



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: April 26, 2022

DATE: March 30, 2022

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Timber Weiss, P.E., Licensed Engineer, Engineering and Capital Projects Community Services Department, 328-4626, tweiss@washoecounty.gov

THROUGH: Dwayne Smith, P.E., Division Director, Engineering and Capital Projects Community Services Department, 328-2043, desmith@washoecounty.gov

SUBJECT: Recommendation to approve the Agreement for the Golden Valley Aquifer Recharge Assessment between Washoe County and Terraphase Engineering effective April 26, 2022, to provide engineering analysis and recommendations for artificial recharge activities in the Golden Valley Groundwater Aquifer [at a cost of \$102,983 which will be 100% funded from the Golden Valley Aquifer Recharge Program under Washoe County Ordinance 1548]. (Commission Districts 5.)

SUMMARY

Washoe County initiated the Golden Valley Recharge Program (Program) in 2002 to combat declining groundwater levels in the Golden Valley Aquifer, which were adversely impacting domestic well owners in the area. The Program injected potable water into the aquifer from 2002 to April 2016 with positive groundwater level trends, then halted upon the discovery of excessive rising groundwater levels in portions of the Golden Valley community. To better understand the hydrologic parameters of the Golden Valley Aquifer, Washoe County is proposing to enter into a contractual agreement with Terraphase Engineering to generate an analysis of the aquifer. This analysis will provide insight to hydrologic factors influencing the aquifer, the interconnectivity of the aquifer throughout Golden Valley and the equality of the Program for domestic well owners in the Golden Valley community.

Washoe County secured funding for this engineering analysis with fees collected under Ordinance 1548, which is fully funding this effort. Approval of this Agreement will have a net-zero impact to Washoe County and the Community Services Department.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Fiscal Sustainability: Long-term sustainability

PREVIOUS ACTION

On November 21, 2014, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) adopted Ordinance 1548, the Golden Valley Artificial Recharge Program, to provide the fee requirements and rate schedule for the Program. Under this ordinance, fees have been collected from

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all property owners in the Golden Valley Area on a monthly basis from December 2014 through present day.

BACKGROUND

In the 1980s and early 1990s, declining groundwater levels in the Golden Valley area caused numerous domestic well owners to either deepen, recondition, or redrill their domestic wells. The Program was initiated in 2002 to inject drinking water quality potable water into the Golden Valley Aquifer to benefit the domestic well users in the area. The project ran successfully through April 2016, when aquifer recharge activity under the Program halted due to high groundwater levels within portions of the Golden Valley Area. Water levels were continuously measured throughout the Golden Valley Area during recharge activity to present day. Current water level data shows continuous rise in groundwater levels in portions of Golden Valley even after the cessation of recharge activities under the Program in April 2016.

Additional engineering analysis of the Golden Valley Aquifer is needed to understand hydrologic interconnectivity in Golden Valley, determine natural hydrologic influences on the aquifer and optimize recharge activity if the Program begins to operate in the future. Washoe County intends to enter into an agreement with Terraphase Engineering to conduct the aquifer analysis. The Professional Services Agreement, Scope of Work and exhibits are included.

FISCAL IMPACT

Should the Board approve the professional consulting agreement for the Golden Valley Aquifer Analysis, there is sufficient funds and budget authority in FY22 in the Utilities Fund (566), Golden Valley Recharge Operations (664300), Professional Services (710100). Revenues in support of the service are provided from recharge service fees.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Board of County Commissioners approve the Agreement for the Golden Valley Aquifer Recharge Assessment between Washoe County and Terraphase Engineering effective April 26, 2022, to provide engineering analysis and recommendations for artificial recharge activities in the Golden Valley Groundwater Aquifer [at a cost of \$102,983 which will be 100% funded from the Golden Valley Aquifer Recharge Program under Washoe County Ordinance 1548].

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to approve the Agreement for the Golden Valley Aquifer Recharge Assessment between Washoe County and Terraphase Engineering effective April 26, 2022, to provide engineering analysis and recommendations for artificial recharge activities in the Golden Valley Groundwater Aquifer [at a cost of \$102,983 which will be 100% funded from the Golden Valley Aquifer Recharge Program under Washoe County Ordinance 1548]."