



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: August 20, 2024

DATE: August 20, 2024,

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Cari Ann Burgess, Interim Registrar of Voters
(775) 328-3238, cburgess@washoecounty.gov

THROUGH: Eric Brown, County Manager

SUBJECT: Recommendation, pursuant to NRS 295.121, for the Board of County Commissioners 1) to appoint up to three (3) individuals to serve on the arguments committee advocating passage of WC-1 (persons being presented by the Registrar of Voters include: Sharon Honig-Bear, Gail Townsend, and Megan Downs) and 2) to appoint up to three (3) individuals to serve on the arguments committee advocating against passage of WC-1 (persons being presented by the Registrar of Voters include: Bruce Parks, Ron Aryel, and Penny Brock); WC-1 is a ballot question authorized by the Board of County Commissioners regarding a 30 year tax override to fund certain aspects of the Washoe County Library System. (All Commission Districts)

SUMMARY

Recommendation, pursuant to NRS 295.121, for the Board of County Commissioners 1) to appoint up to three (3) individuals to serve on the arguments committee advocating passage of WC-1 (persons being presented by the Registrar of Voters include: Sharon Honig-Bear, Gail Townsend, and Megan Downs) and 2) to appoint up to three (3) individuals to serve on the arguments committee advocating against passage of WC-1 (persons being presented by the Registrar of Voters include: Bruce Parks, Ron Aryel, and Penny Brock); WC-1 is a ballot question authorized by the Board of County Commissioners for a 30- year tax override to fund certain aspects of the Washoe County Library System.

PREVIOUS ACTION

No previous action has been taken on this item.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

BACKGROUND

On June 18, 2024, the Board of County Commissioners approved the “Renew Washoe Libraries Resolution,” which authorized a question to appear on the November 8, 2024 General Election ballot regarding extending the allocation to the Washoe County Library System of \$.02 cents for every \$100.00 in assessed property value in Washoe County. This would represent the continuation of an existing tax override that has been in place since 1994.

In 1994 the voters within Washoe County authorized the Board of County Commissioners to implement a 30-year dedicated tax override of \$0.02 for every \$100 of assessed property value to be utilized for acquiring, constructing, improving, equipping, operating, and maintaining library facilities for the County.

In September of 2000 the Board of County Commissioners through Resolution created the Library Expansion Fund for the purpose of clearly identifying the funds received from the tax and directed those expenditures from the fund be limited to costs associated with expansion of services including, but not limited to additional library branch debt service payments, expanded library services, expanded library hours and additional library collections. Since 2000 the Library Expansion Fund has been utilized for staff to expand hours, payment of debt service on library facilities, and expansion of library collections.

The tax dedication period authorized in 1994 runs its course this year and the Library Board of Trustees has a tax renewal plan in place as part of the Washoe County Library System 2022-2025 Strategic Plan.

Per NRS 295.121, the Board of County Commissioners shall, in consultation with the Registrar of Voters, appoint two committees to prepare arguments, one advocating passage of WC-1 and one opposing passage of the WC-1 ballot question.

The office of the Registrar of Voters has established a list of persons who have expressed interest in serving on the committees and recommends the Board of County Commissioners appoint committee members from this list pursuant to NRS 295.121 (5) (a) & (b). That list of interested individuals was established by contacting interested parties by phone, email, and in person.

Once the list was established, the Office of the Registrar of Voters, in performing its due diligence, conducted limited interviews of the individuals who had stated interest in serving on the committees. The Office of the Registrar of Voters now, pursuant to NRS 295.121(5), makes the following recommendations for the committees:

- Arguments Committee Advocating for Passage of WC-1: Sharon Honig-Bear, Gail Townsend, and Megan Downs
- Arguments Committee Advocating Against Passage of WC-1: Bruce Parks, Ron Aryel, and Penny Brock

In the event the Board of County Commissioners fails to appoint a committee as required pursuant to NRS 295.121, the Registrar of Voters would, in consultation with the district attorney, prepare an argument advocating approval by the voters of the ballot question and an argument opposing approval by the voters of the ballot question. The Registrar of Voters would not prepare any rebuttal of the arguments. NRS 295.121(6).

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact related to the appointment of persons to the two (2) arguments committees.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners appoint ‘Sharon Honig-Bear, Gail Townsend, and Megan Downs’ to serve on committee to prepare arguments advocating passage of WC-1, and to appoint ‘Bruce Parks, Ron Aryel, and Penny Brock’ to serve on the committee opposing passage of WC-1, pursuant to NRS 295.121.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board of County Commissioners agree with the recommendation, a possible motion would be:

“Move to appoint ‘Sharon Honig-Bear, Gail Townsend, and Megan Downs’ to serve on committee to prepare arguments advocating passage of WC-1, and to appoint ‘Bruce Parks, Ron Aryel, and Penny Brock’ to serve on the committee opposing passage of WC-1, pursuant to NRS 295.121.”