

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

Date: June 25, 2024
Contact: Tina Elam, Communications Manager
Phone: 651-430-6004 (office), 651-592-5989 (after hours)
E-mail: tina.elam@co.washington.mn.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the June 25, 2024, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota.

County libraries renew contract with MNLINK interlibrary loan system

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract renewal with the MNLINK interlibrary loan system June 25.

MNLINK is a statewide Interlibrary Loan (ILL) system supported and managed by the State of Minnesota through Minitex. It allows libraries to supplement their collections by providing broader access to rare, hard-to-acquire, or specialized materials. In 2023, Washington County Library users borrowed over 60,000 items from other libraries using MNLINK.

Earlier this year, MNLINK made a significant upgrade by transitioning to a new software platform with an improved public interface. The contract, effective from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2029, gives the county access to the MNLINK software and logistical support. Under the terms of the agreement, the county agrees to conform to the MNLINK technology requirements, manage the workflow for interlibrary lending, and participate in the MNLINK operations committee.

There is no direct financial commitment as part of the agreement and either party may terminate with a 60-day notice.

Contact: Aubrey Fonfara, Senior Communications Specialist, 651-275-8504

County Board accepts \$4,500 in donations for county parks

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted two donations on behalf of Washington County Parks June 28.

The first is a \$3,500 donation to the Parks Bench Program made by Jeff Severseike and family for the installation of a new steel bench dedicated to Dr. Odean and Arlene Severseike at Point Douglas Park.

The bench program is one of many donation opportunities for individuals and groups to support Washington County Parks. The program allows an individual or group to donate funds to install and maintain a bench to be used on a trail or near a park facility. The bench includes a commemorative plaque.

The Severseike family's bench will be placed at Point Douglas Park in Cottage Grove where the family has spent many days visiting and boating on the river.

The second was a \$1,000 donation from Linda Craig towards the Parks and Trails Pavement Preservation project at Lake Elmo Park Reserve. Craig is a long-time park user and often visits Lake Elmo Park Reserve and rides her bike along the paved trails. Craig requested that the funds be used for paved trails.

Donations from park users over the years have allowed the county to enhance natural areas and improve trails.

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

Sheriff's Office receives six fire suppression devices from Masons

The Washington County Sheriff's Office received six fire suppression devices (FSTs) valued at \$6,000 donated on behalf of St. John's #1 through St. Paul-Macalester #290 Masonic Lodge.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted the donation from the Masons June 25.

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: Doug Anschutz, Chief Deputy Sheriff, 651-430-7846

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Kathy Bischel named 2024 Child Care Provider of the Year

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized Kathy Bischel as Washington County's 2024 Family Child Care Provider June 25.

Bischel has been a dedicated provider to the families of Washington County for over 25 years.

Bischel works to incorporate fun features into her childcare program. She provides monthly themes, daily story time, and activities focused on kindergarten readiness. She holds special celebrations with families for the children's birthdays, Halloween, and Christmas. As children get ready to head off to Kindergarten, she has a graduation potluck for all the families to celebrate the children crossing this big milestone.

Bischel views the children in her care as an extension of her own family. Her goal is to provide a safe, secure, and loving environment where children can grow and learn. She guides the children as they learn social interaction skills, large and small motor skills, personal health habits, and safety habits.

As a provider, Bischel has made positive impacts on the lives of the young children in her care.

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

County Board approves construction contract for Lake Elmo Park Reserve Contact Station upgrades

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract with Dering Pierson Group for renovations and upgrades to the Lake Elmo Park Reserve Contact Station June 25.

Under the \$251,081 contract, Dering Pierson Group will provide materials and labor for the project.

The project is part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funded building modification project, which includes space reconfigurations throughout multiple county buildings. The Lake Elmo Park Reserve Contact Station was built in 1985 and was last remodeled in 2001. County staff developed a plan for the remodel that includes reconfiguring the front desk area, moving the public entrance to the south side of the building, and installing a walk-up window for staff to interact with patrons.

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County staff released a request for bids for building construction and site development from March to April. Dering Pierson Group was the lowest responsible bidder of the four bids received for the project.

Contact: Greg Miller, Building Services Project Manager, 651-430-6249

County holds second Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting June 25

The Washington County Board of Commissioners and County Auditor convened as the County Board of Appeal and Equalization at 10:30 a.m., June 25, to conduct its annual review of the value and classification of property in the county.

This is the second of two meetings of the County Board of Appeal and Equalization required by state law.

At the first meeting on June 18, property owners who wished to have their appeal heard by the County Board of Appeal and Equalization presented information to the Board. At the second meeting June 25, the Board reviewed recommendations from staff, asked questions, discussed, and acted on each appeal.

Contact: Amy Stenftenagel, Property Records and Taxpayers Services Director, 651-430-6182

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