

Our Mission: We strive to provide exceptional services that enhance quality of life and promote a safe, healthy, and welcoming community for all.

Date: April 1, 2025
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the April 1, 2025, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota.

County Board sets May 6 public hearing on Parks and Open Space Commissioner Ordinance

The Washington County Board of Commissioners set a public hearing on the Parks and Open Space Commission Ordinance #220 for May 6.

Members of the public will be able to make comments at the public hearing on the ordinance, which establishes the Parks and Open Space Commission in Washington County.

Proposed updates to the ordinance would bring it into alignment with County Policy #6006 on Advisory Boards, Commissions, and Committees, increase the membership structure to 13 members, and update the duties and functions of the board.

The public hearing will follow a public comment period in April on the proposed changes to the ordinance.

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

Sheriff's Office receives \$10,600 in donations

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved two donations to the Sheriff's Office April 1 totaling \$10,600.

The first donation of \$5,600 was made by OUR Rescue in support of the East Metro Human Trafficking Task Force. The funds are a training scholarship that will offset the cost of four detectives from the East Metro Human Trafficking Task Force to attend a four-day human trafficking training course in Springfield, Missouri.

OUR Rescue is a non-profit organization that exists to protect children from sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. It supports law enforcement agencies by providing tools, training, and technology to enhance their abilities to combat child exploitation.

The second donation of \$5,000 was made by Walmart in support of the Sheriff's Office Shop with a Cop event. The Washington County Sheriff's Office has partnered with the Oak Park Heights Walmart for the last several years to host a holiday Shop with a Cop community engagement event.

Military families identified by the Yellow Ribbon Network and students nominated by local elementary schools that could use additional help to make the holidays a little brighter are selected to participate in this event. The selected children are paired with deputies from the Sheriff's Office and officers from the Oak Park Heights Police Department to shop for gifts for their families. The participants are also provided a Secret Santa gift selected by the deputy or officer that they are paired with. This event has been a great opportunity for the Sheriff's Office employees and volunteers to connect with the community in a positive way.

Contact: Chief Deputy Doug Anschutz, Sheriff's Office, 651-430-7846

County Board recognizes National Crime Victims' Week

The Washington County Board of Commissioners declared April 6-12 as National Crime Victims' Week at its meeting April 1.

The County Attorney's Office requested the passage of a resolution to remind residents that every April the United States Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime helps lead communities throughout the country in an annual observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week by promoting victims' rights and honoring crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf. This year's theme is KINSHIP - Connecting & Healing.

The theme is a call to recognize that shared humanity should be at the center of supporting all survivors and victims of crime. The resolution recognizes kinship is the foundation of victim advocacy, inspiring trauma-informed care that meets survivors where they are. It also recognizes the ways in which County Attorney's Office staff build peer networks and community alliances that empower survivors, foster resilience, and offer pathways to healing.

With the resolution, the County Board reaffirmed the county's commitment to creating a victim service and criminal justice response that assists all victims of crime during Crime Victims' Rights Week and throughout the year. The board also expressed its sincere gratitude and appreciation for community members, victim service providers, and criminal justice professionals who are committed to improving our response to all victims of crime so that they may find relevant assistance, support, justice, and peace.

Contact: Tom Wedes, Assistant Criminal Division Head, Washington County Attorney's Office, 651-275-7702

County Board recognizes April 7-11 as National Public Health Week

The Washington County Board of Commissioners declared April 7-11 as National Public Health Week at its April 1 meeting.

For over 25 years, the American Public Health Association, (APHA) has recognized the first full week of April as National Public Health Week. This is a time to recognize the contributions of public health and highlight issues that are important to improve our community's health and the environment.

In Washington County, the Department of Public Health and Environment (PHE) consists of 95 staff working across 12 diverse program areas to make a positive impact on the lives of every resident in our community.

In adopting the proposed resolution, the County Board recognized, congratulated, and thanked staff who promote the health, safety and quality of life for Washington County citizens and fulfill the mission to protect, promote, and improve the community's health and the environment.

Contact: David Brummel, Public Health and Environment Director, 651-430-6662

County Board honors, recognizes Public Safety Telecommunicators

The Washington County Board of Commissioners declared National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week April 13-19 at its April 1 meeting.

In 1994, a presidential proclamation was made to designate the second full week in April as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. The week recognizes and celebrates the work of

telecommunicators who help to save millions of lives each day. These individuals are a critical first contact residents have with emergency services. Additionally, they serve as a vital link for law enforcement, firefighters, and paramedics by monitoring their activities by radio, providing them information, and ensuring their safety

The public safety telecommunicators of the Washington County Emergency Communications Response Center have contributed substantially to the apprehension of criminals, suppression of fires, and treatment of patients. The County Board thanked and honored the individuals who serve every day as public safety telecommunicators.

Contact: Commander Andrew Ellickson, Sheriff's Office Special Services Division, 651-430-7814

County to expand wood waste management capacity with equipment and processing contracts

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved several contracts April 1 to address the growing amount of wood waste at the county's yard waste site.

The wood waste management system within the metro region is currently stretched beyond capacity. The peak of metro area wood waste from emerald ash borer is projected to be 2028. The lack of additional capacity is resulting in open burning and resident self-management of tree trimming and disposal.

The board-approved contracts will help the county address the issue by adding additional material processing capacity and purchasing new equipment to process wood waste into nutrient-rich soil amendment material called biochar.

The contracts are with the following companies for the listed services:

- Toft's Outdoor Supply for log recovery, grinding, and firewood processing, and stationery biochar processing through Dec. 31, 2028.
- Titan Machinery for purchase of biochar equipment and service through Dec. 31, 2027.
- Ruffridge Johnson for the contingent purchase of biochar equipment and service through Dec. 31, 2027.

- Clear Water Nitrate Reduction for trailside biochar processing and wood utilization consulting through Dec. 31, 2027.
- Sylva Corporation for leaves and grass removal from applicable sites through Dec. 31, 2028.
- Davey Tree Expert Company for grinding and firewood processing through Dec. 31, 2028.

The contracts total \$435,000 in estimated annual expenses and \$800,000 in one-time equipment purchases. The county projects that the annual cost of the stationery biochar processing paid to contractor can be fully covered by delivery tip fee paid by tree care companies. The rest of the contract costs will be funded through a variety of sources, including SCORE funding, County Environmental Charge funds, market value revenue from materials recovered and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Wood Waste Utilization Grant.

Contact: Caleb Johnson, Senior Community/Environmental Health Program Manager, 651-502-1295

Apex Engineering Group to do preliminary design for 10th St. N./Lake Elmo Ave. N. intersection project

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$364,667 contract with Apex Engineering Group April 1 to provide preliminary design services for the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 10 (10th St. N.)/CSAH 17 (Lake Elmo Ave. N.)/County Road (CR) 17B (Lake Elmo Ave. N.) intersection project.

County staff has been working closely with the City of Lake Elmo and the Stillwater Public School District, which is relocating Lake Elmo Elementary School from its current location to the northwest quadrant of the intersection of CSAH 10, CSAH 17, and CR 17B, located in Lake Elmo.

The school's site design adds two new access points to the county system — one for parents, staff, and visitors on CSAH 10, and separate access for buses on CSAH 17. The school district's contractor is making significant improvements, including turn lanes and traffic signals at the main parent access and the intersection of CSAH 10, CSAH 17, and CR 17B.

The county programmed this capital intersection project, planned for 2028 construction, to address the long-term needs of the county system at this intersection, while also reviewing multimodal needs to connect the school site to the surrounding business and residential area.

On Feb. 21, the county received five proposals from qualified firms to perform design services for this intersection improvement project. The county selected Apex Engineering Group as the most qualified consultant. The scope of work includes project coordination, stakeholder engagement, bike and pedestrian analysis, traffic analysis, utility coordination, permit identification, cost estimating, and preliminary construction plans.

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