



# WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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## STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: July 23, 2019

**DATE:** Friday, July 19, 2019

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Patrick Lee, Captain, Special Operations Division  
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**THROUGH:** Darin Balaam, Sheriff

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation to approve the Law Enforcement Funding Agreement between Burning Man Project (BMP) and Washoe County, on behalf of the Washoe County Sheriff's Office to provide reimbursement for extra staffing [\$118,351.00 estimated total reimbursement] needed in the Gerlach/Empire area during the annual Burning Man Festival for 2019. (Commission District 5)

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### SUMMARY

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office has been tasked with providing additional coverage in the Gerlach/Empire communities while the Burning Man Festival is taking place in the nearby Black Rock Desert. BMP has agreed to a contract which provides for reimbursement to the County for the cost of providing the additional manpower.

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

### PREVIOUS ACTION

On March 18, 2008, the Board approved funding agreements for the 2008 and 2009 Burning Man Festivals.

On July 9, 2013, the Board approved a funding agreement for the 2013 Burning Man Festival.

On August 12, 2014, the Board approved a funding agreement for the 2014 Burning Man Festival.

On July 14, 2015, the Board approved a funding agreement for the 2015 Burning Man Festival.

On June 28, 2016, the Board approved a funding agreement for the 2016 Burning Man Festival.

On June 13, 2017, the Board approved a funding agreement for the 2017 Burning Man Festival.

AGENDA ITEM # \_\_\_\_\_

On August 28, 2018, the Board approved a funding agreement for the 2018 Burning Man Festival.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Burning Man Festival has been taking place in the Black Rock Desert for the last 14 years, with the event currently being held in Pershing County, approximately 8 miles from the town of Gerlach, NV. The main roads into the event are in Washoe County's jurisdiction with more than 70,000 people traveling through Gerlach and Empire to get to the event.

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office is tasked with providing additional law enforcement presence in the communities while the event is going on, which creates a financial burden to Washoe County. Washoe County is not responsible for providing a law enforcement presence inside the festival, which is being handled by the Pershing County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Land Management. The Burning Man organizers are aware of the financial burden to Washoe County and have agreed to offset the Sheriff's Office expenses by providing funding to the Sheriff's Office. They have agreed to pay \$118,351.00 for law enforcement presence.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

WCSO supervision will determine appropriate additional staffing levels needed during the Burning Man event and all costs in excess of the Gerlach Resident Deputies salaries will be reimbursed by Burning Man Project, up to \$118,351. The funds obtained will be used for salary reimbursement, lodging, per diem, and vehicle expenses. Reimbursement received will be deposited to account 150200-485129 (Office of the Sheriff-Salary Reimbursement).

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve the Law Enforcement Funding Agreement between Burning Man Project (BMP) and Washoe County, on behalf of the Washoe County Sheriff's Office to provide reimbursement for extra staffing [\$118,351.00 estimated total reimbursement] needed in the Gerlach/Empire area during the annual Burning Man Festival for 2019.

### **POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to approve the Law Enforcement Funding Agreement between Burning Man Project (BMP) and Washoe County, on behalf of the Washoe County Sheriff's Office to provide reimbursement for extra staffing [\$118,351.00 estimated total reimbursement] needed in the Gerlach/Empire area during the annual Burning Man Festival for 2019."