

Date: March 10, 2026
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the March 10, 2026, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota.

Regional Railroad Authority elects 2026 chair and vice-chair, conducts other business

The Washington County Board of Commissioners, sitting as the Washington County Regional Rail Authority (WCRRA), elected Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2, as the WCRRA chair for 2026 at the authority's organizational meeting March 10. Commissioner Bethany Cox, District 3, was elected vice chair.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners sits as the WCRRA to conduct business for that governmental entity.

During the WCRRA meeting, the board set a public hearing for March 31, 2026, on a proposed WCRRA Property Management Ordinance #222. The public hearing will allow community members to share feedback on the proposal to convert the current WCRRA Property Management Plan, adopted in 2002, into an ordinance. Using an ordinance to manage right-of-way (ROW) is the same process the county uses to manage county-owned ROW.

Besides converting the structure of the document from a plan to an ordinance, the other changes include:

- Updated WCRRA owned property descriptions to be consistent
- Expanded definition section
- Added language to provide flexibility in permit fee, if desired (example: Forest Lake School District bus storage encroachment)
- Clarified roles and responsibilities between staff, WCRRA Board, and permit holder
- Updated references to current county policies and ordinances including:
 - Acceptable Use at County Facilities

- Washington County and Hugo 2025 Memorandum of Understanding for TH 61

The WCRRA also appointed Commissioner Michelle Clasen, District 5, as the 2026 representative to the Gold Line Joint Powers Board.

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County Board makes advisory council, watershed district appointments

The Washington County Board of Commissioners made appointments to the Mental Health Advisory Council (Local Advisory Council) and the South Washington Watershed District Board March 10.

The County Board appointed Thomas Clemen to the Mental Health Advisory Council LAC as a Consumer Representative for a partial term starting March 10, 2026, and expiring Dec. 31, 2027.

The County Board reappointed Sharon Doucette of Cottage Grove as a manager on the South Washington Watershed District Board for a third term beginning on May 1, 2026, and expiring April 30, 2029.

The County Board also appointed Andrea Date as a manager on the South Washington Watershed District Board for a first term beginning May 1, 2026, and expiring April 30, 2029.

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Washington County Library receives anonymous \$30,000 donation

Washington County Library received a \$30,000 donation from a long-standing anonymous supporter.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners gratefully accepted the donation at its meeting March 10.

The county plans to use the donated funds on the library's materials collection to better serve both new and existing patrons. With increasing costs and demand for digital materials, the county will allocate \$15,000 toward purchasing digital e-books and audiobooks with the goal of reducing user wait times. The remaining \$15,000 will be used to pilot new physical collections, expanding the range of materials and growing the types of items borrowable from the library.

Contact: Kim Ukura, Library Senior Communications Specialist, 651-275-8511

County Board approves liquor license applications

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved liquor license applications March 10.

The board approved an application for an off-sale liquor license for Holiday Stationstores, LLC, DBA Point Liquors at 12370 Point Douglas Rd., Hastings, MN 55033.

The board approved an application for renewal of an on-sale and Sunday liquor license for VR US Holdings, DBA Afton Alps at 6600 Peller Ave. S., Hastings, MN 55033.

The county processes all liquor licenses for the townships in the county. The county reviews the liability insurance, and the Sheriff's Office, the County Attorney's Office, and the Public Health & Environment Department complete compliance/verification checks.

Those requirements have all been completed for the application. The applicant's license fees pay for the administrative costs of the county's administration, compliance, and verification checks.

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

County Board transfers right-of-way, easements for Hadley Avenue/Highway 36 intersection

The Washington County Board of Commissioners transferred right-of-way and property interests to state agencies and the City of Oakdale as part of the close-out of the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 13 (Hadley Avenue) and Trunk Highway (TH) 36 intersection project March 10.

With all construction work complete, the county is formally transferring the permanent right-of-way and property interests to the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the City of Oakdale. This will allow each agency to assume its long-term ownership, maintenance, and operational duties as outlined in the cooperative agreements approved for the project.

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

County Board accepts Safe Routes to School grant for Mahtomedi trail construction

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted a grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) March 10 to construct a trail between the entrances of Mahtomedi High School and Middle School.

The \$705,000 grant is part of MnDOT's Safe Routes to School program. Funds will be divided between Washington County and Mahtomedi Public Schools (Independent School District 832) for trail construction, based upon estimated project costs.

Washington County will construct a trail south of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 12 (75th Street North) between the Mahtomedi High School entrance and Inwood Way. Mahtomedi Public Schools will construct a trail from the intersection of CSAH 12 and the high school entrance, along the driveway between the high school and middle school in the City of Grant. The City of Grant will participate through a cost-share agreement.

Both segments will be developed concurrently and constructed as one coordinated project. Construction is scheduled for 2026.

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

Sheriff's Office receives \$10,000 donation for K9 Unit from resident

The Washington County Sheriff's Office K9 Unit received a \$10,000 donation from Washington County resident Jim Dingle.

Dingle made the donation in memory of his late wife, Helen Ann McKasy Dingle.

The couple were avid dog owners and appreciated the service Washington County K9s provide to the community and the loyalty they show their handlers.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted the donation March 10. The funds will be used for equipment needs.

Contact: Pafoua Lo, Law Enforcement Public Information Officer, 651-430-7994

Sheriff's Office retires K9 Odie, transfers ownership to handler

After three and a half years of service to the Washington County Sheriff's Office Drug Task Force, K9 Odie was retired March 1. The Washington County Board of Commissioners transferred ownership of K9 Odie to his handler, Sergeant Justin McDonough, who will care for Odie during his retirement.

K9 Odie is a 7-year-old German Wirehaired Pointer who joined the county in June 2022 with Sergeant McDonough. Odie is certified in the detection of methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin. The pair was assigned

to the Washington County Drug Task Force until Dec. 2022 when they were assigned to a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Task Force Group.

During Odie's service, he helped seize roughly 900 pounds of methamphetamine, 400 pounds of cocaine, five pounds of heroin, and over \$300,000.00 in cash.

The board thanked Sergeant McDonough and K9 Odie for their years of hard work and dedication.

Contact: Pafoua Lo, Law Enforcement Public Information Officer, 651-430-7994

County Board approves construction contract, cooperative agreements for County Road 74 improvement project

The Washington County Board of Commissioners took several actions March 10 to move forward with the County Road (CR) 74 (65th Street) improvement project in Newport and Cottage Grove.

Washington County, in partnership with the City of Newport, the City of Cottage Grove, and the South Washington Watershed District, is leading the project to improve traffic operations, pedestrian safety, address drainage and erosion concerns, and improve the pavement condition. The project extends from County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 38 (Hastings Avenue) to Geneva Avenue.

The County Board approved a \$3,735,359.11 million contract with Meyer Contracting Inc. to complete construction on the project, which includes:

- Realigning CR 74 at CSAH 38.
- Adding a trail on the north side of CR 74 from CSAH 38 to Geneva Avenue.
- Adding storm sewer, curb, and gutter to help control drainage and decrease erosion.
- Adding a stormwater basin to treat and capture runoff.
- Ravine stabilization.
- Pavement rehabilitation.

Bids were opened Feb. 19, and Meyer Contracting Inc. was the lowest bidder of the seven bids the county received from qualified firms.

In addition to the construction contract, the County Board approved construction cost share and maintenance agreements with the City of Newport and the City of Cottage Grove, as well as a construction cost share agreement with the South Washington Watershed District.

The construction cost agreements outline design and construction responsibilities and allocate project costs in accordance with the County's Cost Participation Policy. The maintenance agreements define ongoing maintenance responsibilities upon project completion. The City of Newport, the City of Cottage Grove, and the South Washington Watershed District have reviewed, approved, and executed these agreements.

The board also approved a design contract amendment with Stonebrooke Engineering. This amendment addresses the final design elements that were necessary to complete the project.

Finally, the board approved two budget amendments for the project.

Construction is underway and is expected to be complete this fall.

Contact: Mike Kline, Public Works Engineer I, 651-430-4304

County Board approves contracts for the construction administration of several 2026 projects

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved three contracts March 10 with construction firms to supplement county staff in administering projects scheduled for 2026.

The 2026 construction program will include 20 road, bridge, and park projects valued at over \$70 million. Due to the projected construction workload for 2026, additional personnel, resources, and expertise are necessary to successfully administer these projects. The additional personnel will work alongside county staff under the direction of the county's construction engineer, which has proven to be a successful model in recent years.

The board approved a contract with SRF Consulting Group, Inc. for additional construction engineering and inspection personnel. The county received seven proposals for the work, and SRF Consulting Group, Inc. was selected as the preferred vendor. The contract is not to exceed \$1,114,156. The personnel will be assigned to the following projects:

- County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 4 pavement preservation
- CSAH 12 Safe Routes to School trail construction
- CSAH 14 trail construction
- CSAH 16/Eagle Creek Lane signal installation
- CSAH 19/80th Street intersection improvement project
- CSAH 38 pavement preservation
- County Road 74 reconstruction

- Several miscellaneous road projects

The board approved a contract with WSB & Associates for construction survey and staking personnel. The county received seven proposals for the work, and WSB & Associates was selected as the preferred vendor. The contract is not to exceed \$309,000. The personnel will be assigned to the following projects:

- CSAH 4 Pavement Preservation
- CR 15B reconstruction
- CSAH 19/80th Street intersection improvement project
- CR 74 reconstruction
- Other tasks as assigned by the Construction Engineer

The board approved a contract with Kimley-Horn and Associates for work on the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 17/ Trunk Highway (TH) 36 Intersection Improvement Project, which will replace the existing at-grade intersection with a grade-separated interchange. The work will start in 2026 and span two construction seasons. The county received six proposals for the work, and Kimley-Horn and Associates was selected as the preferred vendor. The contract is not to exceed \$3,225,510.

Contact: Allan Brandt, Public Works Construction Engineer, 651-430-4348

County Board proclaims March Women’s History Month in Washington County

The Washington County Board of Commissioners declared the month of March as Women’s History Month in Washington County March 10.

The National Women’s History Alliance chose “Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future” as the theme for this year’s Women’s History Month. The theme honors the women who have and are reimagining and rebuilding systems to ensure long-term environmental, economic, educational, and societal sustainability.

In its declaration, the board recognized the achievements and contributions of women educators, mentors, and leaders in the county. The board also encouraged communities and organizations to support women leaders of the past, present, and future.

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