



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: August 25, 2026

DATE: July 30, 2026

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Kate Thomas, County Manager

kathomas@washoecounty.gov

THROUGH: Jan Galassini, Washoe County Clerk on behalf of the County Manager and County Comptroller

SUBJECT: Request by the County Manager through the Washoe County Clerk, and pursuant to Washoe County Code (“WCC”) 2.030, to initiate amendments to WCC Section 5.0244, which governs the County Manager's authority to approve incidental food and entertainment expenditures for certain county activities. The proposed amendment would revise WCC 5.0244 to allow additional food purchases where it serves a legitimate governmental or public business purpose; is reasonable, necessary, and in the best interest of Washoe County; sufficient appropriated funds are available and the expenditure complies with applicable County policies and internal control procedures. The proposed amendment would also remove the existing \$5,000 limit for such expenditures. (All Commission Districts.) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

SUMMARY

The County Manager, through the County Clerk, requests, (pursuant to WCC 2.030) to initiate proceedings to amend Washoe County Code (WCC) Section 5.0244, which governs the County Manager's authority to approve incidental food and entertainment expenditures for certain county activities. Under the current code, the County Manager is authorized to approve such payments in amounts less than \$5,000; the eligible categories are limited to refreshments and meals at board/commission/committee meetings, County Manager's office meetings, tickets and tables at events honoring county programs or employees, tickets and tables at events for which the county is an active sponsor, refreshments and meals at county-sponsored events such as blood drives and health fairs, and fees for performers at employee and volunteer appreciation events. This staff report requests an expansion of the allowability of the purchases of food.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Fiscal Sustainability

PREVIOUS ACTION

January 8, 2019 – Public Hearing: Second reading and adoption of an ordinance amending Chapter 5 of the Washoe County Code by repealing a section related to the Community Relations Program; by repealing a section related to the Management Services Program; by repealing all provisions related to the Employment and Training Department; by repealing a section related to telephone toll call logs; by revising provisions related to the meetings of the Board of County Commissioners; by revising provisions related to the powers and duties of the County Manager and Assistant County Manager(s); and by revising a section concerning the County’s Manager expenditures for incidental food and entertainment expenses for certain activities.

BACKGROUND

WCC 5.0244 was originally enacted to authorize the County Manager to approve incidental food and entertainment expenses without requiring individual BCC action for each expenditure, subject to a dollar threshold and a defined list of eligible activities. The section was most recently revised by Ordinance No. 1629, effective January 18, 2019, which increased the County Manager's approval threshold from \$2,500 to \$5,000 and updated the list of eligible expense categories. The 2018–2019 amendment process was initiated by County Manager John Slaughter on October 9, 2018, pursuant to WCC 2.030, and proceeded through a first reading on December 18, 2018, and a second reading and adoption on January 8, 2019.

At the December 18, 2018 BCC meeting, staff presented the proposed increase in the threshold from \$2,500 to \$5,000 as a key change, noting that the expenses must be found to be reasonable and necessary business expenses of Washoe County with sufficient budget appropriation. The 2019 ordinance language, which remains in effect today, specifies six categories of eligible food and entertainment expenses and expressly prohibits payment for expenses incurred in conjunction with partisan political functions or events.

Separately, the Comptroller's Accounts Payable Manual requires that payment requests for food or beverages — except for employees on authorized travel status — will not be processed unless they are included in the department's budget and approved by the BCC annually. This requirement has generated a recurring pattern of retroactive BCC approval requests from HSA and other departments for food purchases that serve program participants rather than county employees or officials, and which therefore fall outside the current WCC 5.0244 eligible categories.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact with updating Washoe County Code 5.0244 to expand the categories of allowable food purchases.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve a request by the County Manager through the Washoe County Clerk, and pursuant to Washoe County Code (“WCC”) 2.030, to initiate amendments to WCC Section 5.0244, which governs the County Manager's authority to approve incidental food and entertainment expenditures for certain county activities. The proposed amendment would revise WCC 5.0244 to allow additional food purchases where it serves a legitimate governmental or public business purpose; is reasonable, necessary, and in the best interest of Washoe County; sufficient appropriated funds are available and the expenditure complies with applicable County policies and internal control procedures. The proposed amendment would also remove the existing \$5,000 limit for such expenditures.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the board agree with staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be : “Move to request by the County Manager through the Washoe County Clerk, and pursuant to Washoe County Code (“WCC”) 2.030, to initiate amendments to WCC Section 5.0244, which governs the County Manager's authority to approve incidental food and entertainment expenditures for certain county activities. The proposed amendment would revise WCC 5.0244 to allow additional food purchases where it serves a legitimate governmental or public business purpose; is reasonable, necessary, and in the best interest of Washoe County; sufficient appropriated funds are available and the expenditure complies with applicable County policies and internal control procedures. The proposed amendment would also remove the existing \$5,000 limit for such expenditures.