

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNTY BOARD
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA
MARCH 11, 2025**

WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS CONVENES

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. in the Washington County Government Center, County Board Room.

Present: Commissioner Fran Miron, District 1
Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2
Commissioner Bethany Cox, District 3
Commissioner Karla Bigham, District 4

Absent: Commissioner Michelle Clasen, District 5

Also Present: Kevin Corbid, County Administrator
John Ristad, Assistant County Attorney Division Chief
Stephanie Kammerud, Administrative Assistant

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Board Chair Karwoski asked for comments from the public; none were heard.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Commissioner Bigham moved, seconded by Commissioner Cox, to adopt the Consent Calendar as follows:

1. Approval of the February 11, 2025, and February 18, 2025, County Board meeting minutes.
2. Approval to appoint Nicholas Stephens to a partial term on the Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee as a Private Sector Representative starting March 12, 2025, and expiring December 31, 2027.
3. Approval of county contract for legal representation for certain persons in Civil Commitments, Guardianships and Conservatorships, with Attorney Samuel Surface.
4. Approve rebalancing the OPEB Trust account to a 50:50 ratio in 2025, instead of the previous approval to rebalance in 2026.
5. Approval to eliminate Financial and Budget Policy #2303 - Custodial Agent Services.
6. Approval of an application for renewal of an On-Sale and Sunday Liquor License for VR US Holdings, DBA Afton Alps, in Denmark Township.

7. Approval of an application for renewal of an On-Sale and Sunday Liquor License for The Keystone Weddings and Events LLC in May Township, Minnesota.
8. Approve Amendment No. 6 to Lease Agreement No. 11627 with the State of Minnesota for common areas and office space for the Department of Employment and Economic Development at the Woodbury Service Center.
9. Approval of **Resolution No. 2025-017** as follows:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMITTAL OF A PROPOSAL
TO THE LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON
MINNESOTA RESOURCES FOR FUNDING THROUGH THE
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND**

WHEREAS, the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) is seeking project proposals that aim to protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota’s air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the LCCMR makes recommendations to the Minnesota Legislature for funding from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund; and

WHEREAS, beginning July 1, 2026, \$103 million is available through this funding opportunity; and

WHEREAS, grants will be competitively awarded to entities who have demonstrated financial capacity; and

WHEREAS, Washington County is an eligible grant recipient; and

WHEREAS, Washington County is submitting proposals to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund for the following projects:

- Increasing Forest Resiliency in Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park
- Hardwood Creek Regional Trail Extension; and

WHEREAS, Washington County is committed to securing funding for the remaining cost of the projects if selected; and

WHEREAS, Washington County is committed to completing the project, if selected, and funding is provided through the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Washington County is requesting funding from the state legislature by means of proposing projects

to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund; and the county is committed to completing the projects identified above and securing funding for the remaining cost of the projects.

10. Approve Change Order No. 2 on Contract No. 15657 with Mulcahy Nickolaus, LLC for \$9,248.66 for the North Environmental Center project in Forest Lake.
11. Approve Change Order No. 3 on Contract No. 15908 with Nasseff Mechanical Contractors, Inc. for \$1,689.00 for the North Environmental Center project in Forest Lake.
12. Approve Change Order No. 3 on Contract No. 15827 with Hoffman & McNamara Company for \$1,454.58 for the North Environmental Center project in Forest Lake.
13. Approve Change Order No. 6 on Contract No. 15659 with Wenzel-Plymouth Plumbing, LLC for \$2,295.00 for the North Environmental Center project in Forest Lake.
14. Approve Change Order No. 6 on Contract No. 15664 with Kevitt Excavating, LLC for \$28,615.06 for the North Environmental Center project in Forest Lake.
15. Approve Change Order No. 6 on Contract No. 15673 with A.J. Moore Electric, Inc. for \$51,071.66 for the North Environmental Center project in Forest Lake.
16. Approve grant application to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for the Implementation Grants for Stormwater Resilience program.
17. Approve Contract No. 17174 with Sambatek for \$1,195,262 for project administration and inspection services to support the road and bridge construction program.
18. Approve Joint Powers Agreement No. 17173 that allows the Washington County Sheriff's Office to provide fuel to the City of Oak Park Heights for law enforcement services.
19. Award bid to Patriot Airboat Corp. and authorize execution of Contract No. 17171 for \$249,000.00 for the design and build of two airboats.
20. Approve Contract No. 17125 with Magnet Forensics LLC for \$4,620.00 for the period of April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026.

The motion was adopted with a Roll Call vote as follows: Ayes, Commissioners Miron, Cox, Bigham, and Karwoski. Nays, none.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

Clean Water Partnership Loan Program

Stephanie Souter, Senior Program Manager in the Department of Public Health and Environment (PHE), presented a resolution to apply for funding through the Clean Water Partnership Loan Program to support the county's septic and well loan program.

Ms. Souter provided an overview of the county's subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS), which are an efficient means of treating wastewater in rural areas. There are more than 19,000 SSTS within the county, approximately 17,500 for households, and another 1,500 serving commercial and other properties. Non-compliant or poorly maintained septic systems have the potential to contaminate surface and groundwater. PHE maintains a county ordinance to implement state rules for septic systems. The system lifespan is approximately 30 years and replacement cost for a single system is more than \$30,000.

Ms. Souter reported that the county serves as a lender for SSTS loans and low-income grants with a low interest rate. Funding sources for these loans are through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's (MDA) AgBMP program, and local funds. Ms. Souter reported that since the program began in 2014, the county has issued 165 loans, providing more than \$3 million in loans. Both funding sources continue to revolve as payments are received.

Commissioner Bigham moved to adopt **Resolution No. 2025-018** as follows:

RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR CLEAN WATER PARTNERSHIP LOAN PROGRAM

WHEREAS, non-compliant Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS or 'septic systems') are identified in the Washington County Groundwater Plan as a potential source of surface water and groundwater contamination; and

WHEREAS, the Washington County Groundwater Plan identifies financial assistance for septic system replacement as an implementation action; and

WHEREAS, one-hundred percent of the source of drinking water in Washington County comes from groundwater; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the public's health, safety and welfare to keep the surface and groundwater resources as free from contamination as possible; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 145A authorizes the county to make expenditures to protect the health of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, Washington County currently operates a low interest loan program for septic and well replacements; and

WHEREAS, demand remains high for providing additional loans to eligible property owners.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Washington County Board of Commissioners approves submittal of a proposal to the Clean Water Partnership Loan program operated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to conduct the following Project: SSTS low interest loan program support; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment staff be authorized to submit the proposal for the above-mentioned Project and shall have the authority to represent this body in all matters that do not specifically require the action of this body; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that submittal of a proposal does not obligate this body to accept a grant and/or a loan if so offered.

Commissioner Miron seconded the motion, and it was adopted with a Roll Call vote as follows: Ayes, Commissioners Miron, Cox, Bigham, and Karwoski. Nays, none.

PUBLIC WORKS

Big Marine Park Reserve Prairie Restoration

Natural Resource Coordinator Dan MacSwain presented a grant agreement and licenses to facilitate habitat restoration work in Big Marine Park Reserve.

Mr. MacSwain reported that in June 2024, the board approved a grant application to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for the Habitat Enhancement Landscape program grant application to restore 25 acres of prairie in Big Marine Park Reserve. The grant is \$50,950 and will help pay for native seed, native plants, and contracted services to help establish the prairie.

Mr. MacSwain summarized funding for the project, and the required match of 10% will be met through in-kind staff and volunteer time. The Pollinator Friendly Alliance and Pheasants Forever have volunteered to assist with the implementation of the work associated with this grant and their labor will count toward the match required for the grant.

Commissioner Miron moved to approve a grant agreement with the Washington Conservation District and Pollinator Friendly Alliance to implement a Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP) Grant for Prairie Restoration in Big Marine Park Reserve. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion, and it was adopted.

Commissioner Cox moved to approve License No. 17204 with Pollinator Friendly Alliance to Use Real Property within the County Park System. Commissioner Miron seconded the motion, and it was adopted.

Commissioner Bigham moved to approve License No. 17203 with Washington County Pheasants Forever Chapter to Use Real Property within the County Park System. Commissioner Miron seconded the motion, and it was adopted.

EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION

Commissioner Cox moved to move into Executive (closed) session. Commissioner Bigham seconded the motion, and it was adopted.

The Board met in Executive (closed) attorney/client session, pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.05, Subd. 3(b), to discuss active litigation, Evans v. Krook, the time being 9:53 a.m. Present for the Executive (closed) session were Commissioners Miron, Karwoski, Cox, and Bigham, and Kevin Corbid, Jennifer Wagenius, Julie Sorrem, Cindy Ecklund, John Ristad, Dan Starry, and Vicki Hruby.

The Executive (closed) session closed at 10:40 a.m.

OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION

County Administrator Kevin Corbid stated that the board received information from the attorney regarding a settlement reached in the Evans v. Krook lawsuit. A lawsuit was brought against Deputy Krook and the county following a 2018 incident in the City of Lake Elmo. Mr. Evans, who was armed and suicidal, was shot by Deputy Krook during a lengthy standoff with law enforcement. The county stands by the actions of its deputy as necessary and justified to protect public safety.

Mr. Corbid reported that over the past number of years, the county has vigorously defended itself and its deputy against the claims brought forth by the trustee and next-of-kin of Mr. Evans. The parties participated in numerous court-ordered mediations. The most recent mediation occurred in February, just prior to the start of the jury trial in federal court. At this most recent mediation, a tentative settlement was reached. The board received information on that settlement this morning. The settlement includes a payment to the plaintiff of \$4.5 million. Of this amount, \$2.0 million will be contributed by the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) and the remaining \$2.5 million contributed by the county. The \$2 million contributed by MCIT is the maximum coverage amount as a member of the trust.

Commissioner Miron moved to approve the settlement agreement in the lawsuit Evans v. Krook and approve appropriating \$2.5 million dollars from the county to the global settlement of any and all claims in this litigation, including attorneys' fees. Commissioner Bigham seconded the motion, and it was adopted.

State Legislative Update

County Administrator Kevin Corbid reported that today's agenda packet includes an update of the county's legislative priorities and the status on related bills. Also included are three letters of support related to Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System proposals.

Margaret Vesel from Larkin Hoffman reported that last week, the State's February forecast was announced. There was a decrease in revenues in both the short-term and long-term forecasts. The budget forecast for February is a surplus of \$456 million, a reduction of \$160 million from November. For 2028-2029, the budget forecast is a deficit of \$6 billion, a reduction of \$852 million from November. These numbers could continue to decrease, with much uncertainty at the federal level.

Ms. Vesel reported that the Minnesota Legislature has combined the first and second bill deadline to April 4, and the third deadline, in which the Omnibus bills need to be out of the finance committees, is April 11. The House is releasing their budget targets on April 1, and the Senate is releasing theirs on April 5. Ms. Vesel noted that taxes and bonding are not part of those budget deadlines, and she anticipates expecting a \$790 million bonding bill this year.

Mr. Corbid reported that the regional park system would like to send four letters of support, signed by each agency's park director. One of the letters relates to support for \$20 million on bonding for the regional parks. The County Board has this item as one of its legislative priorities, and Parks Director Alex McKinney has signed this letter of support. The other three letters ask for support of Operations and Maintenance Funding, Parks and Trails Legacy Fund, and Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). The board agreed to send the support letters.

Federal Legislative Update

Deputy County Administrator Jennifer Wagenius provided the Federal legislative update. Ms. Wagenius attended the National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference last week, along with commissioners. After meeting with the Federal delegation, the most likely outcome seems to be a continuing resolution to continue funding until the end of FY25, which may not include the pending community projects.

Ms. Wagenius reported that many members are starting to gather community projects for FY26, including Representative Pete Stauber and Senator Amy Klobuchar. In addition to the Sheriff's projects for FY26, Rep. Stauber requested the county resubmit the FY25 \$9 million County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 32 Improvement Project in FY26.

Ms. Wagenius reported that in meetings with the Federal delegation, the commissioners reaffirmed the FY25 projects, asked for feedback on FY26 projects, affirmed the county's reliance on Federal funding to provide critical services to county residents, and sharing the need for the release of the Federal grant funds that were committed to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), in order for the anaerobic digestion project with Ramsey County to move forward as contracted.

Ms. Wagenius concluded that after the NACo conference, there was a breakfast coordinated by Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), where attendees heard from members throughout Minnesota, all who shared their appreciation for county government and many called out their support for the Federal changes needed to further the county's legislative priority to improve the MnCHOICES assessment process and reduce the frequency of reassessments.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioners reported on meetings and other events they attended. Please see archived livestreaming of the board meeting for full commissioner reports on the county's website washingtontymn.gov under "County Board of Commissioners."

BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

No board correspondence was received.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Cox moved to adjourn. Commissioner Miron seconded the motion, and it was adopted.

The County Board meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

BOARD WORKSHOP WITH PUBLIC WORKS

The board met in workshop session to discuss the project budget for the purchase of property to site a central yard waste program and Sheriff's Office operations. Present for the workshop were Commissioners Miron, Cox, Karwoski, and Bigham. Also present were Kevin Corbid, Jennifer Wagenius, and county staff.

BOARD WORKSHOP WITH PROPERTY RECORDS AND TAXPAYER SERVICES

The board met in workshop session to review assessment year 2025/pay 2026 property values. Present for the workshop were Commissioners Miron, Cox, Karwoski, and Bigham. Also present were Kevin Corbid, Jennifer Wagenius, and county staff.

BOARD WORKSHOP WITH ADMINISTRATION

The board met in workshop session to discuss 2026 budget development, guidelines and principles. Present for the workshop were Commissioners Miron, Cox, Karwoski, and Bigham. Also present were Kevin Corbid, Jennifer Wagenius, and county staff.

Attest:

Kevin Corbid

Kevin Corbid
County Administrator

Stan Karwoski

Stan Karwoski
County Board Chair