the Special Investigations Unit and DEA Task Force until his promotion to Sergeant in 2020. Sgt. Howard is currently assigned to the Drug Task Force, a partnership with local police departments that investigates cases involving the illegal selling, buying, and possession of dangerous drugs or narcotics. The Task Force is also responsible for the prevention and education in the area of drug abuse. Sgt. Howard is dedicated to the Sheriff's Office and the safety of the residents and visitors to the county. He is respected by his peers and our public safety partner agencies.

Sgt. Matt Wieland from the Sheriff's Office was hired as a Deputy Sheriff in 2001. During his career, he has provided contracted law enforcement services to the City of Lake Elmo, served as a general patrol deputy, worked as an advisor for the Washington County Explorer program, and worked as a K9 handler to K9 Agent from 2005 to 2010. In 2010, he was promoted to sergeant and has served in the Civil Unit in the Special Services Division since 2016. Wieland was also a member of the Washington County

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Explorers and Reserve Deputy program during his youth. Sgt. Wieland has recently completed a National Staff and Command College training and is the county's most senior sergeant. He has numerous awards and commendations in his career. He is passionate about all employees' wellness and has contributed greatly to the Sheriff Office's wellness initiatives.

And Courtney Schroeder, Public Safety Administrative Technician in the Civil Unit in the Sheriff's Office was hired as a 911 dispatcher in 2016 and promoted to supervisor in 2020. In 2023, she entered into an office support role in the department. Courtney has been heavily involved in the Sheriff Office's wellness program and has been an integral part of our employee and family appreciation events. She is not only a tremendous employee, but someone who is an ardent supporter of our mission and vision.

Contact: Tina Elam, Communications Manager, 651-430-6004

County Board makes Parks and Open Spaces Commission appointment

The Washington County Board of Commissioners appointed Tammy McColloch to the Parks and Open Space Commission for a partial term expiring on December 31, 2026, as a District 5 representative.

The board made the appointment at its April 23 meeting.

Contact: Megan Carlson, Administrative Assistant, 651-430-6001

County Board approve liquor license applications

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved liquor license applications April 23.

The board approved an application for an Off-Sale Liquor License from Holiday Stationstores LLC, DBA Point Liquors. The premise is located in Denmark Township at 12370 Point Douglas Rd., Hastings, MN 55033.

The board also approved an application for e renewal of an On-Sale and Sunday Liquor License from The Keystone Weddings and Events LLC. The premise is located in May Township at 12169 Keystone Ave. N., Hugo, MN 55038.

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The county processes all liquor licenses for the townships in the county. The county reviews the liability insurance, and the Sheriff's Office, the County Attorney's Office, and the Public Health & Environment Department complete compliance/verification checks.

Those requirements have all been completed for the applications. The applicants' license fees pay for the administrative cost of the county's administration, compliance, and verification checks.

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

Kimley-Horn selected for preliminary designs on Olive Street improvement project

Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. will provide preliminary designs for the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 5 improvement project in Stillwater.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract with the company totaling \$199,901 April 23.

The county has identified improvements to CSAH 5 (Olive Street) from Pine Tree Trail to Owens St., located in Stillwater. In February, Public Works staff received two proposals from qualified firms to perform design services for this improvement project. In collaboration with the City of Stillwater, these proposals were evaluated using the qualification-based selection process with Kimley-Horn being selected.

The scope of work includes:

- Public engagement.
- Wetland delineation.
- Environmental documentation.
- Drainage analysis and design.
- Speed study.
- Cost estimating.
- Creation of a preferred alternative project layout.
- Development of 60% plans.

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Planned use of Road & Bridge Fund Balance and local contributions from the City of Stillwater will be used to fund this contract.

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

Marie Ridgeway LICSW to provide mental health and wellness services for Sheriff's Office

Marie Ridgeway LICSW LLC will provide professional mental health and wellness services to the Washington County Sheriff's Office after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract April 23.

The contract is for the period of May 1, 2024, through April 30, 2025, and not to exceed \$150,000 per year. The county can renew the contract for up to four additional one-year periods.

The Sheriff's Office has identified a need for professional mental health and wellness services from an on-site clinician. Employees in the Sheriff's Office handle a wide range of calls for service and critical incidents that have the potential to have a direct impact on the mental health and wellness of the employees involved. The Sheriff's Office is committed to ensuring that professional resources are readily available.

The contract with Marie Ridgeway LICSW LLC will support of the initiatives and development of the County Occupational Resources for Employees (CORE) Program, which aim to provide a neutral space for employees to process their emotional state of well-being with the help and guidance of a licensed practitioner. The partnership will also help employees build resiliency and coping skills that they can lean on in their personal and professional lives to promote a healthy lifestyle.

Marie Ridgeway LICSW LLC was selected as the best value from three proposals received. The contract will be funded through public safety aid.

Laura Perkins, Law Enforcement Public Information Manager, 651-430-7994

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County holds public hearing to consider changes to Parks rules and regulations

The Washington County Board of Commissioners held a public hearing to consider changes to the rules and regulations for Washington County parks April 23.

The changes outlined in Parks Ordinance #218 include a ban on the use of cannabis/THC, alignment of county rules with MN state law related to the use of e-bikes on bike trails, and an option to obtain a permit to forage for mushrooms and berries.

Parks rules and regulations are routinely reevaluated and updated to provide better services and experience for our park users. Public Works staff led the process to draft Park Ordinance #218, in collaboration with staff from the Sheriff's Office and Attorney's Office.

The Washington County Parks and Open Space Commission provided a motion of support for the proposed revisions to the Washington County Board of Commissioners. A resolution will be prepared for board consideration at a future board meeting.

Contact: Alex McKinney, Parks Director, 651-430-4364

County approves CDA's annual action plan

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the annual action plan for the county's Community Development Agency April 23.

The Community Development Agency (CDA) administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) programs. Each year, the county prepares an annual action plan detailing its intended use of the CDBG and HOME funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The funded activities must address the priorities identified in the 2020-2024 plan. The highest priorities are affordable homeownership and rental housing, public services for homeless and other special need populations, and public infrastructure improvements.

The CDBG/HOME 2024 program year runs from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. The CDA solicited HOME applications for the 2024 Program Year in January. CDA staff and the CDBG Citizen Advisory Committee

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reviewed the four applications received and the funding allocations. The 2024 Annual Action Plan contains those programs and projects that are eligible for funding and meet the funding priorities of the Consolidated Plan. The projects funded by CDGB funding are:

- Woodland Park Rental Rehabilitation for \$142,428 to rehabilitate 184 affordable housing rental units.
- Home Improvement Loan Program for \$294,000 to acquire and rehabilitate 10 affordable housing units.
- Washington County Public Services for \$106,712 to provide homeless prevention to 540 persons.

The projects funded by HOME funding are:

- Two Rivers Community Land Trust for \$230,300 to add 10 affordable housing 10 units.
- Setting aside \$46,210 for Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs).

Additional funds were set aside for the administration of the programs.

A public comment period was held from March 15, 2024, through April 16, 2024. The CDA held a public hearing on the draft plan on April 16, 2024. The plan will now be submitted to HUD to meet the submission deadline, which is currently May 15.

The County Board also amended the 2023 action plans to reallocate funds from a HOME project in 2023 to a HOME project in 2024.

Contact: Karly Schoeman, Washington County CDA Deputy Executive Director, 651-458-6556

County Board approves construction contract, amendment for new service and license center in Woodbury

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a metal panels contract with Berwald Roofing, Inc. and approved an amendment to an existing contract with Kraus-Anderson Construction Company April 23 for the new service and license center being built in Woodbury.

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In October 2022, Washington County entered into a contract with Kraus-Anderson Construction Company for construction management services to oversee the Central Service and License Center project. Proposals for construction management services include costs for firm personnel, a fee for construction management services, and a provision to add General Conditions at the start of construction.

The amendment to Contract No. 15156 with Kraus-Anderson Construction Company, totaling \$396,336, is for the General Conditions for the Central Service and License Center, along with a cost increase for 2024 labor hours, due to a later start date.

General Conditions for each project include construction site security like construction fencing and gates, temporary restroom facilities, temporary office spaces or trailers for firm personnel, temporary construction to separate occupied spaces from construction zones, building permits, and dumpsters for hauling away construction debris, which all are coordinated by the construction management firm. Construction management firms are hired at the same time as the architect to provide cost estimating, to review constructability, and to perform value engineering services. General Conditions are amended to construction management contracts at the start of construction when the size and scope of the project is fully known to avoid additional amendments moving forward. Unused general conditions budget amounts are refunded to the owner at the completion of the project.

The county, in coordination with Kraus-Anderson Construction and Alliance Architects, publicly advertised the Bid Package #3 re-bid for metal panels on Feb. 23, 2024, and on March 26, 2024, and received three proposals. The lowest responsible bid was received from Berwald Roofing Inc. and the contract totals \$1,073,967.

The metal panels contract and general conditions amendment will be funded by Planned Use of Fund Balance and Capital Investment Funding.

Contact: Mandy Leonard, Senior Building Services Project Manager, 651-430-6236

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