



# WASHOE COUNTY

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## STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: July 20, 2021

**DATE:** Thursday, July 15, 2021

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Michael Large, Deputy District Attorney  
337-5712, mlarge@da.washoecounty.us

**THROUGH:** David Watts-Vial, Assistant District Attorney  
Cathy Hill, Risk Manager

**SUBJECT:** Discussion and possible approval of a settlement of *Heidi Howe v. Washoe County; Chuck Allen*, case number 3:18-cv-00471-HDM-WGC, for a total sum of [\$45,000] inclusive of attorneys' fees and costs for all claims against Washoe County – (All Commission Districts) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

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### SUMMARY

This is a possible settlement of a lawsuit filed by former employee Heidi Howe against Washoe County; Chuck Allen in October 2018. A proposed draft of the settlement agreement is attached as Exhibit 1 to this staff report. Ms. Howe's claim arises under Title VII based on allegations of gender discrimination. The case is currently pending in the United States District Court for the District of Nevada.

Pursuant to WCC 65.240(5), the Board has sole authority to settle any claim or suit for damages in this amount.

County Priority/Goal Supported by this Item: Government efficiency and financial stability.

### PREVIOUS ACTION

There is no previous action for this item.

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

## **BACKGROUND**

Ms. Howe is a former employee with the Washoe County Sheriff's Office. After she retired from employment in 2017, Ms. Howe filed a complaint in federal court asserting Title VII claims based on gender discrimination. The case has proceeded through dispositive motions, an appeal, and is currently in discovery.

Ms. Howe was seeking over \$1,897,000 in damages in this case. The proposed settlement will not result in a judgment against Washoe County, and Washoe County makes no admissions regarding liability by entering the settlement agreement. The settlement will resolve all claims brought against Washoe County.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Funding for the payment of the \$45,000 settlement is available within the FY22 adopted budget in the Risk Management Fund (619).

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board approve the settlement of *Heidi Howe v. Washoe County; Chuck Allen*, case number 3:18-cv-00471-HDM-WGC, for a total sum of [\$45,000] inclusive of attorneys' fees and costs for all claims against Washoe County

## **POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Board agree with staffs' recommendation, a possible motion could be:

"Move to approve settlement of *Heidi Howe v. Washoe County; Chuck Allen*, case number 3:18-cv-00471-HDM-WGC, for a total sum of [\$45,000] inclusive of attorneys' fees and costs for all claims against Washoe County