

STAFF REPORT

Date: March 22, 2023

To: Mayor and City Council

Thru: Doug Thornley, City Manager

Subject: Staff Report [For Possible Action] Presentation, discussion and potential direction to staff for the creation of an Activation Coordinator position to assist in activating City owned spaces, administrative duties related to sponsorship allocation, and lead operations of City hosted events with funding drawn from the Room Tax Fund and other changes to special events policy and resolution. (two-thirds majority voting requirement) (Room Tax Fund)

From: Eric Edelstein, Assistant City Manager

Department: City Manager's Office

Summary: Council has allocated room tax funds to subsidize special events by offsetting expenses or otherwise incentivizing activation of particular spaces in the community. Council previously requested staff review the existing allocation process and more regularly activate city spaces. The process for allocating these contributions has not been updated since Council approved Resolution 7931 in January 2014. This resolution includes a sponsorship committee tasked with recommending the most appropriate special events to support and consists of members from boards or programs not currently active, and the resolution does not afford an alternate process.

This circumstance is an opportunity to build a more effective activation program for underutilized city-owned spaces by revising the terms of committee membership to assure continuity of function and funding an Activation Coordinator position that will administer special event sponsorships, facilitate promoter resources, support community events and activation of public spaces, and manage city hosted events. This agenda item advocates two parallel actions: an amendment to Resolution 7931 providing for changes in the membership, policies, and procedures of the Special Events Sponsorship Committee and providing authorization for the activation coordinator drawn from the Room Tax Fund.

Staff requests direction on strategy to allocate Special Event Funding for FY23 and recommends

Council create an Activation Coordinator position to assist in activating City owned spaces, administrative duties related to sponsorship allocation, and lead operations of City hosted events.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: Economic and Community Development

Previous Council Action: January 15, 2014 – Council approved Resolution No. 7931 – Resolution Adopting the Revised Special Events Sponsorship Policy

Background: Resolution 7931 adopts the City of Reno Special Event Sponsorship Policies and Procedures. These policies outline the allocative and administrative processes of the Special Events Sponsorship Committee (“Committee”). The resolution and policies provide that the Committee be comprised of the following: one member of the Reno City Council, an appointed member of the Reno Citizens Institute, an appointed member of City of Reno Arts and Culture Subcommittee, and an outside appointed member by the Special Events Subcommittee of the Reno City Council. It is the responsibility of the Committee to make event sponsorship recommendations, which are forwarded to the Special Events Subcommittee for approval, and then are forwarded to Council for approval.

The policy further mandates that the City Manager’s Office “is responsible for the centralized administration and coordination of this policy, application, and process.” As such, the Special Events Program Manager is responsible to compile supporting documents to present the Committee’s recommendations and any necessary contracts to Council. This position is not currently funded or filled. The authorization to create an Activation Coordinator position and modify the policies and procedures of the Committee will allow for the most beneficial use of Room Tax Funds. Special events are a crucial component of economic and community development in the City of Reno. These proposed changes will provide for a more efficient, effective, and productive special events sponsorship process.

Summary of Sponsorships 2019 – 2022: Between 2019 and 2022 the Committee awarded the following event sponsorships:

FY19/20 \$266,705

FY 20/21 \$39,000

FY21/22 \$221,527

Discussion: Transient Lodging Taxes are a widely used tool by municipal governments to increase revenue, reduce reliance on property taxes, and encourage tourism in a way that is minimally impactful on residents. A central component of the City of Reno Room Tax Fund is the activation of the urban core, particularly through special events sponsorship. Special events activate downtown corridors by increasing foot traffic, creating a sense of community, highlighting unique features of the area, generating revenue, and encouraging investment.

Resolution 7931, as adopted by Council, includes a committee tasked with recommending the most appropriate special events for support that includes members from boards or programs not currently active, and the resolution does not afford an alternate process. As a result, the Committee cannot be convened, and no sponsorships can be awarded. In addition, the lack of a full time Activation Coordinator prevents the Committee from realizing its intended goals, as outlined by Council.

This resolution proposes a comprehensive solution, which will address each of the identified challenges. First, modifying the Committee's membership requirements to remove any defunct or dissolved organizations will legally allow the Committee to reconvene. Second, creating an Activation Coordinator will allow for the full realization of the Committee's goals and Council's downtown activation vision to be realized.

The Activation Coordinator will be responsible for the following:

- Managing the Committee: This includes coordinating meetings, preparing agendas, and ensuring that all committee members are informed of upcoming events and programs.
- Administering the sponsorship program: This includes advising promoters on sponsorship applications, reviewing submissions, and compiling relevant materials for the Committee.
- Developing and maintaining relationships with local organizations, businesses, and community groups to facilitate event planning and participation.
- Planning, organizing, and executing special events hosted by the City: This includes securing venues, arranging entertainment, coordinating vendors, and overseeing event logistics.
- Evaluating the success of events and making recommendations for future improvements.
- Developing a resource guide to assist event promoters with vendors and resources.

Creating the Activation Coordinator position will effectuate Council's activation goals, the beneficial expenditure of Room Tax Fund dollars, and increase the capacity of the City to attract new and recurring special events. This increase in capacity will have direct and measurable benefits to the Reno community as a whole. Both residents and visitors will have the opportunity to experience Reno in new and exciting ways through the special events which will be actualized by this remodeled Committee.

Financial Implications: These funds have been allocated in the FY22/23 budget. \$350,000 is allocated to special events sponsorship.

Legal Implications:

Legal review completed for compliance with City procedures and Nevada law.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends Council approve the creation of the Activation Coordinator position and give direction modifying the Special Events Sponsorship Committee's policies and procedures.

Proposed Motion:

I move to approve staff recommendation.

Attachments:

Resolution 7931 for the Special Events Sponsorship Committee