

TOWN COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Title: Approval of Town of Mammoth Lakes and Mono County Whitmore Recreation Area Joint Operations and Maintenance Agreement

Meeting Date: April 16, 2025

Prepared by: Rob Patterson, Town Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Town of Mammoth Lakes and Mono County Whitmore Recreation Area Joint Operations and Maintenance Agreement (“Agreement”), subject to final legal review and approval by Mono County.

BACKGROUND:

The Town of Mammoth Lakes and Mono County entered into a Joint Powers Agreement for the management of the Whitmore Animal Control Shelter in May 2000 and amended the agreement in October 2000 to include management of the Whitmore Recreation Facility. The Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) was again amended in 2003 to include additional facilities at Whitmore Park. The governance structure, budgeting and cost sharing provided for in the JPA has not been adhered to for the past several years. The proposed Joint Operations and Maintenance Agreement would replace the current JPA.

Town Staff have been working with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) to expand the Whitmore area lease. The expanded park site was initially pursued to meet a minimum park size for grants (approx. 50 acres) including a lease of greater than 30 years. The expanded lease area will provide expanded recreational opportunities. LADWP has requested that the Mono County Animal Shelter and the Town recreational facilities be retained in a single lease. LADWP has also requested a copy of a draft operating agreement between the Town and the Mono County to proceed with the lease amendment, which will still take a considerable amount of time to finalize. The proposed Agreement satisfies this request. A draft lease is attached which includes a map showing current leased areas and requested expanded area.

ANALYSIS:

The current management of the Whitmore Park facilities are provided by the Town. This includes programming, maintenance, and capital improvements. The Town bills the County each year for 50% of the net operating costs of park-related facilities (including Whitmore Pool). The Town fully funds capital improvements with no reimbursement from the County. Over the past couple of years this investment was approximately \$595,700. The Town has not participated in the 50/50 cost share for several years for the Animal Shelter, due to lack of billing from the County and a lack of clarity of these components by current staff. As compensation for these unbilled expenses, the Town has agreed to

provide a credit of \$300,000 for the County to be used against reimbursement within the first two years. Below is the schedule of maximum reimbursement to be received:

- Fiscal Year 2024/25: \$0.00
- Fiscal Year 2025/26: \$56,000
- Fiscal Year 2026/27: \$178,000
- Each year thereafter: Cap increase of no more than 5% per year over the previous fiscal year reimbursement.

Under the JPA the operating costs and capital projects would go through a joint review process with each agency sharing 50% of the costs based on net operating costs and splitting capital costs based on bids. The County takes the lead on the Animal Control Shelter and the Town takes the lead on the recreation facilities. The County currently funds the operation and maintenance of the Animal Control shelter. The proposed agreement provides no reimbursement from the Town to the County for operation of the Animal Control Shelter.

The proposed Agreement incorporates the current net cost share of 50/50 for recreational facilities; the same as current practice. The agreement sets a maximum on the cost share amount and limits the growth in costs. This was done so the County would not see significant increases resulting from capital investment or changes in programming that could significantly impact cost allocations in any given year. The proposal eliminates the sharing of capital costs. Starting with the new lease, the Town will be charged by LADWP for water usage at Whitmore Park. The Town is proposing to pay this charge vs. putting in meters to determine the amount of water used by the Animal Control Shelter. The proposal reflects current processes and eliminates future uncertainty regarding sharing of capital costs (does not preclude doing a joint project), eliminates unplanned increases in costs and eliminates one of the parties from potentially stopping (or slowing) capital projects due to costs and/or impacts on operating budgets.

The proposed agreement establishes an operating cost share for the County beginning with FY24-25, with a maximum amount of \$178,000 for the base year. The County will use their credit to cover the full cost of reimbursement for FY24-25. In the second year, FY25-26, the remaining credit will be exhausted leaving a maximum reimbursement of \$56,000. The third year will retain the base \$178,000 maximum reimbursement. In subsequent years, the billing amount may not increase more than 5% per year, unless justified and agreed to by the County. This provides a level of certainty and control on growth in the obligation for operating costs.

OPTIONS ANALYSIS

Option 1: Approve Town of Mammoth Lakes and Mono County Whitmore Recreation Area Joint Operations and Maintenance Agreement (“Agreement”), subject to final legal review and approval by Mono County.

Option 2: Approve the Agreement in concept and request it be brought back to Council for final approval after being presented to Mono County for approval.

Option 3: Do not approve the proposed agreement and provide additional direction to staff to amend the agreement.

Attachment:
Draft Agreement