

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

Date: July 23, 2024
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

County receives \$374,000 PATH grant for homelessness services

Washington County received \$373,963 in grant funding from Minnesota Department of Human Services' Project for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH).

The PATH grant funds activities to provide street outreach and case management to individuals experiencing homelessness and who are diagnosed with serious mental illness and/or a substance use disorder. Washington County Community Services Department has been a recipient of the PATH grant for over 10 years and was awarded a significant increase in funding in 2024.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the grant agreement for the grant period of April 21, 2024, through June 30, 2025, at its July 23 meeting.

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

Bestview Care Options to provide personal care assistant assessment services

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract with Bestview Care Options to provide personal care assistant (PCA) assessment and reassessment services July 23.

Washington County is mandated to provide PCA assessment and reassessment services to determine appropriate level of care, recommend the necessary amount of PCA service and qualified professional supervision of the PCA, and develop a service plan for the individual receiving PCA services. PCA assessment and reassessments must be completed by certified Public Health Nurses. Bestview Care

Options is a provider enrolled with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to complete PCA assessment and reassessments.

The term of the contract is for period of March 1, 2024, through December 31, 2025. Services under this contract will be billed directly to the State of Minnesota, so there are no county funds included in this contract.

Contact: Denise Landry, Community Services Division Manager, 651-2775-7754

Optimal Care to provide semi-independent living skills services

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract not to exceed \$30,000 with Optimal Care, LLC to provide semi-independent living skills services July 23.

Semi-Independent Living Services (SILS) are services needed by an adult with a developmental disability or related condition(s) to live successfully in the community. The goal of SILS is to support people in ways that enable them to achieve personally desired outcomes and lead self-directed lives. SILS service providers are based on individual choice, meaning if an individual chooses a provider that is not already contracted with Washington County, Washington County will use a lead-county contract or consider a contract with the provider. Optimal Care is a provider of SILS services that was chosen by an individual authorized to receive services from Washington County.

The contract term is for a period of May 13, 2024, through June 30, 2025, and is largely funded by state funds (85%) with the remainder coming from county levy dollars.

Contact: Denise Landry, Community Services Division Manager, 651-2775-7754

Solid Ground and Valley Outreach to provide homelessness prevention direct assistance

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved contracts to sub-grant Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) funds to Solid Ground and Valley Outreach July 23.

Under the contract, Solid Ground and Valley Outreach will provide direct assistance for homelessness prevention and administrative services to support the delivery of these direct assistance funds in the community.

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Washington County Community Services Department applied for a second round of FHPAP funds for the 2023-2025 biennium and was awarded an additional \$715,016 for the remainder of the two-year period that began October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2025.

The County Board approved a contract with Solid Ground for \$320,000 and with Valley Outreach for \$270,000 for the period of July 23, 2024, through Sept. 30, 2025.

The purpose of the FHPAP program is to provide supportive services and/or financial assistance to families, youth and single adults that are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness. Washington County has received FHPAP funding from Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MN Housing) since 2007 to assist households to obtain or retain housing. The majority of funds are sub-allocated for direct household assistance.

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

County Board recognizes VFW Scout of the Year Riley Symicek

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized Riley Symicek, a resident of Cottage Grove, as the recipient of the VFW Scout of the Year award July 23.

Symicek was honored with the award for his Eagle Scout project, in which he and volunteers assembled 60 backpack “care kits” that were distributed to people experiencing homelessness. The backpacks were filled with items that people experiencing homelessness may need. Symicek and volunteers gave backpacks to those in need at Listening House, a day shelter in St. Paul.

In addition to recognizing Symicek for this award, the County Board also presented Symicek with a Commissioners Service Award signed by the County Commissioners.

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

Photo Cutline 001: *Left to right: Commissioner Michelle Clasen, Commissioner Gary Kriesel, VFW Scout of the Year Riley Symicek, Commissioner Karla Bigham, Commissioner Fran Miron, and Minnesota VFW State Commander David Staehlin.*

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County Board approves amended ARPA Recovery Plan

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an updated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Recovery Plan July 23.

Washington County received \$50,975,893 under ARPA to address the expenditures and impacts of COVID-19 and to replace revenue shortage related to the pandemic.

The updated plan reallocates \$1,142,541 in funds to county infrastructure improvements projects and operations funded by lost revenue replacement. Projects to receive reallocated funds include the Emergency Housing Services Building project, which will provide 30 private rooms and supportive programs and resources for adults experiencing homelessness as they transition to more stable housing.

Following the County Board's approval, staff will submit the completed 2024 Recovery Plan by July 31 to U.S. Department of Treasury and post it to the county website.

Contact: Jill Zenzola, Accounting Manager, 651-430-6048

Attorney Office's Juvenile Division receives Excellence in Service Award

The Juvenile Division of the Washington County's Attorney's Office (WCAO) was presented with an Excellence in Service Award by the Minnesota Juvenile Officer's Association at their annual conference in Duluth this June.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized WCAO staff for the award at its July 23 meeting.

The WCAO Juvenile Division received the award for the support they have shown to school resource officers in Washington County and the support they have shown to the Minnesota Juvenile Officer's Association. Attorneys in the WCAO Juvenile Division carry a caseload of juvenile prosecution and child protection cases.

The Minnesota Juvenile Officers Association formed in 1955 and works to support police officers, social workers, corrections agents, and school administrators.

Contact: Tony Zdroik, Chief of Juvenile Division, 651-430-6115

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***Photo Cutline 002:** Washington County Commissioners Michelle Clasen, Karla Bigham, Gary Kriesel, and Fran Miron recognize Assistant County Attorney Tony Zdroik and members of the Juvenile Division team for the Minnesota Juvenile Officer's Association Excellence in Service Award.*

County Board proclaims July 21-27 as Pretrial, Probation, and Parole Supervision Week

The Washington County Board of Commissioners proclaimed July 21-27, 2024, as Pretrial, Probation, and Parole Supervision Week July 23.

The week honors the work of pretrial, probation, and parole officers in Washington County and recognizes their achievements. This year's theme is "Wellness Unveiled: Navigating the Journey."

Washington County's Community Corrections professionals supervise adult and juvenile offenders in the community and provide services and referrals for offenders. They promote prevention, intervention, and advocacy. They provide services, support, and protection for victims and advocate for community and restorative justice.

The county's Community Corrections staff partners with community agencies to keep communities safe and transform the lives of justice-involved clients.

Contact: Terry Thomas, Community Corrections Director, 651-430-6951

SRF Consulting, Inc. to provide final design services on Radio Drive improvement project

SRF Consulting, Inc. will provide final design services for the County Highway 13 (Radio Drive) Improvement Project.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners amended the existing contract with SRF Consulting, Inc. to include final design services July 23.

The County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 13 (Radio Drive) Improvement Project, located in the City of Woodbury, includes highway expansion, the addition of multi-use trails, and improvements to intersections from CSAH 20 (Military Road) to Hargis Parkway.

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SRF Consulting, Inc. has worked closely with county staff since February 2023 on the project. To date, SRF Consulting, Inc. has completed planning, community engagement, and preliminary engineering tasks for this project. The project team has engaged with the community through meetings with adjacent property owners, pop-up events, and a series of public open houses.

Through this engagement process, the project team created and shared a preferred layout to improve this corridor. This preferred layout has been supported by the Woodbury City Council through a resolution.

This amendment to the existing contract will take the project through final design and includes all aspects necessary to bring this project to bidding, including additional public engagement, coordination with private utility companies, production of final plans, cost estimating, and permitting. The negotiated fee is \$749,985 to complete this work.

The contract amendment will be funded by State Aid funds (\$694,985) and local contributions from the City of Woodbury (\$100,000).

The County Board also passed a resolution to acquire the necessary right-of-way and associated easements for the County Highway 13 Improvement Project, which are necessary to proceed with the acquisition and construction of the project. The right-of-way estimate is \$1,100,000. Right-of-way costs will be funded by State Aid funds (\$500,000) and local contributions from the City of Woodbury (\$600,000).

The project is scheduled for construction in 2027.

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

Bituminous Roadways, Inc. selected for Lake Elmo Park Reserve's Eagle Point Trailhead Improvement Project

Bituminous Roadways, Inc. was selected to provide services for the Lake Elmo Park Reserve Eagle Point Trailhead Improvement Project.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the \$1,278,402.50 contract with the company July 23.

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The project includes a pavement mill and overlay along the entrance road from County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 10 to the Eagle Point Parking Lot, a 49-parking space expansion and pavement rehabilitation of the parking lot, and the construction of a permanent restroom facility.

This parking lot serves as the trailhead for the increasingly popular Eagle Point Trail system, which encompasses most of the trails on the west side of the park. This parking lot will also be one of the official trailhead locations for the Central Greenway Regional Trail and for future mountain bike single-track trails that will be added to the park over time.

The project received a \$1 million Community Project Funding Grant, through the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee. This grant, sponsored by Congresswoman Betty McCollum, was approved for this project in 2022. Additional funding will come from the Transmission Line Tax and Transportation Advancement Account funds.

Bids for this project were opened on June 18, 2024, and Bituminous Roadways, Inc. was selected as the lowest responsible bidder. Construction is scheduled to begin in August 2024.

Contact: Ryan Hoefs, Engineer II, 651-430-4336

Washington, Ramsey counties to take over one-mile stretch of Century Avenue from state

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an agreement with the State of Minnesota to transfer a one-mile segment of Century Ave. N. from the state to Washington and Ramsey counties July 23.

Upon agreement execution by Ramsey County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), the counties will take over jurisdiction from the state of Trunk Highway 120 (Century Ave.) from Interstate 694 to County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 12, also known as Wildwood Rd.

The transfer of this segment of Century Ave. has been planned for over 20 years and is included in a 1996 Memorandum of Understanding between Washington County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). The transfer was reviewed and confirmed in a 2014 Minnesota Jurisdictional Realignment study and included in Washington County's Comprehensive Plans.

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This portion of TH 120 is a border road between Ramsey and Washington County and is in the cities of White Bear Lake and Mahtomedi. As this portion of the roadway currently functions like a county highway, past studies and plans indicate that the county is the best agency to own and maintain it.

Under the Transfer Agreement, the State of Minnesota will pay Washington County \$10,500,000, as Washington County is acting as the fiscal agent for the counties. These funds will be used for capital improvements to the roadway and operating costs. Upon agreement execution by all parties, the transfer will be effective in spring 2025.

Contact: Erin Clarkowski, Engineer II, 651-430-4384

Washington County Parks Division recognized with four awards

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized staff from the Parks Division for four recently received awards July 23.

The Minnesota Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) Awards of Excellence Program is an annual program that recognizes agencies or organizations in Minnesota for outstanding achievements in parks, recreation and leisure service. The awards recognize programs, projects, or initiatives that were implemented or received substantial revisions in 2023. Washington County is receiving an award in the Programming Category for the *Día de los Muertos Celebración*.

The National Association of County (NACo) Achievement Awards recognize innovative county government programs in a wide variety of categories. Washington County has been recognized with a NACo Achievement Award for the BIPOC Connect program, recognizing the innovation and effectiveness of this program to strengthen services for our residents.

Finally, the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials (NACPRO) selects projects or programs in a variety of categories that provide inspiration and innovation in parks and recreation across the nation. NACPRO selected the reconstruction of St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park Boat Launch for an award in the Parks and Recreation Areas and Facilities category and also selected the *Día de los Muertos Celebración* for its award in the Park and Recreation Program category.

Contact: JJ Williams, Parks Manager, 651-430-8245

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Photo Cutline 003: *Left to right: Parks and Open Space Commissioner Anne Siess, Parks Equity Coordinator Elena Schewe, Minnesota Recreation and Park Association Awards Committee Member Nicole Greenwell, Commissioners Karla Bigham, Fran Miron, and Michelle Clasen, Parks Manager JJ Williams, Commissioner Gary Kriesel, and Public Works Director Wayne Sandberg.*

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