



CITY OF MENIFEE

SUBJECT: Christmas Tree Lighting Event Enhancements

MEETING DATE: October 19, 2022

TO: Mayor and City Council

PREPARED BY: Mariana Mitchell, Community Services Manager

REVIEWED BY: Jonathan Nicks, Community Services Director

APPROVED BY: Armando G. Villa, City Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Review and discuss the budget and Options A, B, and C for the event components planned for the 2022 Christmas Tree Lighting and Holiday Bazaar event; and
2. If Council chooses Option C, authorize an additional general fund allocation of \$60,000 and adopt a budget amendment resolution appropriating \$15,500 from general fund to account 100-4662-52800 and \$44,500 to account 100-4662-53155 for the purchase of an artificial tree; and
3. Authorize the City Manager to issue a Purchase Order (PO) to The Christmas Kings for the purchase of an artificial tree, decorations, and installation equipment in the amount of \$44,500 (including taxes); and
4. Authorize the City Manager to execute a professional services agreement with The Christmas Kings for event and facility lighting and decorations, artificial tree installation, decoration and storage services not-to-exceed \$53,000.

DISCUSSION

As requested by the City Council, staff provided an overview of the 2021 Annual Christmas Tree Lighting & Holiday Bazaar event that included the event budget and program elements at the March 16, 2022 City Council meeting. At the conclusion of the discussion, staff received the direction to research the following:

- Superior tree lighting and decoration options
- Increased photo opportunities
- Larger snow area to decrease waiting time

- Enhanced entertainment elements such as an ice-skating rink
- Additional decoration elements throughout the City
- Explore future opportunities for a tree and display that would remain available throughout the holiday season.

Anticipating the increased costs associated with the enhanced decorations and event elements, Community Services proposed an additional \$50,000 to be added to the event budget, bringing the total event budget to \$95,000; which was more than double the expenditures from the previous year. The budget increase was subsequently approved by the City Council for fiscal year 2022/2023.

Staff utilized multiple methods to research the requested enhancements including surveying neighboring agencies on their event components and associated costs, reaching out to businesses specializing in holiday lighting and decor for informal quotes, and working with current vendors to negotiate competitive pricing for increased goods and services. Upon conclusion of the research, it was clear that some enhancements were possible within the increased event budget and other components could be explored if additional funding was allocated and if there was further development of City facilities or parks to accommodate these larger amenities.

This year's Christmas Tree Lighting & Holiday Bazaar event is scheduled for Saturday, December 3, 2022 from 4:00 – 8:00 PM at Mt. San Jacinto College (MSJC). Several popular elements included are:

- Over 50 craft vendors and non-profit booths creating the “holiday bazaar” atmosphere
- Food trucks and food vendors
- Santa Claus leading the walking parade and lighting ceremony
- On stage professional and community entertainment
- Menifee Police Department on site with the BearCat Armored Vehicle to assist with donation collections for Santa's Workshop and the Menifee Valley Community Cupboard

Based on prior City Council discussion, staff has identified the following complimentary components to enhance the overall event experience within the current event budget of \$95,000:

- Creation of a second snow sledding area with almost double the amount of snow at the event (90 tons total)
- Lighted decor for ambiance and “media moments” throughout the event such as displays of 16 ft. decorated trees, 6 ft. ornaments, 5 ft. present boxes, 12 ft. walk through ornament, and lighted pathways
- Walking entertainment throughout the event such as stilt walkers, roller skaters, and dancers
- Addition of a trackless train ride for youth and adults

Additionally, to expand the spirit of the holidays beyond the event it is proposed to decorate City Hall, Community Services Department, Kay Cenicerros Senior Center, and Lazy Creek Recreation Center with holiday lights. Also, there is an opportunity for decorating and lighting the Menifee Town Center arch.

Another amenity explored, and not included in the proposed/current program budget, is the rental or purchase of a 30-foot artificial tree with prices ranging from \$30,000 to \$60,000; or the purchase and installation of a live tree with pricing at approximately \$65,000. Staff solicited informal bids from ten vendors for decorations and lighting for the event and City facilities and received quotes ranging up to \$103,000 in cost. Through this process, The Christmas Kings not only provided the lowest cost for services but were also the most competitive with providing wholesale pricing when inquiring about the purchase of an artificial tree. Of the various tree options provided, the purchase of an artificial tree with a minimum five-year warranty would serve as an investment in the event for future years. The current event budget has \$8,200 allocated towards the decoration of the live tree currently located at the Mt. San Jacinto College campus. Should the City Council recommend the purchase of an artificial tree, an additional allocation of \$60,000 from the general fund would be required for the purchase and other associated costs.

Another amenity explored for possible future holiday seasons was an ice rink. Quotes for this element range from \$90,000 to \$150,000 in rental fees and requires a month long (minimum) operating commitment at the location, a substantial amount of dedicated electricity, and a large concrete or asphalt surface for placement. Staff also found that some agencies have recently opted to cancel their ice rink operation due to these requirements and cost.

Staff presented the above-mentioned potential event enhancements to the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Commission at their regular meeting in October and there was general support for the expansion of the snow area, the addition of the lighted photo opportunities, and the added roaming entertainment. However, there was a lack of consensus on the options related to the tree for the event due to concerns over cost and placement of the tree.

Despite the increased cost of supplies and equipment, staff have committed to seeking out the best use of resources to provide a quality event and memorable experience. However, staff is presenting the following options for Council consideration:

- **Option A** – Proceed as presented while remaining within the current budget of \$95,000.
- **Option B** – Reduce some components listed, to allow the purchase of an artificial or live tree, while remaining within the current budget of \$95,000.
- **Option C** – Appropriate an additional \$60,000 to purchase an artificial tree, for a budget not to exceed \$155,000. The attached quote does not include storage of the artificial tree.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE

Safe and Attractive Community

FISCAL IMPACT

The anticipated fiscal impact associated with the items proposed in Options A and B as outlined in this report are funded within the approved fiscal year 2022/23 budget.

However, if the City Council chooses Option C, an appropriation of \$60,000 would be needed to move forward with the purchase of an artificial tree, and a budget amendment resolution appropriating \$15,500 from general fund to account 100-4662-52800 and \$44,500 to account 100-4662-53155 would need to be adopted.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Event Elements and Facility Decoration Examples
2. Quote for Artificial Tree Purchase
3. Professional Services Agreement
4. Budget Amendment Resolution