

# INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

## January 15, 2026



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**To:** City Council  
**From:** Finance Department  
**Prepared by:** Kevin McCarthy, Finance Director  
**Subject:** **Council Consideration of Two Separate Sponsorship Requests– Palm Springs Air Museum Annual Gala and the Palm Springs Film Awards Gala**

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **APPROVES** Finance Committee Recommendations to attend the Palm Springs Air Museum Annual Gala and the Palm Springs Film Festival Gala; and

**FINDS** the project to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15060.

### BACKGROUND:

#### Sponsorship and Community Assistance Funding Policy

The City was directed to explore table sponsorship opportunities for City participation in each gala. Because the cost of each proposed gala table exceeds \$5,000—the Palm Springs Film Festival Gala Angel Table at \$10,379 and the Palm Springs Air Museum Annual Gala table at \$6,550—the City Council’s Sponsorship and Community Assistance Funding Policy applies and calls for Finance Committee review. The information is presented to support the Committee’s evaluation of the proposed expenditures and its recommendation to the City Council. Any such recommendation is advisory only, and final authority and approval remain solely with the City Council.

Under the **Purpose of this Policy** section of the policy, specifically excluded from this policy are sponsorships below \$5,000, such as sponsored luncheons or other events to financially support non-profits or other governmental organizations. More common examples include purchasing a table for an awards or recognition luncheon, participating in a valley event such as the economic summit, or sponsorship level support of a non-profit event such as a fundraiser.

Under the **Review and Approval Process** section of the policy, the City Manager’s Office shall administer sponsorship requests received by the City. Upon receipt of a sponsorship request, the City Manager’s Office shall provide notice to the full City Council

to determine whether there is interest by any Council Member in pursuing the sponsorship.

In the event that one or more Council Members express such interest, the sponsorship request shall be forwarded to the Finance Committee for review and evaluation. In the absence of Council interest, the request shall not be referred to the Finance Committee, and no further action shall be taken.

Under the **City Sponsorship Funding Policy** section of the policy, Sponsorship requests submitted to the City shall be directed to individual Council Members for an initial determination of interest. If a Council Member indicates support for further consideration, the request will be referred to the Finance Committee for review and evaluation. Following its review, the Finance Committee shall forward the sponsorship request, along with its recommendation, to the full City Council for final determination.

### **The Palm Springs Air Museum Annual Gala**

The event details are as follows:

- Event Name: Palm Springs Air Museum Annual Gala (50th Anniversary of the Ending of the Vietnam War: Honoring Character and Remembering Courage)
- Date: Saturday, February 7, 2026
- Individual Ticket Price: \$525 per person
- Table Sponsorship (12 seats): \$6,550
- Event Information: Palm Springs Air Museum Gala

The gala is a high-profile local event that supports cultural and historical preservation in the Coachella Valley. Attendance by City representatives provides an opportunity to demonstrate support for local organizations and veterans' initiatives. The event also draws civic leaders, business partners, and community stakeholders, offering opportunities to strengthen relationships that may benefit the City. Supporting cultural and historical programs aligns with the City's broader mission to foster civic pride, promote tourism, and encourage educational initiatives.

Over the past two years, the Community Activities Committee has sustained a partnership with the Museum to host Indian Wells Day at the Museum each February. This collaboration is underpinned by a sponsorship of \$1,200 and exemplifies the Committee's dedication to fostering cultural enrichment and community involvement. The event offers Indian Wells residents an invaluable opportunity to engage with and appreciate local history and heritage in a significant manner.

## Finance Committee Recommendation

The Finance Committee recommends that attendance be accommodated through the City's purchase of individual tickets based on Council Member interest, rather than the purchase of a full table and a supplemental appropriation of up to \$6,550 based on Council attendance, inclusive of one guest.

## **The Palm Springs Film Festival Gala**

The event details and available sponsorship options are as follows:

- Event Name: Palm Springs Film Festival Gala
- Date: Saturday, January 3, 2026
- Sponsorship Options:
  - Angel Table: \$10,379 – table for 10, cocktail hour, dinner, awards show, 4 Platinum Passes, 4 Opening & Closing Night Tickets or After Party access for all table guests
  - VIP Platinum Seat: \$2,610 – includes cocktail hour, dinner, awards show, and After Party
  - Premier Seat: \$1,574 – includes cocktail hour, dinner, awards show, and After Party
  - FF26 Benefactor Pass: \$3,905 – all-access transferable festival pass, includes premier seat at the Film Awards, access to all festival parties, reserved seating in theaters, Festival Lounge access, and Opening & Closing Night events
  - Event Information: Palm Springs Film Awards

The Palm Springs Film Festival Gala is a high-profile regional event that draws national and international visitors, generating tourism and hospitality activity that benefits the City's economy. Attendance provides an opportunity to promote Indian Wells as a vibrant cultural and civic partner, demonstrating the City's commitment to arts, culture, and tourism. The event also attracts industry leaders, business representatives, and civic figures, offering City leadership opportunities to cultivate relationships that support City initiatives and community development. Council may consider whether the City should

participate as a sponsor and, if so, at what level, recognize both the fiscal commitment and the potential community benefits.

### Finance Committee Recommendation

The Finance Committee recommends that Council Members who wish to attend utilize their individual \$5,000 Council discretionary funding, in lieu of the City purchasing a table or providing event sponsorship.

### **OPTIONS:**

For deliberation regarding the City's potential participation, staff has outlined the following options for consideration:

- Approve participation in the Galas and Supplemental Appropriations as recommended by the Finance Committee.
- Decline participation at this time.
- Provide an alternative direction for the staff.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

#### Palm Springs Air Museum Annual Gala

The cost of an individual ticket is \$525 per person, while a full table sponsorship costs \$6,550. City Council consideration includes whether City funds should be used for event sponsorship and, if so, at what level. The Finance Committee recommends that, in lieu of the City purchasing a table or providing event sponsorship, the City approves a supplemental appropriation of up to \$6,550 based on Council attendance, inclusive of one guest.

#### Palm Springs Film Awards Gala

Sponsorship costs range from \$1,574 for a Premier Seat to \$10,379 for an Angel Table. City Council consideration includes whether City funds should be used for event sponsorship and, if so, at what level. The Finance Committee recommends that Council Members who wish to attend utilize their individual \$5,000 Council discretionary funds, rather than the City purchasing a table or providing event sponsorship.

## **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):**

This action has been reviewed per the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State and local CEQA Guidelines, and the City's environmental regulations. The City, acting as the Lead Agency, determined that the ordinance is not subject to CEQA pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2), 15060(c)(3), and 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, because it will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change to the environment as there is no possibility that the action would result in a significant environmental impact, and because it does not constitute a "project" as defined in Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3.