



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

**Date:** July 8, 2025  
**Contact:** Tina Elam, Communications Manager  
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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The following actions were taken at the July 8, 2025, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota.

### **County Board makes Workforce Development Board appointments**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved two appointments to the Workforce Development Board July 8.

The board appointed Conner Sager to the Workforce Development Board as a business representative and Cynthia Larson as a DEED representative for first terms starting July 9, 2025, and expiring Dec. 31, 2028.

**Contact: Tina Elam, Office of Administration Communications Manager, 651-430-6004**

### **County Board approves contract for adult and child case management**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract July 8 with Mount Olivet Rolling Acres, Inc. to provide case management services to adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Case management for these individuals is performed by county social workers or contracted through private agencies. The county completed a request for proposals process to expand contracted case management services, and the county received 17 proposals.

The contract with Mount Olivet Rolling Acres, Inc. begins on the date of signature and extends through Dec. 31, 2026. It shall not exceed \$40,000 in county-paid funds for the term of the contract.

**Contact: Denise Landry, Community Services Division Manager, 651-275-7754**

## **Jen Sterner is the 2025 Washington County Child Care Provider of the Year**

Jen Sterner of Lake Elmo was recognized as Washington County's 2025 Child Care Provider of the Year at the July 8 County Board meeting.

Sterner operates Sunrise Nature Preschool, a half-day nature-based preschool next to Lake Elmo Park Reserve. Sterner works with young children, sharing her passion for environmentalism, outdoor recreation, and play. Sterner's school has an outdoor classroom and an indoor preschool space filled with opportunities for art, movement, music, building, dramatic play, reading, cooking, baking, and more.

Sterner aims to partner with families in their children's learning. Each day, she shares photos of the children's adventures so that families can follow along with the fun. Books are thoughtfully selected to complement what the children are exploring in their learning.

Sterner believes children learn best through play. She provides children with opportunities for independence and creative problem-solving in a safe place where they can make and learn from mistakes, as well as form meaningful relationships. She wants every child that leaves her program to feel empowered by and grounded in the idea that they are capable, lovable, and worthy just as they are.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized Sterner for her accomplishment during the board meeting. Every year, a committee of professionals evaluates nominations for Washington County's Family Child Care Provider of the Year. Nominations are available on the county website for anyone in the community, but the majority of nominations come from families in care. The selection of a provider for this recognition includes the following:

- They have been in the field for at least three years.
- They promote quality child care as a profession.
- They meet annual state training requirements and have future goals to further enhance their competency as a child care provider.
- They have a positive impact on the lives of young children.
- They demonstrate professional skills in child care.

**Contact: Christy Moravitz, Community Services Senior Communications Specialist, 651-308-0037**

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**Photo cutline: From left to right: Washington County Commissioners Stan Karwoski, Karla Bigham, and Bethany Cox, Jen Sterner of Sunrise Nature Preschool, and Commissioners Fran Miron and Michelle Clasen.**

## **Residents report high quality of life in Washington County**

Washington County residents continue to report a high quality of life, according to results from the most recent Community Survey.

Representatives from Polco and the National Research Center presented the findings from the 2025 Washington County Community Survey to the Board of Commissioners at its July 8 meeting.

The county partners with Polco and the National Research Center every few years to gather feedback from residents about quality of life, local concerns, and county services. In February, the survey was mailed to 4,500 randomly selected households, with online access also available in English, Spanish, and Hmong. A total of 673 responses were collected and analyzed to reflect the county's diverse population.

This year's results show that the overall quality of life scores have improved since 2022. Residents gave the county an overall rating of 80 on a 100-point scale, which is well above the national average. Many said they value the county's location, rural feel, and strong neighborhoods.

When asked about community challenges, residents expressed concern about taxes, affordable housing, reckless driving, and inflation. Concerns about crime have decreased since 2022.

Health and environmental priorities included concerns about mental health, obesity, and the quality of local water resources. At the same time, residents gave the county positive marks for its efforts in land conservation, disaster preparedness, and waste reduction.

County services received strong ratings overall. Libraries, parks, recycling centers, snow removal, and services for older adults all scored above national averages. Compared to the 2022 survey, residents reported improvements in mental health services, disaster preparedness, and services for veterans.

Residents also rated experiences with county employees and at county service and license centers more positively in 2025, noting shorter wait times and courteous, knowledgeable service.

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**Contact: Kelli Matzek, Office of Administration Senior Planner, 651-430-6021**

## **County Board proclaims July 20-26 as Pretrial, Probation, and Parole Supervision Week**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners proclaimed July 20-26, 2025, as Pretrial, Probation, and Parole Supervision Week July 8.

The week honors the work of pretrial, probation, and parole officers in Washington County and recognizes their achievements. This year's theme is "Heroes Behind the Mission: Transforming Lives, Enhancing Public Safety."

Probation officers continue to work together to find solutions to the myriad problems that challenge community corrections. When we lean on each other and support each other, it makes for stronger bonds between colleagues, community partners, and those under supervision. This collaborative work done by community corrections professionals keeps communities safe and transforms the lives of justice-involved clients.

**Contact: Terry Thomas, Community Corrections Director, 651-430-6951**

## **K9 Jake retires from Washington County Sheriff's Office K9 Unit**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the retirement of K9 Jake from the Sheriff's Office K9 Unit July 8. The board also approved the transfer of ownership of K9 Jake to his handler, Deputy Chris Majeski.

K9 Jake has served the communities of Washington County since 2016. K9 Jake has reached the end of his service as he is no longer able to perform his duties due to age and medical reasons. K9 Jake was an invaluable resource to our communities by taking dangerous drugs off the streets, locating individuals involved in crimes, and locating missing and vulnerable people.

Deputy Majeski and K9 Jake were part of two national champion K9 teams for the last two championships. Deputy Majeski and K9 Jake have put in over nine and a half years of dedicated service.

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

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**Photo cutline: The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognizes K9 Jake and his handler, Washington County Deputy Chris Majeski, upon K9 Jake's retirement from service.**

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