

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

**Date:** Feb. 11, 2025  
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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The following actions were taken at the Feb. 11, 2025, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota.

## **County Board makes appointment to Mental Health Advisory Council**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners appointed Nichole Buatala to a first term on the Mental Health Advisory Council (local advisory council) as a Chemical Health Professional Representative Feb. 11.

Buatala's term begins Feb. 12, 2025, and expires Dec. 31, 2027.

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

## **County to embed crisis telecommunicator in Emergency Communications Response Center**

Washington County will embed a full-time crisis telecommunicator in the county's Emergency Communications Response Center in 2025.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$199,841.82 grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Feb. 11 to fund the pilot position. The term of the grant agreement is from March 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.

The pilot's goal is to assist in meeting Travis Law mental health requirements, which directs 911 calls centers to dispatch mental health crisis teams as the primary responders to most mental health crisis calls. The pilot also aims to enhance coordination between the Sheriff's Office and Community Services for mental health support and streamline referrals to the Crisis Response Unit and Coordinated Response Team.

The Department of Public Safety, Minnesota Office of Justice Programs, provided funding to local law enforcement and governments to support or expand crisis response teams, where social workers or mental health professionals are sent as first responders to mental health crisis calls.

**Contact: Kathy Mickelson, Community Services Division Manager, 651-430-6532**

## **Sheriff's Office receives Reunite K9 Cop Grant for new canine**

The Washington County Sheriff's Office received a \$7,500 grant from the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) and American Kennel Club to help with the purchase of a new canine.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the Reunite K9 Cop Grant Feb. 11.

The new canine to be purchased using the funds will replace one that will be retiring. The Sheriff's Office has been a long-standing member of the USPCA and has a great partnership with the organization.

The grant requires a \$2,500 minimum county match, which will be covered by levy budgeted in the K9 Unit.

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