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Date: Oct. 3, 2017
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Oct. 3, 2017, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

Miller will serve on Workforce Development Board

Lee Miller will serve as an education representative on the Washington County Workforce Development Board, after the County Board of Commissioners made the appointment Oct. 3. Miller will serve a term expiring June 30, 2020.

It is the responsibility of the Workforce Development Board to determine the most effective designation of administrative entities, grant recipients, and program operators for the Workforce Service Area. It also jointly plans for collaboration, and provides for on-site review and oversight of program performance. It also selects local priorities for service and target populations for supplemental programming within the Workforce Development Board.

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Green will serve on county's Child Protection Citizen Review Panel

Key-C Green, Woodbury, will serve on the Washington County Child Protection Citizen Review Panel, after the County Board of Commissioners made the appointment Oct. 3.

The appointment is for a partial first term expiring June 30, 2019.

The Child Protection Citizen Review Panel provides opportunities for members of the community to have an integral role in ensuring that Child Protection Service Systems are protecting children from

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abuse and neglect and are meeting the permanency needs of children. The County Board created the Child Protection Citizen Review Panel in 2007.

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County Board will conduct public hearing on buffer ordinance

The Washington County Board of Commissioners will conduct a public hearing to gather testimony on the adoption of a county buffer ordinance at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 24, in the County Board Room in the Government Center.

The Government Center is at 14949 62nd St. N., in Stillwater. The Board Room is on the fifth floor of the Government Center.

The Minnesota Buffer Law was signed into law in 2015, with some revisions made in 2016 and 2017. The law requires primarily agricultural landowners to implement vegetative buffer strips along public waters and public drainage systems, to protect or improve water quality.

The County Board elected local jurisdiction for enforcement of the buffer law in June, and notified the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

The proposed buffer ordinance puts in place the required local controls to enforce the ordinance. The ordinance applies countywide to all waters, including public drainage systems, shown on a buffer protection map prepared by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and available on its website at www.dnr.state.mn.us/buffers/index.html. The proposed county ordinance closely mirrors the model ordinance provided by BWSR, and should be in place by Nov. 1.

The basic buffer requirements in the ordinance are a 50-foot average and 30-foot minimum buffer requirement for public waters on the DNR buffer map, and a 16.5-foot minimum for public drainage systems on the DNR buffer map. The ordinance includes information on exemptions and alternative practices as allowed by state law.

Determining compliance will be done through a partnership between the Washington Conservation District (WCD) and the county. Enforcement options for noncompliant landowners include criminal and/or an administrative penalties.

To date, the WCD has identified 120 parcels in the county, owned by approximately 85 landowners, which may be impacted by the buffer law. All of the landowners received initial communication from

the WCD last fall. Forty-percent of those parcels were either removed from the DNR list, are in compliance, or have a plan to come into compliance. The remaining parcels still need field verification to determine compliance and landowners will receive additional communication from WCD this fall.

Contact: Stephanie Souter, Senior Planner, 651-430-6701

Moody's issues report on Washington County credit rating

Moody's Investor Services is a leading provider of credit ratings for corporate and public finance issuers, and has begun to issue an annual issuer comment report (AICR) for local government issuers who access the markets infrequently.

Washington County most recently issued debt in 2016 and received the highest credit rating available of AAA from Moody's. At the end of August, Moody's issued an AICR that provides a summary of key economic, demographic, and financial information for Washington County.

Moody's report concluded that Washington County's credit position is "excellent" and noted that its AAA rating is better than most other counties. Moody's noted that the key factors in reviewing the county's financial health include a very strong financial position, an extensive tax base, and strong resident wealth levels. Additional credit factors include an exceptionally light debt burden and a moderate pension liability. The report noted that debt and pension liabilities of Washington County are affordable overall and compare favorably to the medians for all Moody's-rated counties nationwide.

Washington County is one of a small number of counties nationwide that are AAA rated by both Moody's and Standard and Poor's, the two largest rating agencies.

The County Board has begun the process of refinancing a portion of its existing debt later this year. Based on current market conditions, the estimated savings from this refinancing could exceed \$4.5 million over the life of the existing bonds. Final board action on a potential refinancing would occur in November.

Contact: Molly O'Rourke, Administrator, 651-430-6002