

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

Date: Jan. 7, 2025
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

County commissioners take oaths of office, board elects chair and vice chair

Newly elected and reelected county commissioners took oaths of office before the Washington County Board meeting Jan. 7.

Newly elected Bethany Cox was sworn in for a four-year term as County Commissioner for District 3, serving the cities of Afton, Bayport, Baytown Township, Lake Elmo, Lake St. Croix Beach, Lakeland, Lakeland Shores, Oak Park Heights, St. Mary's Point, Stillwater, Stillwater Township, and West Lakeland Township.

Before being elected to the County Board, Cox worked as the Director of Development at the Wild Rivers Conservancy of the St. Croix and Namekagon from 2019 to 2024. Cox served on the City of Stillwater Planning Commission from 2022 to 2024 and the Stillwater Public Library Board of Trustees from 2018 to 2022.

Commissioner Fran Miron was reelected to a four-year term as County Commissioner for District 1, serving the cities of Dellwood, Forest Lake, Grant, Hugo, Marine on St. Croix, Scandia, and May Township, as well as Precinct 1 of Mahtomedi. Miron was elected to the County Board in 2012. He was reelected in 2016, 2020, and 2024.

Miron served 16 years as the mayor of the city of Hugo and four years as a city of Hugo council member. He has served in numerous civic service organizations, including the University of Minnesota Extension Service. He is a director on the Forest Lake Community Scholarship Foundation board. He also served on a multijurisdictional transportation coalition that guided the construction of the Interstate 35E

interchange and chaired the Hugo Economic Development Authority. He has also been involved in several agricultural organizations.

During the Jan. 7 meeting, Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2, was elected as the board chair and Commissioner Karla Bigham, District 4, was elected as vice chair for 2025. The board also set its meeting dates for 2025. Information on board meetings can be found at the county's website, WashingtonCountyMN.gov.

Contact: Tina Elam, Communications Manager, 651-430-6004 (office), 651-592-5989 (after hours)

Photo Cutlines: 003 – Fran Miron (right) is sworn into office as a Washington County Commissioner for District 1 on Jan. 7, 2025.

006 – Bethany Cox (right) is sworn into office as a Washington County Commissioner for District 3 on Jan. 7, 2025.

County receives state Cannabis and Substance Use Prevention grant

Washington County received 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 grant funds totaling \$199,076 for the initial grant period that runs through June 30, 2026.

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 main focus must be on primary prevention of substance use/misuse.

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

Sheriff's Office receives donation for K9 unit

The Washington County Sheriff's Office K9 Unit received a \$1,000 donation from county resident Jackie Marshall.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted the donation Jan. 7.

Marshall is involved in a horse and hunt club that works with hunting dogs. Marshall made the donation to the K9 Unit to give back to the community. This donation will be used to purchase equipment for the K9 Unit's new team, who will start training in February.

Contact: Sara Halverson, Commander-Patrol Division, 651-430-7871

County Board approves contract for website redesign

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract Jan. 7 with Bright Penny Creative, LLC to redesign the county's website.

Under the \$283,875 contract, Bright Penny Creative, LLC project will implement the recommendations from a comprehensive website evaluation that was completed in April 2024. These recommendations include:

- Auditing the website to remove outdated and redundant information.
- Redesigning navigation menus and webpages to make it easier for users to navigate and find the information they need.
- Implementing design principles to meet and maintain federal accessibility standards.

Implementing the recommendations of the comprehensive website evaluation will create a visually engaging, responsive, and inviting website that meets community needs.

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County Board adopts 2025 legislative platform

The Washington County Board of Commissioners adopted the county's 2025 legislative platform Jan. 7, which will guide the county's work at the state Capitol during the next legislative session.

Government Center | 14949 62nd Street North | P. O. Box 6 | Stillwater, MN 55082-0006
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Each year, the County Board adopts position statements on state funding requests and legislative issues specific to Washington County. The issues that the board will present to the Legislature in 2025 are requests for:

- \$22.5 million in state funds to construct the County Road 19A and 100th Street Realignment Project.
- \$3 million in general funds for the design of the multimodal Trunk Highway (TH) 36 and TH 120 (Century Ave.) grade separation project.
- \$10 million in state funds for the design and construction of a Southern Public Works and Environmental Center Campus.
- \$3 million in state funds to construct a trailhead and trail connection(s) from County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 5 to the Brown's Creek State Trail.
- \$1 million in state funds for land acquisition, design, and construction to close a one-mile gap in the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail.
- \$2 million in state funds for trail lighting in Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.
- \$4 million in state funds for land and equipment purchases to process wood waste and diseased trees into products.
- \$15 million in state funds for Metropolitan Regional Park System capital projects.
- State support for required investments related to the ARMER Radio System Upgrade Agreement.
- Legislation that will simplify the MnCHOICES assessment process and reduce the frequency of reassessments to every three years, upon request, or when a significant change in condition occurs.
- Legislation to remove the 10% financial obligation for Minnesota counties associated with MnCHOICES assessments and reassessments.

The adopted 2025 Legislative Platform will be shared with the county's legislative delegation.

Contact: Jan Lucke, Deputy County Administrator, 651-430-6003

County Board adopts committees, commission, joint powers boards assignments

The Washington County Board of Commissioners adopted assignments Jan. 7 for 2025 for the committees, commissions, and joint powers boards on which commissioners serve.

As part of their duties as commissioners, the commissioners serve on groups that oversee governance and functions throughout the metropolitan area, and throughout the state. The 2025 assignments are:

Commissioner Fran Miron, District 1:

- Washington County:
 - Groundwater Advisory Committee.
 - Personnel Committee.
 - Regional Rail Authority.
 - Washington County Community Development Agency.
- Association of Minnesota Counties:
 - Agriculture & Rural Development Advisory Committee.
 - Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.
- East Central Regional Juvenile Center as an alternate.
- Lower St. Croix Watershed Policy Committee.
- Metropolitan Emergency Services Board (MESB).
 - MESB Executive Committee.
- Metropolitan Mosquito Control District (MMCD).
 - MMCD Executive Committee.
- Minnesota Inter-County Association.
- Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Board.

Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2:

- Washington County:
 - Regional Rail Authority.
 - Washington County Community Development Agency as an alternate.
 - Workforce Development Board.

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- Association of Minnesota Counties:
 - Transportation Policy Committee.
- East Metro Strong Board.
- Gold Line Executive Change Control Board.
- Gold Line Joint Powers Board.
- GREATER MSP.
- Metropolitan Mosquito Control District as an alternate.
- Metropolitan Transportation Advisory Board.
- Minnesota Inter-County Association.
- National Association of Counties (NACo).
 - Rural Action Caucus Steering Committee.
 - Environmental, Energy and Land Use Committee.
 - Environment, Energy and Land Use Steering Committee – Air Quality (Vice Chair).
 - Membership Standing Committee.
- Rush Line (Purple Line) Corridor Task Force.

Commissioner Bethany Cox, District 3

- Washington County:
 - Community Corrections Advisory Board.
 - Groundwater Advisory Committee as an alternate.
 - Historic Courthouse Advisory Committee.
 - Personnel Committee.
 - Planning Advisory Commission.
 - Plat Commission.
 - Regional Rail Authority.
- Association of Minnesota Counties:
 - Board of Directors as District X Representative as an alternate.
 - General Government Policy Committee.
- East Central Regional Juvenile Center.
- Lake Elmo Airport Advisory Commission.

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- Lower St. Croix Watershed Policy Committee as an alternate.
- Metropolitan Emergency Services Board as an alternate.
- Metropolitan Mosquito Control District.
- Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Board as an alternate.

Commissioner Karla Bigham, District 4

- Washington County:
 - Audit Advisory Committee.
 - Finance Committee.
 - Law Library Board.
 - Library Board.
 - Planning Advisory Commission as an alternate.
 - Plat Commission as an alternate.
 - Regional Rail Authority.
 - University of Minnesota Extension Advisory Committee.
- Association of Minnesota Counties:
 - Board of Directors as District X Representative.
 - Public Safety Policy Committee.
- Gold Line Executive Change Control Board as an alternate.
- Gold Line Joint Powers Board as alternate.
- Great River Rail Commission.
- Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA).
 - MELSA Finance Committee.
- Metropolitan Transportation Advisory Board as alternate.
- Minnesota Inter-County Association as an alternate.
- National Association of Counties (NACo).
 - Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee.
 - Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee – Law Enforcement Subcommittee (Vice Chair).
 - Arts and Culture Commission.

- The Resilient Counties Advisory Board.
- The Rural Action Caucus – RAC.
- Women of NACo Leadership Network.
- Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Board.
 - Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Board - "Regional Hauler Licensing Board."
- Red Rock Corridor Commission.

Commissioner Michelle Clasen, District 5

- Washington County:
 - Finance Committee.
 - Library Park Association.
 - Mental Health Advisory Council.
 - Parks and Open Space Commission.
 - Regional Rail Authority.
 - Workforce Development Board as an alternate.
 - University of Minnesota Extension Advisory Committee.
- Association of Minnesota Counties:
 - Economic Development, Workforce, and Housing Policy Subcommittee.
 - Health and Human Services Policy Committee.
 - Local Government Water Roundtable Advisory Committee.
- East Metro Strong Board as an alternate.
- Gold Line Executive Change Control Board.
- Gold Line Joint Powers Board.
- Great River Rail Commission as an alternate.
- Metropolitan Emergency Services Board.
- National Association of Counties (NACo).
 - Community, Economic and Workforce Development Steering Committee .
 - LGBT Leaders and Allies (NACLGBTLA).
 - Women of NACo Leadership Network Committee.
- Red Rock Corridor Commission as an alternate.

- State Community Health Services Advisory Committee.

Contact: Holly Hess, Administrative Assistant, 651-430-6015

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