



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: October 25, 2016

DATE: September 27, 2016

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Dave Solaro, Arch., P.E., Director
Community Services Department, 328-3600, dsolaro@washoecounty.us

THROUGH: Kevin Schiller, Assistant County Manager

SUBJECT: Recommendation to approve the terms of purchase for the property located at 905 E. Prater Way, Sparks, Nevada for use by the Child Protective Services as a family visitation center [\$535,000]; and authorize the Chair to act on behalf of Washoe County to execute and deliver any and all instruments and funds, including without limitation, contracts, agreements, notices, escrow instructions, closing documents and all other documents as may be necessary or appropriate to accomplish the acquisition of the property located at 905 E. Prater Way, Sparks, Nevada. (All Commission Districts.)

SUMMARY

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners (Board) authorize the purchase of the property located at 905 E. Prater Way Sparks, NV for a family visitation center in order to facilitate a more family friendly environment, where families can visit with their children in foster care. It is the goal of Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) to preserve families whenever possible. The visitation center will allow for families and staff to work together in a non-office setting, creating a safe, family friendly, home-like environment for families to grow and learn, while they transition through their child's safety plan.

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

PREVIOUS ACTION

On July 26, 2016, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) approved staff to proceed with the selection of a building for use by the Child Protective Services as a family visitation center and authorized the Director of Social Services, Director of Community Services, and the District Attorney's Office to negotiate a potential acquisition; approved up to \$20,000 for a refundable earnest deposit for the building of interest; and authorized the Director of Social Services to approve any due diligence needed, including a Phase I environmental study, appraisals, and inspections necessary, up to \$21,000, (for a total cost not to exceed \$41,000); and if the acquisition is acceptable, directed staff to return to the Board for review of the terms and final approval of the acquisition.

AGENDA ITEM # 9

BACKGROUND

Washoe County Department of Social Services has occupied space in an office building at 350 South Center Street for approximately 14 years. Office space was set aside for families to visit with children who have been placed in foster care.

As Washoe County's foster care caseloads have increased, so has the strain on the resources needed to serve our families. With little space to house visiting families, they are often left to visit in the hallways and lobbies of the office building. Social Services has been actively seeking an alternative to this situation, which led to the idea of providing our families with a family friendly environment, away from the small rooms and offices at 350 South Center.

A child care facility with playground or play area location, with adequate parking on an established bus route is the preferred location. The building being sought for purchase meets these criteria. While the property is not available turnkey, the Community Services Department is currently providing guidance and will administer a construction project to finish out the building to include all of the needs of the visitation center.

The concept for scheduling visitation at the center includes family visits that would be facilitated, monitored and supervised by trained foster parent facilitators and volunteers. The Department practices a visitation model that engages both the child's natural family caregivers (biological parents) and their substitute caregivers - often foster parents or relatives. This practice is based on a model developed by the University of Delaware known as Attachment and Bio-behavioral Catch-Up for Visitation or ABC-V. This visitation practice has been studied and implemented through the Youth Law Center at the Department with very positive results such as reducing the number of placements and decreasing the time to reunification. As required, the first 5 visits for the ABC-V cases would remain at the current 350 S. Center Child Welfare location so that the assigned Social Worker, Human Support Specialist and Foster Parent could still assess safety provide the information and parent training for ABC-V and to ensure appropriate observation and open communication. The first 5 visits generally take place within 2-3 weeks of removal of the child from the home, at which time, if deemed appropriate, the visits could be transitioned to the visitation center as an offsite option for families and foster parents.

In determining the overall valuation for this property Washoe County staff performed due diligence activities with the use of various consultants. The location and amenities provided at this location make the purchase and renovation of this facility a value to Washoe County. The due diligence work identified that there are no environmental concerns with the site; however, the building itself is outdated and in need of complete renovation from the inside out. While that may seem counterintuitive to being a value to Washoe County, complete purchase and renovation is estimated to cost approximately \$180.00 per square foot including land. Currently a new commercial building for the same application is estimated at \$400.00 per square foot not including land. There were many facilities toured while looking for the visitation center and this building provides the best value for the funding available.

FISCAL IMPACT

The FY 2017-2022 adopted Capital Improvement Program contains this project in an amount of \$585,000. The Social Services Department also has \$434,000.00 in VOCA funds available for the necessary renovations of this building. No budget augmentations or amendments are necessary.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Board of County Commissioners approve the terms of purchase for the property located at 905 E. Prater Way Sparks, Nevada for use by the Child Protective Services as a family visitation center [\$535,000]; and authorize the Chair to act on behalf of Washoe County to execute and deliver any and all instruments and funds, including without limitation, contracts, agreements, notices, escrow instructions, closing documents and all other documents as may be necessary or appropriate to accomplish the acquisition of the property located at 905 E. Prater Way, Sparks, Nevada.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be:
"Move to approve the terms of purchase for the property located at 905 E. Prater Way Sparks, Nevada for use by the Child Protective Services as a family visitation center, and authorize the Chair to act on behalf of Washoe County to execute and deliver any and all instruments and funds, including without limitation, contracts, agreements, notices, escrow instructions, closing documents and all other documents as may be necessary or appropriate to accomplish the acquisition of the property located at 905 E. Prater Way, Sparks, Nevada."