



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: February 25, 2020

DATE: Thursday, February 20, 2020

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Kate Thomas, Assistant County Manager
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THROUGH: Eric P. Brown, County Manager

SUBJECT: Recommendation to discuss and obtain direction regarding the development of a Washoe County Arts Commission. (All Commission Districts).

SUMMARY

This agenda item outlines potential areas for consideration as the Board of County Commissioners discusses establishing a Washoe County Arts Commission to guide art and cultural activities on County-owned property or projects within unincorporated Washoe County. The Washoe County Arts Commission would be established to complement the existing, similar boards in both the Cities of Reno and Sparks and support the arts, economic development, and quality of life in the region.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Safe, Secure and Healthy Communities.

PREVIOUS ACTION

At the September 24, 2019 Board meeting, Commissioners Berkbigler and Lucey stated the need for an arts commission to oversee issues related to art in Washoe County.

On February 18, 2020, the Board of County Commissioners approved a resolution to move the remaining \$8,800 in Commissioner Berkbigler's commissioner District Funds to support the arts in Washoe County.

BACKGROUND

The successful Washoe County ArTrail project and forecasted growth in Washoe County highlights the need to support a culturally diverse and dynamic community and expand Washoe County's role in the arts.

According to a resource guide published by the Oklahoma Arts Council, developing an effective arts council requires focused planning and a commitment to offer arts programs

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that are meaningful and relevant to the community. Arts councils provide various services including sponsoring arts festivals, showcasing the work of local artists, hosting art exhibits, concerts and performances, sponsoring arts workshops in community settings, or facilitating professional development services to existing arts organizations. They may also award grants to local artists or local arts organizations or maintain an inventory of public art and artists. In rural areas, the local arts council may be the only arts organization in the community.

In considering a Washoe County Arts Council, staff has contacted the City of Sparks and City of Reno to ensure that the Washoe County Arts Council is complementary to their existing programs and further enhances art and culture goals in Washoe County. Developing the Washoe County Arts Commission will require staff oversight of the Commission which will be responsible for agenda development, meeting posting in conformance with Nevada Open Meeting Law, budget development and monitoring, website coordination and compiling of minutes. District Attorney oversight will be needed as well as other County administrative support.

Because staff resources are limited and to properly develop, support, promote and coordinate the arts at the County level, it is recommended that a phased approach be taken and that the following elements be considered in establishing the Arts Council:

- **Staff** – it is recommended that the preliminary establishment of the Arts Commission utilize existing staff in the County Manager’s Office to establish the Arts Commission while working towards a dedicated staff resource as the program grows and direction from the County Commission is provided. As an example, the additional staff resource could also coordinate special events for Washoe County if the Board of County Commissioners identifies a future need.
- **Commission size** – it is recommended that the Arts Commission be comprised of five (5) members. Each of the Board of County Commissioners would appoint one (1) arts commissioner to represent their respective commission districts *or* to be appointed as at large members not specific to a district by each County Commissioner. Arts Commissioner term is recommended as two (2) years with no term limit with no compensation.
- **Budget** – funding for the Washoe County Arts Commission is dependent on the desired objective of the Arts Commission and can be appropriated annually via the budget process. As part of the direction needed for the resolution to establish the Arts Commission, it is recommended that the Board of County Commissioner request a Restricted Internal Order account be established to accept funding.

For example, the Reno Arts & Culture Commission supports arts and artists through grants, purchase of public art for display in Reno, and commissioned projects. The Reno Arts & Culture Commission receives approximately \$200,000 from room tax and there is a general fund allocation as well as a public art dedication also from room tax. The overall Arts, Culture, and Special events office within the Office of the City Manager includes two full time and

The City of Sparks' Arts and Culture Advisory Committee (ACAC) was formed in 2016 to support the community by facilitating investment in the arts and culture. The budget for the ACAC is derived from \$20,000 annually in room tax allocation, \$20,000 annually from the usage fees from private use of public property, a \$150,000 allocation for public art from the Sparks Tourism Facility & Revitalization Steering Committee and grant money as secured. The City's event supervisor staffs the ACAC and oversees the nearly \$200,000 arts budget.

- **Objective** – a limited scope is recommended at the onset of the Washoe County Arts Commission depending on budget and staff resources. As the Arts Commission is established and the appointed individuals begin to meet there will be development of a mission and scope of work to ultimately be approved by the Board of County Commissioners. The mission and objectives will lead to budget development and enhancement of the Arts Commission regionally.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact at this time as staff is seeking direction to bring forward a resolution for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve the establishment of a Washoe County Arts Commission and direct staff to bring back a resolution incorporating the discussion heard during this item.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to approve the establishment of a Washoe County Arts Commission and direct staff to bring back a resolution incorporating the discussion heard during this item."