

CITY COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

TITLE	Funding Approval for 2026 Winter Ice Rink Program
SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT	City Manager
PRESENTER	[Document Description]
MEETING DATE	April 28, 2025
SECOND READING REQUIRED	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
CERTIFIED RESOLUTION	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Royal Oak Holidays program, produced by Jonathan Witz & Associates (JWA), has been restructured to enhance the downtown holiday experience. Historically, the City hosted a three-day Winter Blast event in early February; however, due to unpredictable winter weather and fluctuating attendance, this event will be discontinued. While Winter Blast will not return the Royal Oak Holidays will incorporate many of the hallmark activities from Winter Blast—including the zip line, musical performances in heated tenting, an ice sculpture themed weekend, a free skating weekend, outdoor rides and other seasonal festivities—into an expanded five-week holiday programming schedule. This change not only mitigates the weather risks that plagued Winter Blast in early February, but it extends the energy and vibrancy of last year’s Royal Oak Holidays program, both increasing sustained foot traffic during a critical shopping period, and by offering more consistent opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy downtown Royal Oak.

The Rink at Royal Oak program, which has successfully operated for three years, will have its normal 12.5 week run through mid-February, maintaining its seasonal presence and community value. The rink once had 25,000 skaters accompanied by many guests and visitors who were spectators at the rink, delivering its positive impact of foot traffic and vibrance to Centennial Commons and the downtown. With the rink, the City has also partnered with Jonathan Witz & Associates, (“JWA”) to operate the rink since the 2022-2023 (three seasons). Under the original agreement, JWA’s use of the rink during Winter Blast was factored into the contract as in-kind value. With Winter Blast’s elimination, the agreement will be amended to instead include a management fee paid to JWA to manage rink operations, sponsorship, marketing and programming.

Importantly, the City’s overall cost for the 2025-2026 programs (holidays, rink and winter blast) remain consistent with the programs that were produced last season:

- Rink at Royal Oak operating contribution: \$50,000
- Royal Oak Holiday programs: \$75,000

Of equal importance JWA has guaranteed to raise a combined \$245,000 of additional funding from outside corporate partners to support high level programming and operations for both the Holidays and Rink initiatives.

Fiscal Impact

BUDGET SUMMARY	
EXPENDITURE REQUIRED	\$125,000
AMOUNT CURRENTLY BUDGETED	\$125,000
BUDGET AMENDMENT REQUIRED	\$0.00 (BA between dept; net -0- effect on FB)
FUNDING SOURCE/ GL NUMBER	101-835-96800
WAS THIS A BUDGETED EXPENSE?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

OTHER FISCAL IMPACTS: (Select all that apply.)

☐ No fiscal impact

☐ Revenue impact (details below)

☐ Workload impact (details below)

☐ Operations Impact (details below)

REVENUE IMPACT: Revenues from the program offset the rink's operating costs. Any surplus revenues that exceed expenses are to be managed according to the management agreement between Witz Entertainment and the City of Royal Oak.

WORKLOAD IMPACT: The event involves coordination with several city departments most notably the City Manager's office, Department of Public Services, Finance, and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Police and Fire.

OPERATIONS IMPACT:

N/A

ALIGNMENT WITH COMMISSION APPROVED PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

The program most closely identifies with the Strategic Plan's focus on promoting a vibrant local economy.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The City's Communications Department will collaborate with Witz Entertainment and the DDA to cross promote this wonderful event to maximize our visibility.

BOARD AND COMMISSION FEEDBACK

The DDA Board and City Commission have provided support and feedback on this item since its inception.

LEGAL COMMENTS

PROPOSED COMMISSION RESOLUTION:

Be it resolved, the Royal Oak City Commission hereby approves funding for the 2026 Rink at Royal Oak program in the amount of \$125,000.00 and authorizes the City Manager and City Attorney to finalize an amended operating agreement with Witz Entertainment.