



BEN BARTLETT
CITY COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 3

CONSENT CALENDAR
May 12, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett, Mayor Adena Ishii

Subject: Berkeley Juneteenth Festival: Relinquishment of Council Office Budget Funds to General Fund and Grant of Such Funds

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the expenditure of funds, including \$2500 from Councilmember Bartlett for pre-planning of the Berkeley Juneteenth Festival (organized by Berkeley Juneteenth Association, Inc., 501(c)3), with funds relinquished to the City's General Fund for this purpose from the discretionary council office budget of Councilmember Bartlett and any other Councilmembers who would like to contribute.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The 2026 Berkeley Juneteenth Festival will be held on Sunday, June 21, 2026, in the heart of South Berkeley's historic Lorin District on Adeline Street, beginning at 11:00 AM, and will welcome residents of Berkeley and the greater Bay Area. Throughout the week leading up to the Sunday celebration, which will feature local artisans, food vendors, musical, dance, and cultural presentations, and information booths staffed by local non-profit organizations, the Berkeley Juneteenth event will hold educational and cultural events at various locations, including the Ed Roberts Campus.

BACKGROUND:

President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, declaring freedom for enslaved individuals in Confederate states. However, in Texas, enslaved people remained unaware of their freedom for more than two years, as their captors deliberately withheld this information. On June 18, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger of the Union Army arrived in Galveston, Texas, accompanied by 1,800 soldiers, to enforce the emancipation of over 250,000 enslaved people in the state.

The following year, on June 19, 1866, newly freed individuals in Texas took to the streets to commemorate their emancipation, establishing an enduring tradition of celebration. Today, Juneteenth is widely celebrated nationwide as a day honoring freedom, culture, heritage, and resilience.

The establishment of Berkeley Juneteenth Association, Inc. (BJAI) led to the first annual Festival in 1987. It has provided a lively cultural environment that fosters fellowship and community pride, and unites South Berkeley residents and businesses in celebrating this significant historical event. The event will feature booths showcasing arts and crafts, literary offerings, traditional garb, culinary fare, and opportunities for social gatherings. On two performance stages, local musicians, dancers, and other performers will showcase their talents, including primarily youthful performers on Stage Two. Former City Councilmembers Mary Wainwright and the late Maudelle Shirek played pivotal roles in securing City sponsorship. Additionally, the late Lothario Lotho and Giselle Thomas contributed over 25 years of dedicated service to the event's development.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No negative impact.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

No General Fund impact; \$2500 is available from the discretionary council office budget of Councilmember Ben Bartlett.

CONTACT PERSON:

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ATTACHMENT:

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AUTHORIZE THE EXPENDITURE OF SURPLUS FUNDS FROM THE OFFICE EXPENSE ACCOUNTS OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS FOR A GRANT TO PROVIDE PUBLIC SERVICES FOR A MUNICIPAL PUBLIC PURPOSE

WHEREAS, Councilmember Bartlett has surplus funds in his office expenditure account; and

WHEREAS, a California non-profit tax-exempt corporation, Berkeley Juneteenth Association, Inc., will receive the funds; and

WHEREAS, the provision of such services would fulfill the following municipal public purpose: Berkeley Juneteenth Association, Inc. (BJAI) Promotes greater societal cohesiveness and well-being by educating and involving the community-at-large in historical, family, and cultural activities; and

WHEREAS, BJAII hosts various activities, including Black History Month Celebrations and the Berkeley Juneteenth Festival; and

WHEREAS, cultural celebrations are critical to the social and spiritual unity of our community, and are integrated into BJAII events; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that funds relinquished by the Mayor and Councilmembers from their council office budget, of an amount to be determined by each Councilmember, shall be granted to Berkeley Juneteenth Association, Inc.

