

Date: Oct. 7, 2025
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Oct. 7, 2025, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota.

County Board makes reappointment to Valley Branch Watershed District

The Washington County Board of Commissioners reappointed John Brach of West Lakeland Township to a second term as a manager of the Valley Branch Watershed District.

Brach's term begins Nov. 14, 2025, and expires Nov. 14, 2028.

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

County Board approves contracts with agencies to prevent homelessness

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved contracts Oct. 7 with three agencies that work with county residents who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

Washington County applied for Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program (FHPAP) funds for the 2025-2027 biennium and was awarded \$814,000 for two years, from Oct. 1, 2025, through Sept. 30, 2027. The FHPAP program is to provide supportive services and/or financial assistance to families, youth, and single adults who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

Washington County has received FHPAP funding from Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MN Housing) since 2007 to assist households in obtaining or retaining housing, and the majority of the funds are sub-allocated for direct household assistance. The county will sub-allocate funds to:

- Valley Outreach for \$216,000 to distribute as prevention direct assistance and to provide administrative services to deliver the assistance.
- Solid Ground for \$216,000 for coordinated entry services, to distribute as prevention and rapid rehousing direct assistance, and to provide administrative services to deliver the assistance.

- Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties for \$252,000 to distribute as prevention and rapid rehousing direct assistance and to provide administrative services to deliver direct assistance.

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

County receives additional state Cannabis and Substance Use Prevention grant funds

Washington County received additional Cannabis and Substance Use Prevention grant funds from the Minnesota State Department of Health (MDH).

On Jan. 7, the Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted the original grant totaling \$199,076 for the initial grant period that runs through June 30, 2026. On Oct. 7, the County Board approved a grant amendment that adds \$307,660 for a total grant award of \$506,736 and extends the term through June 30, 2028.

The MDH Cannabis and Substance Use Prevention Program awarded funds to all community health boards as a formula grant. The purpose of this funding is to support the implementation of Cannabis and Substance Use Prevention Grant responsibilities by community health boards. Those responsibilities include creating prevention, education, and recovery programs focusing on substance misuse prevention and treatment options. The focus must be on primary prevention of substance use/misuse.

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

County continues participation in Snowmobile Trails Assistance Program

The Washington County Board of Commissioners voted to continue county participation in the Snowmobile Trails Assistance Program and will administer grant funding for the Star Trail Association Oct. 7.

The Star Trail Association uses funds from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) snowmobile trail maintenance and grooming grants-in-aid (GIA) program to cover the cost of trail maintenance. However, because the snowmobile club cannot receive the funds directly, Washington County sponsors the club and acts as a pass-through agency.

The Washington County Board first entered into a county/club agreement with the Star Trail Association on July 31, 1991. The DNR requires a board resolution each year to facilitate the official involvement of the county.

The term of the grant will be from the date of the DNR approval to June 30, 2026. All grant revenue received by the county on behalf of the Star Trail Association will be forwarded to the club as a reimbursement for costs expended for trail maintenance during the 2025-2026 snow season.

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

County Board approves grant for traffic enforcement

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$229,750 grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Office of Traffic Safety Oct. 7.

The funding is part of the 2026 Enforcement Grant Program, which promotes safety for those who use public roadways. The grant, awarded for the period of Oct. 1, 2025, through Sept. 30, 2026, provides reimbursement for overtime costs associated with enforcement of the following violations: Impaired driving, pedestrians, seat belts, speed, distracted driving, and move over laws.

Participating agencies in the 2025 Enforcement Grant Program include the Washington County Sheriff's Office and the police departments of Bayport, Cottage Grove, Forest Lake, Oakdale, Oak Park Heights, Stillwater, and Woodbury. The Washington County Sheriff's Office will act as the fiscal agent for this grant.

Contact: Commander Sara Halverson, Sheriff's Office Patrol Division, 651-430-7871

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month in Washington County

The Washington County Board of Commissioners has declared the month of October to be Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

The board passed a resolution making the declaration Oct. 7.

Cybersecurity Awareness Month is dedicated to the public and private sectors working together to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity. Over the years, it has grown into a collaborative effort between government and industry to enhance cybersecurity awareness, encourage actions by the public to reduce online risk, and generate discussion on cyber threats on a national and global scale.

The county has taken many steps to enhance cybersecurity within the organization, including delivering countywide training, supporting tools to report and respond to phishing attempts, providing system security patches, and performing security reviews of new applications before they are used at the county.

The county also encourages the public to take simple actions at home, not only during October but every day throughout the year, to stay safe online. These actions include recognizing and reporting phishing attempts, using strong passwords, turning on multifactor authentication (MFA), and updating software.

Contact: Cassandra Lidgerding, Senior Communications Specialist, 651-430-6419

County receives Statewide Health Improvement Partnership funds

Washington County will continue receiving Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) grant funds from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

The SHIP program provides funding to community health boards and tribal governments to promote evidence-based and community-level strategies that support healthy behaviors.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the five-year grant agreement with MDH Oct. 7. The county will receive \$523,076 in the first year of the grant, which spans from Nov. 1, 2025, to Oct. 31, 2030.

Funding under the grant supports staff time, consultant support, and outgoing grants to organizations such as schools, cities, food shelves, and other community-based organizations.

Contact: Stephanie Souter, Public Health and Environment Senior Community/Environmental Health Program Manager, 651-430-6071

Park Grove Library renovation project moving forward with developer's agreement approval

The renovation project at Washington County's Park Grove Library in Cottage Grove is moving forward with the approval of a developer's agreement with the City of Cottage Grove.

The Cottage Grove City Council approved the renovation project subject to a developer's agreement being approved by Washington County. The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the developer's agreement Oct. 7. The agreement defines the responsibilities of Washington County as the developer of the Park Grove Library site and the role the city will play in the project.

The current Park Grove Library was constructed in 1984 and no longer meets our community's current needs. The redesigned library will maintain quality services in an energy-efficient, modern, and welcoming facility. The project includes improved parking, the addition of meeting rooms, and an outdoor children's reading space.

The library will close in early 2026 for construction, which is anticipated to last until early 2027. During the closure, the county will offer the following library services in at least two temporary locations in Cottage Grove, including:

- **Cottage Grove Service Center** – Basic library services, such as getting a library card, holds pickup, a small browsing collection, and access to public computers and printing. Hours of operation are still to be determined.
- **Cottage Grove Armory** – Outreach programming, such as storytimes, book clubs, baby playdates, and sewing and crafting classes. Some programming will also be done off-site in the community.

For more information about the renovation project, visit WashingtonCountyMN.gov/ParkGroveLibraryProject.

For more information about Washington County Library branches, visit WashCoLib.org.

Contact: Jacquie Kramer, Library Director, 651-275-8501