



# WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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## STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: April 16, 2024

**DATE:** March 25, 2024

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent,  
Community Services Dept., 775-328-2181, [cwallace@washoecounty.gov](mailto:cwallace@washoecounty.gov)

**THROUGH:** Eric Crump, Director,  
Community Services Dept., 775-328-3625, [ecrump@washoecounty.gov](mailto:ecrump@washoecounty.gov)

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation to approve: 1) a Dragon Lights Reno Agreement between Washoe County and Tianyu Arts and Culture Inc., for a Dragon Lights Reno event to be held on September 27, 2024 through November 30, 2024 (with possible renewals for calendar years 2025 and 2026) at the Wilbur D. May Arboretum and Botanical Garden, located at 1595 North Sierra Street; and 2) authorize Community Services Director, Eric Crump, to execute an Invitation Letter directed to the United States Citizen and Immigration Services requesting P-3 visas for artists and entertainers. (Commission District 3.)

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### SUMMARY

This item is a request from Tianyu Arts & Culture Inc., to host Dragon Lights Reno at the May Arboretum and Botanical Garden within Rancho San Rafael Regional Park. The proposed agreement authorizes exclusive use of the Arboretum and sections of Rancho San Rafael Regional Park as designated in the agreement.

**Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item:** Economic Impacts, Support a thriving community.

### PREVIOUS ACTION

On December 10, 2019, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) approved the Dragon Lights Reno Agreement between Washoe County and Tianyu Arts & Culture Inc., for a Dragon Lights Reno event from June 27, 2020 through August 2, 2020 (with possible renewals for calendar years 2021, 2022 and 2023) at the Wilbur D. May Arboretum and Botanical Garden; and authorized Assistant County Manager, Dave Solaro, to execute an Invitation Letter (exhibit C to Agreement) to United States Citizen and Immigration Services requesting P-3 visas for artists.

On October 7, 2019, the Open Space and Regional Park Commission recommended approving an agreement for Dragon Lights Reno event between Washoe County, Tianyu Arts & Culture Inc., and the May Arboretum Society.

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

On February 27, 2018, the Board approved a Chinese Lantern Festival Agreement between Washoe County, Tianyu Arts & Culture Inc., and the May Arboretum Society. The May Arboretum and Botanical Garden within Rancho San Rafael Regional Park will host the Chinese Lantern Festival from June 30, 2018, through August 5, 2018, and authorized the Assistant County Manager to execute an Invitation Letter (exhibit C to Agreement) to United States Citizen and Immigration Services requesting P-3 visas for artists.

## **BACKGROUND**

Dragon Lights Reno, the Chinese Lantern Festival that took place in 2018, 2022 and 2023 was a tremendous success. There were over 62,000 visitors during the five-week festival in 2018, over 94,017 visitors in 2022 and 93,748 in 2023. The Wilbur D. May Arboretum and Botanical Garden earned roughly \$90,000 from the event from a 90/10 split of gross ticket sales net of credit card fees and local admission tax. In 2022, the revenue was \$234,000 and in 2023, \$215,000. Once ticket sales exceeded \$1,000,000, Washoe County received a 15% split of the gross revenue. This occurred in 2022 and 2023. These funds have been placed in the restricted fund for the Arboretum and used for equipment and supplies, much needed for the Arboretum's maintenance.

The 2024 event will also focus on Chinese culture and will offer a variety of visually appealing lantern displays and events for the general public to enjoy. The event will require three weeks for setup and two weeks for dismantle. The event will be open daily for eight weeks, with start times beginning at 5:30 p.m. During the time of the event, the May Arboretum and Botanical Garden will be closed to the general public to offer this ticketed event. However, the Arboretum will be open from 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. daily and free of charge throughout the course of the event.

Staff negotiated with Tianyu Arts & Culture, Inc., regarding schedule, activities and logistics of the event. The agreement outlines the requirements and responsibilities of the applicant and those of Washoe County. This agreement is similar to those approved and used for other major special events at Washoe County Regional Parks. This agreement details the responsibilities of Tianyu Arts & Culture, Inc. which include:

- Advertising and promotion
- Event design, layout, setup and dismantle
- Access and parking - traffic and parking plan
- Restrooms and sanitary facilities
- Trash receptacles and dumpsters
- Ticket sales
- Concessions
- Arboretum clean up (during and post event)
- Security
- Electrical power

The agreement terms are a 90/10 split of gross ticket sales net of credit card fees and local admission tax, if any, with most responsibilities placed upon Tianyu Arts & Culture, Inc. If ticket sales exceed \$1,000,000, Washoe County will receive a 15% split of gross ticket sales.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

For 2024, income distribution is the same as 2023: Income for admission revenue up to \$1,000,000, 10% to the County; for revenue over \$1,000,000 (from \$1,000,001 and up), 15% to the County. For 2025 and 2026: Should ticket sales in 2024 be equal to or greater than 2023, the promoter agrees to pay 15% of total gross ticket sales beginning in 2025 and ending in 2026.

Should the Board approve the agreement, the proceeds received by the County will be dedicated specifically to the May Arboretum and Botanical Gardens. Approximately, \$200,000 is estimated to be earned from the event in FY25. Funds will be accounted for in the Other Restricted Fund (270-6), May Arboretum (IN20034) and will be recommended in the FY25, FY26, and FY27 budgets.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended the Board of County Commissioners approve: 1) a Dragon Lights Reno Agreement between Washoe County and Tianyu Arts and Culture Inc., for a Dragon Lights Reno event to be held on September 27, 2024 through November 30, 2024 (with possible renewals for calendar years 2025 and 2026) at the Wilbur D. May Arboretum and Botanical Garden, located at 1595 North Sierra Street; and 2) authorize Community Services Director, Eric Crump, to execute an Invitation Letter directed to the United States Citizen and Immigration Services requesting P-3 visas for artists and entertainers.

### **POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to approve: 1) a Dragon Lights Reno Agreement between Washoe County and Tianyu Arts and Culture Inc., for a Dragon Lights Reno event to be held on September 27, 2024 through November 30, 2024 (with possible renewals for calendar years 2025 and 2026) at the Wilbur D. May Arboretum and Botanical Garden, located at 1595 North Sierra Street; and 2) authorize Community Services Director, Eric Crump, to execute an Invitation Letter directed to the United States Citizen and Immigration Services requesting P-3 visas for artists and entertainers."