



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service
www.washoecounty.gov

STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: November 18, 2025

DATE: Wednesday, October 8, 2025

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Noah Boyer, Sergeant, Washoe County Sheriff's Office
(775) 785-6217; nboyer@washoecounty.gov

THROUGH: Darin Balaam, Sheriff
(775) 328-3010; DBalaam@washoecounty.gov

SUBJECT: Recommendation to retroactively approve the Law Enforcement Funding Agreement between the Burning Man Project (BMP) and Washoe County on behalf of Washoe County Sheriff's Office to provide extra staffing needed in the Gerlach/Empire area [Estimated \$129,582.00 annual costs reimbursed] during the Burning Man Festivals 2025 – 2028, Including one week prior and one week following the last day of the 2028 festival with the annual payment amount to be revised each year to adjust for increased costs. Sheriff. (All Commission Districts) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

SUMMARY

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office has been tasked with providing additional coverage in the Gerlach/Empire communities while the Burning Man Festivals are 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 supplying the additional manpower.

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

PREVIOUS ACTION

On August 20, 2024, the Board accepted item #10.K.1., a funding agreement for the 2024 Burning Man Festival.

On June 27, 2023, the Board accepted item #6.I.1., a funding agreement for the 2023 Burning Man Festival.

On August 23, 2022, the Board accepted item #8.J.1., a funding agreement for the 2022 Burning Man Festival.

On July 23, 2019, the Board accepted item #5.F., a funding agreement for the 2019 Burning Man Festival.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

On August 28, 2018, the Board accepted item #10.L.9., a funding agreement for the 2018 Burning Man Festival.

On June 13, 2017, the Board accepted item #5.J.2., a funding agreement for the 2017 Burning Man Festival.

The Board has been approving funding agreements for Burning Man since 2008.

BACKGROUND

The Burning Man Festival has been taking place in the Black Rock Desert for over 16 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 annually at an estimated \$129,582.00 for law enforcement presence.

Payments to be made in two installment payments to Washoe County. The first installment, for one half of the total amount due, by August 1 of each year. The second installment for the remainder of the total amount due, by November 1 of year.

FISCAL IMPACT

This Agreement was anticipated and as such, sufficient revenue and expenditure authority is included in the FY26 Washoe County Sheriff's Office adopted budget. The revenue received will be posted in Internal Order 60014 in General Ledger Account 485129 Salary Reimbursement. WCSO supervision will determine appropriate additional staffing levels needed during the Burning Man event and costs that include the Gerlach Resident Deputies salaries, lodging, per diem and vehicle expenses shall be reimbursed by Burning Man Project in the amount of \$129,582.00. The funds obtained will be used for salary reimbursement, lodging, per diem, and vehicle expenses. The reimbursement received will be deposited into account:

Cost Object & Description	G/L Account & Description	Amount
60014 – Sheriff OT Burning Man	485129 – Salary Reimbursement	\$129,582 (est)

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners retroactively approve the Law Enforcement Funding Agreement between the Burning Man Project (BMP) and Washoe County on behalf of Washoe County Sheriff's Office to provide extra staffing needed in the Gerlach/Empire area [Estimated \$129,582.00 annual costs reimbursed] during the Burning Man Festivals 2025 – 2028, Including one week prior and one week following the last day of the 2028 festival with the annual payment amount to be revised each year to adjust for increased costs.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to retroactively approve the Law Enforcement Funding Agreement between the Burning Man Project (BMP) and Washoe County on behalf of Washoe County Sheriff's Office to provide extra staffing needed in the Gerlach/Empire area [Estimated \$129,582.00 annual costs reimbursed] during the Burning Man Festivals 2025 – 2028, Including one week prior and one week following the last day of the 2028 festival with the annual payment amount to be revised each year to adjust for increased costs."