

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

Date: May 21, 2024
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the May 21, 2024, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota.

County Board appoints members to Workforce Development Board

The Washington County Board of Commissioners appointed two members to the Workforce Development Board May 21.

The board approved the appointments of:

- Gladys Kumenda-Jassam to a partial term on the Workforce Development Board as a Business Representative starting May 21, 2024 and expiring January 1, 2027.
- Shana Weiss to a partial term on the Workforce Development Board as a Business Representative beginning May 21, 2024 and expiring July 1, 2026.

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

County Board approves pull tab applications for Bayport American Legion Post 491

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved two off-site gambling applications May 21.

The Bayport American Legion Post 491 submitted the off-site gambling applications to conduct pull tab activities at the Washington County Fair from July 31 through August 4 and at the Yellow Ribbon Randy Kopesky Field of Bands event Sept. 21. Both events will be held at the Washington County Fairgrounds located at 12300 N 40th Street, Stillwater, Minnesota in Baytown Township.

Minnesota state law requires County Board approval by resolution of permits for organizations to conduct off-site gambling within townships. The County Auditor reviewed the applications and Bayport

American Legion Post 491 meets the requirements to conduct pull tab activities. The approved applications will now be sent to the State Gambling Board for consideration.

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

County, Metropolitan Council enter grant agreement for Big Marine Park Reserve land acquisition

The Metropolitan Council will reimburse Washington County 75% of the county's costs of purchasing a 247-acre land parcel that will be added to Big Marine Park Reserve.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a grant agreement with the Metropolitan Council authorizing the reimbursement May 21.

In October 2023, the board approved the purchase of the former Kelley Land and Cattle Company parcel, located at the southeast quadrant of County Highway 15 (Manning Ave.) and County Highway 4 (170th St.) in May Township. The total cost to purchase the parcel is \$3,633,845 including recording fees and taxes. The Metropolitan Council Grant Agreement SG-24P1-10-01 reimburses the county funds used to purchase the property up to \$2,725,384.

The grant requires the County to enter into restrictive covenant agreements on the property. These two covenants are standard and have been included in past acquisition grants:

1. The property cannot be sold, encumbered, or conveyed in any way without the written approval of the Metropolitan Council.
2. A permanent easement is established for future regional wastewater conveyance corridors on the property. As a consideration of the Wastewater Facilities Easement, the grant agreement agrees to waive the service availability charge for the property.

The remaining 25% of the costs to purchase the land were funded through the Land and Water Legacy Program funds. This is the first of three phased land purchases. The county will purchase 685 total acres of Kelley land for inclusion in Big Marine Park Reserve.

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

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County recognized for 2024 Minnesota Safety and Health Governor's Safety Award

Washington County received the gold in the annual Governor's Safety Awards, recognizing excellence in workplace safety and health, during the 2024 Minnesota Safety and Health Conference on May 1.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized staff for the award May 21.

Washington County received the award for having a consistent, outstanding record with incident rates that are in the 75th to 89th percentile of the industry's state and national average and having a continuously improving and satisfactory safety program. The Minnesota Safety Council has over 3,800 member organizations.

Since 1934, the annual Governor's Safety Awards program has honored Minnesota companies and organizations that have exceptional safety performance. Applicants are judged on several years of injury data as it compares with their industry's state and national statistics, and on their progress in implementing a comprehensive safety program.

Washington County was one of the 244 employers to be honored through the awards program. In addition, out of the past 33 years, Washington County has received the Governor's Safety Award 32 times.

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

County Board awards two contracts for replacing jail detention door locks

The Washington County Board of Commissioners awarded two contracts for the replacement of jail detention door locks May 21.

The contracts were awarded to Stronghold Industries, Inc. for \$1,142,000 for hardware and Parkos Construction Company for \$200,800 for carpentry.

The Washington County Law Enforcement Center was built in 1993, which includes the county jail. The detention locks in the jail are at the end of their expected life cycle of 25-30 years and require

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replacement. Planning to replace these locks began in 2017. Since then, issues with the locks have become more frequent and lock parts for the aging systems are difficult to obtain. To allow contractors access to repair, jail lockdowns are necessary, negatively affecting jail operations. Additionally, as locks fail, cells cannot be used, reducing the overall capacity of the jail until repairs can be made.

The county advertised a Request for Bids for Jail Detention Door Hardware replacement on March 11 that included two bid packages: 1) Detention Hardware Bid Package and 2) Carpentry Bid Package. Bids were received on April 9. The total amount of both bid packages is \$1,342,800, which is below the county engineer's estimate of \$1,500,000. The project will be funded through Capital Repair Funds and has a total budget of \$1,750,000.

The project construction will begin in October and is expected to be completed in March 2025.

Contact: Erik Jalowitz, Building Services Capital Projects Manager, 651-430-6227

County Board approves new rules and regulations ordinance for county parks

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved changes to the rules and regulations for Washington County parks May 21.

The changes outlined in Parks Ordinance #218 include a ban on the use of cannabis/THC, alignment of county rules with Minnesota 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 board. The board held a public hearing to consider the changes April 23.

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

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Sheriff's Office receives 14 fire suppression devices from Masons

The Washington County Sheriff's Office received 21 fire suppression devices (FSTs) valued at \$14,000 from the Newport Masonic Lodge #118.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted the donation from the Masons May 21.

Patrol deputies can use these valuable tools in response to calls for service involving an active fire. The portable, one-time-use FST is a highly effective, environmentally safe aerosol fire suppression solution. While the fire department responds, deputies can deploy the FST to extinguish flames and reduce heat. In many instances, the deployment of the FST can suppress and even extinguish a fire, and can help prevent re-ignition at recommended concentrations.

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

County Board adopts plan to fund Land and Water Legacy Fund through 2026

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution May 21 allocating \$4.4 million to fund the Land and Water Legacy Program through 2026.

The allocation is comprised of \$3.4 million in 2024 interest earnings and \$1 million in unspent funds from budget year 2023. The funds will support \$4 million in conservation project program needs and \$400,000 in Parks funding needs in the next three years.

Washington County voters approved a \$20 million land and water protection referendum in November 2006. The county has expended \$16.7 million of the funds to complete 46 projects protecting more than 1,300 acres and leveraged nearly \$25 million in partnership funds. The full \$20 million in funds will likely be expended by the end of 2024.

Planning has been underway to renew funding for the program to continue these protection efforts. After reviewing a feasibility study and research from the Trust for Public Lands on a renewed Land and Water Legacy bond referendum for 2024, the county board directed staff to develop other potential funding options to allow the board to target 2026 for a bond referendum to continue funding the program.

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

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