



COUNTY of VENTURA

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December 13, 2022

Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: Approval of a Five-Year County Funding and Management Agreement with the Museum of Ventura County (MVC), Effective July 1, 2023, Providing for \$275,000 in Annual County Contributions and Annual Matching County Contributions Up To \$50,000; All Supervisorial Districts

Recommendation:

Approve a funding and management agreement (Exhibit 1) with the Museum of Ventura County (MVC), to take effect on July 1, 2023, consisting of (a) an annual County contribution of \$275,000 for five years (2023 – 2028) to assist with general museum operations, archive maintenance, and inventory management and (b) a matching County contribution option of up to \$50,000 annually for five years (2023 – 2028) contingent upon MVC's acquisition of grants from federal, state, and/or private organizations.

Background:

1913 to 1978

From its inception in 1913 until 1978, the County funded all operational costs of the museum. In November of 1976, the County entered into an agreement with the MVC's predecessor, the Ventura County Historical Society (Society) to "act as representative" of the County for museum management services. In a March 1978 agreement, the museum agreed to acquire and maintain historical records and the County confirmed ownership of all acquired materials and the collection. In response to Proposition 13 in June 1978, the County terminated the 1976 agreement due to unforeseen revenue gaps, a decision which became effective August 1978. Around this time, in a letter from the Society to the County, the Society acknowledged that "the County owns most of the artifacts and the collection in the Museum."

1979 to 2016

The County continued partial and informal funding for the museum over the years. Due to irregular funding and the lack of a contract, the museum could not maintain appropriate staffing levels, nor could it make its collection and archive fully accessible. Subsequently, general operations for MVC remained impacted over the years. In August 1984, County Counsel issued a formal opinion at the request of County leadership that concluded that museum collection and items collected even after the County ceased administering the museum, "belong to the County" unless stated otherwise. This meant that the County legally held ownership over all MVC items.

2017

In June of 2017, the County received a request from the museum to provide financial assistance over a five-year period to support its ongoing operations while the MVC (a) attempted to create an endowment fund that would help sustain funding on an ongoing basis, (b) fully assessed its collection, and (c) revitalized its programming to serve a broader and more inclusive audience. In response to that request, on July 25, 2017, your Board approved a one-time contribution of \$125,000 to help resource the museum for six months with the requirement that the MVC assist the County in its due diligence to assess the status of the collection.

2018 to Present Day

Given the success of the 2017 allocation of \$125,000, in June of 2018 your Board approved a five year funding plan (2018 – 2023) for MVC which included the following: (a) a one-time contribution of \$300,000 to assist with the funding of an Archives Project, including the hiring of an archivist and the consolidation and inventorying of the collection held by the museum, (b) financial contributions of \$200,000 a year for five years and (c) an in-kind contribution, equivalent to \$75,000 a year, for five years in the form of a lease of a County-owned building at 77 N. California Street to assist with managing and improving accessibility to the collection. The museum has subsequently provided regular updates to the County on its progress.

Over the period of the current agreement (2018 – 2023), MVC has been committed to showcasing a multitude of historic items and points of view that are informed by the region's culture, history, and population. The museum's commitment has been reflected in its partnerships with civic leaders, nonprofit partners, and other educational stakeholders, as well as its pledge to share the collection, create programs, and involve new audiences. MVC's 2018 – 2022 accomplishments include:

Collection/Archive:

- Processing 929 cubic ft of the 1,412 cubic ft backlog, and digitized 4,621 items
- Releasing 1,259 items and adding to record 156 items
- Securing \$139,000 in federal grant funds, local/state grants, and private funding
- Moving all offsite archival storage to one consolidated location for processing

- Completing space analysis, fire suppression risk assessment, and the collection risk assessment reports

Programs:

- Site improvements including new children's areas, gardens, and galleries
- Creating a "third campus" online to allow for "virtual" collection visitation
- Launching multiple "rapid response collecting" efforts to collect memorabilia and ephemera that represent major events (Thomas Fire, Woolsey Fire, etc.)
- Currently developing, with the permission of the family, a collection program to conserve and save artifacts and stories relating to Supervisor Carmen Ramirez
- Reworking exhibits from having no translation for any signs or labels to providing 100% Spanish translation throughout the galleries

Partnerships:

- Partnership increases from less than 20 in 2017, to almost 60 plus through 2022
- Developing and implementing a paid internship program
- Holding community conversations to throughout the county

Funding:

- Increasing restricted endowments by over 300% (from \$2.7 million to \$8.5 million) and establishing a board-restricted endowment (from \$0 to \$3.5 million)
- Increasing visitor spending onsite by over 600%
- Increasing average annual grants (non-local government funding) by over 50%
- Increasing earned revenue by 30%
- Establishing prudent reserves of three months of operating budget
- Attracting over 250 new donors every open year

Governance:

- Adopting over 40 new policies, including new by-laws
- Establishing a new Board with representation from throughout the County
- Creating new committee structures for all volunteer committees
- Monthly meetings with County staff, and allowing County staff to serve on the Finance/Investment Committee

The MVC has exceeded the County's expectations and performed at a high level throughout the lifecycle of the current contract agreement. The museum has effectively taken on the challenge of reinvigorating facilities, archives, and collection. The County is appreciative of the achievements the MVC's staff, Board of Directors, and the many stakeholders have made together, and looks forward to continuing its commitment to the Museum for the cultural benefit of the next generation.

Discussion:

The MVC reached out to the County in 2022 to discuss the continuation of the partnership between the County and the museum. The CEO recommends an annual contribution to the MVC in the amount of (a) \$275,000 for five years (2023 – 2028) to assist with general operations, collection/archive maintenance, and inventory management and (b) a matching contribution option of up to \$50,000 annually for five years (2023 – 2028) contingent upon MVC's acquisition of grants from federal, state, or private organizations.

The County's annual commitment increases by \$75,000 from \$200,000 for 2018 – 2023, to \$275,000 for 2023 – 2028. This increase addresses the significant growth and increased complexity of the collection, as well as the additional costs of professional staffing and operations. The museum has an opportunity to be awarded an additional maximum of \$50,000 annually if it receives \$50,000 in organizational grants from state, federal and/or private institutions.

The purpose of this matching funds opportunity is to encourage MVC's internal fundraising capacity; the museum recently filled a director-level position for this work. Total financial support over the course of the new agreement has a floor of 5 years/\$275,000 annually and maximum of 5 years/\$325,000 annually (if the maximum matching funds figure is met). The proposed funding and management agreement is attached as Exhibit 1.

Funding Commitment:

	Year 1 FY 23-24	Year 2 FY 24-25	Year 3 FY 25-26	Year 4 FY 26-27	Year 5 FY 27-28	Total
Ongoing	\$275,000	\$275,000	\$275,000	\$275,000	\$275,000	\$1.37 mil
Matching	+/- \$50,000	+/- \$50,000	+/- \$50,000	+/- \$50,000	+/- \$50,000	+/- \$250,000
Ongoing & Matching Max	+/- \$325,000	+/- \$325,000	+/- \$325,000	+/- \$325,000	+/- \$325,000	+/- \$1.62 mil

Funding and Management Agreement

The proposed 2023 – 2028 funding and management agreement is attached as Exhibit 1. The agreement establishes the guidelines by which the museum will continue to manage the collection and general museum operations. This agreement gives the MVC operational control over the collection for five years. Under the previous agreement (2018 – 2023), the museum made significant improvements and completed the outlined tasks and obligations. This included roles and responsibilities, collection/archive policy, reporting requirements, accounting, etc. A few components of the new agreement include:

- Providing the County regular updates on external grants received from organizations (federal, state, and/or private entities. This includes total applications submitted, total awards received, total funding received, etc.
- Increasing overall fundraising goals, endowment funds, and multi-year grants for long-term sustainability and sustainability during down revenue years
- Providing for County representation on MVC boards (including, upon specific notice from your Board, on the MVC board of directors) and committees to ensure County involvement with museum operations
- Continuing partnerships throughout the region – schools, nonprofits, business community, higher education, cities, etc.

The museum excelled in implementing the requirements under the previous management agreement. The County is confident that MVC will successfully match the requirements under the new agreement.

It should be noted that the County also provides an in-kind benefit to the museum in the form of a lease agreement for the use of a county-owned property located at 77 N. California Street in Ventura. MVC manages the site including general maintenance and upkeep. This location provides space for archiving, cataloging, and document digitization, and is available to the public. The current lease term expires in June 2023. The CEO will return to your Board in early 2023 to seek renewal of this lease with MVC. The lease timeline will align with the updated funding and management agreement (2023 – 2028).

This letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office and County Counsel. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Kumazawa at (805) 477-7232 or Asad Baig at (805) 654-2686.

Sincerely,



Dr. Sevet Johnson, PsyD
County Executive Officer

Attachments
Exhibit 1 – Funding and Management Agreement