



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: September 16, 2025

DATE: Thursday, September 11, 2025

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Ryan Johnston, Captain, Washoe County Sheriff's Office
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THROUGH: Darin Balaam, Sheriff
(775) 328-3010; DBalaam@washoecounty.gov

SUBJECT: Recommendation to (1) approve a new FY26 Capital Improvement Project – Washoe County Special Operations Division Hangar approved by the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) committee September 3, 2025; (2) accept the Hangar Sale Agreement dated September 18, 2025 between the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority (“Seller”) and the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office (“Buyer”) for the purchase of the permanent structure known as Hangar 5 (approximately 39,600 sq ft) at the Reno-Stead Airport in the amount of \$1,750,000.00; (3) accept the Noncommercial Ground Lease at Reno-Stead Airport for a proposed fifty (50) year Ground Lease Agreement with the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority for a 2.12+/-acres (92,350SF) site which would allow the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office to use the premises for the purpose of housing Hangar 5 for RAVEN operations, secure storage Special Operations assets, a controlled environment for rapid deployment, training and general office related activities for the proposed lease period of October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2075 at \$29,100.00 per year received as mutually agreeable in-kind services provided by the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office to be negotiated annually at equal or greater than the rent; (4) accept a direct grant award [\$1,500,000.00, no match required] from the William N. Pennington Foundation to the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office through the Washoe County Honorary Deputy’s Association for the purchase of Hangar 5 from the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority from the grant dated June 10, 2025; and if approved, direct Finance to make the necessary net zero cross-functional budget appropriation transfer and budget amendments [net impact to the general fund \$0.00]. Sheriff. (All Commission Districts) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

SUMMARY

Proposals for the Washoe County Special Operations Division Hangar Project were obtained to acquire and refurbish the permanent structure known as Hangar 5. The proposal tailored to meet the agencies’ specialized needs were compiled as follows:

AGENDA ITEM # _____

Washoe County Special Operations Division Hanger	
Category	Amount
Construction Costs <i>(various funding sources, BCC as acquired)</i>	\$3,200,968.00
Purchase	\$1,750,000.00
Project Estimate	\$4,950,968.00

In addition to the acquisition and refurbishment costs, the Sheriff's Office recognizes the requirement for specialized liability insurance and the annual premium of approximately \$5,500.00. This cost is factored in our Operations and Maintenance projections and will reflect any future increased annual renewal costs.

The project addresses the critical need for a dedicated facility to store and maintain WCSO's emergency vehicles and equipment, which are currently exposed to harsh environmental conditions and security risks. This exposure leads to reduced operational readiness, increased maintenance costs, and potential delays in emergency response. The acquisition of Hangar 5 resolves these issues by providing a secure, weather-protected, centralized hub for the Special Operations Division.

The hangar will reduce deployment times by ensuring vehicles and equipment are stored in optimal conditions, ready for rapid response. For example, the document highlights that battery life for critical equipment (e.g., EOD robots) is reduced by half when stored outside, impacting operational effectiveness.

Proper storage will extend the lifespan of vehicles and equipment, reducing repair and replacement costs. Adequate storage solutions combat ongoing maintenance challenges (e.g., re-caulking, increased cleaning, and system reboots) due to current storage conditions. Secure storage mitigates risks of theft, vandalism, and weather-related damage, ensuring equipment reliability during emergencies and enhancing personnel safety.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Safe, secure and healthy communities.

PREVIOUS ACTION

On April 21, 2020, the Board of County Commissioners accepted item # 7.C.3., a donation of a Sprung Tent Structure and eleven (11) combined air handler, air conditioning, and heating units [total estimated value of \$1,213,827.00] from a private citizen to be used by the Sheriff's Office to house the RAVEN program and to store and protect assets for the Special Operations Division.

BACKGROUND

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office received a donation from The William N. Pennington Foundation through the Washoe County Honorary Deputy's Association [totaling \$1,500,000.00] from the grant dated June 10, 2025 and \$250,000.00 in the Capital Improvement Fund for the purchase of Hangar 5 from the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority. This structure will be utilized by the Washoe County Sheriff's Office as a storage and protection facility for Special Operations equipment such as RAVEN, SWAT, and Search and Rescue.

Currently the RAVEN program assets reside in a hangar that is owned by the City of Reno and too small to house all the helicopters and equipment related to the RAVEN program. Other assets, such as armored vehicles and large equipment, are stored outside in an uncovered parking lot where they are unprotected from the elements. This has led to the Sheriff's Office incurring large expenses such as window replacement for the armored vehicles.

The Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority and the Washoe County Sheriff's Office have identified and mutually agreed upon a 50-year lease for a 2.12+/-acres (92,350SF) parcel located at the Stead Airport to be used to house the permanent structure.

GRANT AWARD SUMMARY

Project/Program Name: *Washoe County Special Operations Division Hangar*

Scope of the Project: *Purchase of A permanent structure to house equipment and aircraft for the Washoe County Sheriff's Office Bomb Squad, SWAT, RAVEN and Search & Rescue.*

Benefit to Washoe County Residents: *Enhanced public safety and response times through secure & controlled storage of mission ready equipment.*

On-Going Program Support: *N/A*

Award Amount: *\$1,500,000.00*

Grant Period: *June 10, 2025 through June 09, 2026*

Funding Source: *William N. Pennington Foundation*

Pass through From: *N/A*

CFDA Number: *N/A*

Grant ID Number: *N/A*

Match Amount and Type: *No Match Required*

Sub-Awards and Contracts: *None*

FISCAL IMPACT

The ground rent for this parcel is \$2,424.00 per month or \$29,100.00 per year. The rent will be received as mutually agreeable in-kind services provided to the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority by the Washoe County Sheriff's Office and will be negotiated annually equal to or greater than the annual ground rent of \$29,100.00. In kind services will be tracked and reported using statistical order 70805 – WCSO Stead Airport.

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office will also be responsible for all required capital expenditures for utilities and all other improvements required to refurbish the permanent structure and conduct permitted uses. The funds to support these costs will be raised by the Sheriff through the Honorary Deputy's Association and will be submitted to the board as acquired.

Should the Board accept this award, and approve these amendments, the adopted FY26 Capital Improvement Fund (F402) budget will be increased by \$1,500,000.00 in both revenues and expenditures and include a net zero cross-functional appropriation transfer in the following accounts; :

Fund/Function	Cost Object & Description	G/L Account & Description	Amount
Capital Improvement Fund (Fund 402)/Public Safety	IO-TBA Pennington Hangar - Stead	484195-Non-Govt'l Grants	\$1,500,000.00
Capital Improvement Fund (Fund 402)/Public Safety	IO-TBA Pennington Hangar – Stead	818000 – Transfer to Intrafund	\$1,500,000.00
Capital Improvement Fund (Fund 402)/Public Safety	TBD PW	781002 – Buildings & Improvements Capital	\$1,500,000.00
Capital Improvement Fund (Fund 402)/Public Safety	TBD PW	818000 – Transfer to Intrafund	\$(1,500,000.00)
Fund/Function	Cost Object & Description	G/L Account & Description	Amount
Capital Improvement Fund (Fund 402)/Public Works	IO-20537 CIP Grant Match	781080-Construction Contracts	\$(250,000.00)
Capital Improvement Fund (Fund 402)/Public Safety	TBD PW	781002 – Buildings & Improvements Capital	\$250,000.00

Net-zero impact, no additional funding requested.

- *No match required.*
- *Indirect costs are not allowable on this grant award as no salary or wages are included in the grant budget.*

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation to (1) approve a new FY26 Capital Improvement Project – Washoe County Special Operations Division Hangar approved by the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) committee September 3, 2025; (2) accept the Hangar Sale Agreement dated September 18, 2025 between the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority (“Seller”) and the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office (“Buyer”) for the purchase of the permanent structure known as Hangar 5 (approximately 39,600 sq ft) at the Reno-Stead Airport in the amount of \$1,750,000.00; (3) accept the Noncommercial Ground Lease at Reno-Stead Airport for a proposed fifty (50) year Ground Lease Agreement with the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority for a 2.12+/-acres (92,350SF) site which would allow the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office to use the premises for the purpose of housing Hanger 5 for RAVEN operations, secure storage Special Operations assets, a controlled environment for rapid deployment, training and general office related activities for the proposed lease period of October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2075 at \$29,100.00 per year received as mutually agreeable in-kind services provided by the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office to be negotiated annually at equal or greater than the rent; (4) accept a direct grant award [\$1,500,000.00, no match required] from the William N. Pennington Foundation to the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office through the Washoe County Honorary Deputy’s Association for the purchase of Hangar 5 from the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority from the grant dated June 10, 2025; and if approved, direct Finance to make the necessary net zero cross-functional budget appropriation transfer and budget amendments [net impact to the general fund \$0.00]. (All Commission Districts)

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be: “Move to (1) approve a new FY26 Capital Improvement Project – Washoe County Special Operations Division Hangar approved by the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) committee September 3, 2025; (2) accept the Hangar Sale Agreement dated September 18, 2025 between the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority (“Seller”) and the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office (“Buyer”) for the purchase of the permanent structure known as Hangar 5 (approximately 39,600 sq ft) at the Reno-Stead Airport in the amount of \$1,750,000.00; (3) accept the Noncommercial Ground Lease at Reno-Stead Airport for a proposed fifty (50) year Ground Lease Agreement with the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority for a 2.12+/-acres (92,350SF) site which would allow the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office to use the premises for the purpose of housing Hanger 5 for RAVEN operations, secure storage Special Operations assets, a controlled environment for rapid deployment, training and general office related activities for the proposed lease period of October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2075 at \$29,100.00 per year received as mutually agreeable in-kind services provided by the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office to be negotiated annually at equal or greater than the rent; (4) accept a direct grant award [\$1,500,000.00, no match required] from the William N. Pennington Foundation to the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office through the Washoe County Honorary Deputy’s Association for the purchase of Hangar 5 from the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority from the grant dated June 10, 2025; and if approved, direct Finance to make the necessary net zero cross-functional budget appropriation transfer and budget amendments [net impact to the general fund \$0.00].”