City of Calistoga
STAFF REPORT

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council
From: Sheli Wright, Fairgrounds Revitalization Director
Meeting: City Council - Regular Meeting - Oct 27 2026
Subject: **Calistoga Fairgrounds Annual Department Report - FY 25/26**

DESCRIPTION:

Council will receive the Calistoga Fairgrounds Annual Department Report - FY 25/26

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the Calistoga Fairgrounds Fiscal Year 2025–26 Department Update and provide feedback on department operations and ongoing revitalization priorities.

SUMMARY:

During Fiscal Year 2025–26, the Calistoga Fairgrounds supported public events, private rentals, community programs, leases, and emergency response while staff continued facility repairs and property improvements. The department balances revenue generation with community access, maintenance, emergency readiness, and the property's role in the City's reclaimed wastewater system.

ANALYSIS:

Background

The City acquired the Calistoga Fairgrounds in July 2024. Since acquisition, staff have worked to restore facilities, address deferred maintenance, and expand use of the property as a year-round community resource.

Under City Council direction, City staff manage and maintain the Fairgrounds' facilities, RV Park, Speedway, and open spaces; generate revenue using existing assets; and carry out property improvements approved by the Council.

The Fairgrounds hosts fairs, races, community celebrations, recreation, and private rentals. It also provides space for emergency staging, shelter, and community services, and supports the City's reclaimed wastewater system through irrigation and distribution on the property.

Council Priorities and Department Staffing

The department's work supports Council priorities to increase revenue from the RV Park and existing facilities and prioritize infrastructure projects that can reduce General Fund subsidies. Council priorities also called for assessing community wishes for the property before further decisions on investment, reopening facilities, and uses. Continued support for the community survey and Fairgrounds Advisory Committee informs that work.

During FY 2025–26, department staffing consisted of the Fairgrounds Revitalization Director and one full-time maintenance position. The current organization includes administrative support. The FY 2025–26 presentation identifies $233,655 for full-time administrative and maintenance personnel to support facility operations, rentals, events, and revitalization.

Discussion

The department's responsibilities extend beyond providing event space. Staff coordinate scheduling, rental and lease agreements, contract oversight, event setup and site access, safety planning, concessions, and volunteer participation. Staff also coordinate with Public Works, Police, Fire, Finance, and other City departments to support facility operations and multiple uses of the grounds.

Facility Use and Community Activity

Reported FY 2025–26 activity included:

- 18 regular rentals, including birthday parties, quinceañeras, memorials, and weddings.
- 12 public events, supporting community celebrations, agricultural programming, recreation, and public outreach.
- 9 special meetings and trainings, including START, Human Resources, Public Works, Summer BBQ, and NCLOG activities. This count excludes regular weekly meetings.
- 10 community uses, supporting local organizations, school activities, emergency services, and training.

Examples of events and outreach hosted on the grounds include the Ag Fair, Jaripeo, Safety Day, Hoist Training, Egg Hunt, Carnival, Circus, Holiday Bazaar, Tour de Calistoga, Hazardous Waste Collection, Louie Vermeil Classic, Baseline Data Outreach, Public Works Water Outreach, and Car Show.

Community uses included CERT, Calistoga High School cross-country practices and homecoming float activities, the Chamber, Up Valley Family Center, Calistoga Police Officers Association, and Garden Club. The property also served as a helicopter rescue and ambulance site and a training location for CDFA, St. Helena Fire, and Calistoga Fire.

Leases and Revenue Generation

Leases and site-use arrangements included Calistoga Cares, Calistoga Arts Center, Verizon, AT&T, PG&E, and Calistoga Vines. These uses support community services and revenue generation from existing assets. The RV Park, facility rentals, and event uses also contribute to department revenue. Staff continue to evaluate revenue opportunities in coordination with Council direction while accounting for maintenance costs, staffing needs, infrastructure capacity, and community access.

Fiscal Year 2025–26 Financial Update

The revenue chart reports $759,183.13 from the categories below. It separately identifies $838,392 in fund transfers, $133,600.70 in deferred RV Park reservation revenue for the next fiscal year, and $26,074.50 in taxes paid. These amounts require separate accounting treatment when comparing operating revenue with expenses.

Revenue category	Reported amount
RV Park	$241,037.36
Event rentals	$269,797.91
Long-term leases	$162,782.25

Revenue category	Reported amount
Concessions	$18,970.16
CDFA allocation	$41,000.00
Other	$25,595.45
Total	$759,183.13

Reported FY 2025–26 expenses totaled $1,453,615.78. Major expense categories included contracts ($515,735.42), salary and personnel costs ($410,012.47), repairs and maintenance ($119,030.98), water and sewer ($108,143.96), utilities ($71,877.51), and RV House sewer work ($60,685.01).

Facility Improvements and Maintenance

FY 2025–26 accomplishments included hosting the first sprint car races since 2019, completing $250,000 in grandstand infrastructure repairs through the Speedway contract, and hosting a successful “I Love Calistoga” Ag Fair. Facility improvements included the Butler Building roof repair, Tubbs Building painting and new lighting, Tubbs kitchen repair and cleaning, and RV House work. Staff also continued improving the appearance and usability of the grounds.

These improvements support safe and reliable facility use, strengthen rental opportunities, and address accumulated maintenance needs. Ongoing grounds care, repairs, and event preparation remain essential to sustaining these gains.

Emergency Readiness and Reclaimed Water Operations

The Fairgrounds supported emergency response associated with the Pickett Fire. Its buildings and open areas provide space that can be used for staging, shelter, training, and community assistance, with the specific use coordinated through City and emergency response personnel. The site is used for fire training and as a pick-up/drop-off emergency helicopter space on an ongoing basis.

Staff also maintain and coordinate irrigation and reclaimed water distribution on the property. This municipal function will require continued coordination with Public Works and wastewater operations as recreation, events, and future property uses are planned.

Continuing Work in Fiscal Year 2026–27

Continuing priorities include Council-approved infrastructure improvements, facility maintenance, RV House and Butler Building work, pump communication with the water treatment plant, seasonal grounds preparation, and event readiness. A major water leak has been located and repaired; water savings remain to be quantified.

The Golf Course and Speedway requests for proposals provide opportunities to evaluate operating arrangements, rehabilitation commitments, and revenue potential. Staff will also continue supporting the Fairgrounds Advisory Committee and bringing recommendations requiring Council action forward for consideration.

Capital Improvement Program

The FY 2025–26 capital program included $450,000 for northeast infrastructure improvements. The presentation reports $60,685.01 for RV House work and identifies the $250,000 in grandstand repairs as work completed through the Speedway contract.

For FY 2026–27, the presentation identifies $389,314.90 in northeast infrastructure carryover, $500,000 for the sewer project, $506,400 for water leaks, and $33,000 for a forklift, for total

available capital improvement expenditures of $1,428,714.90. These investments support infrastructure reliability and continued public use of the property.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None. Receiving this department update does not authorize new expenditures or amend the adopted budget. Department operations, maintenance, and approved improvements are funded through the applicable adopted budgets and Council authorizations. Any additional funding requests or proposed agreements requiring Council approval will be presented separately.

CEQA STATUS:

Not Applicable

ATTACHMENT(S):

Fairgrounds update - presentation 2026 Final 10426

APPROVAL(S):

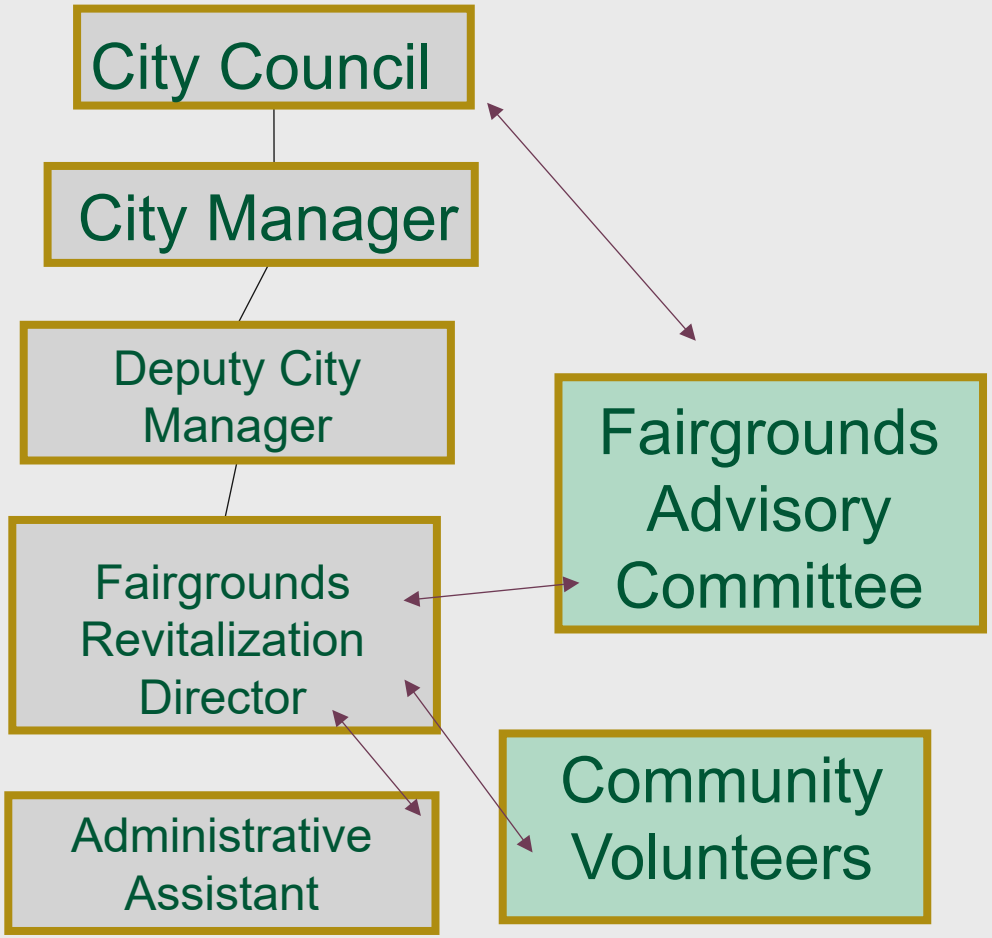
Rachel Stepp, Deputy City Manager	Approved - Oct 14 2026
Connie Cardenas, Admin. Services Director	Approved - Oct 14 2026
Yudiana Galvan, City of Calistoga | City Clerk	Approved - Oct 19 2026
Mitch Celaya, City Manager	Approved - Oct 20 2026

ANNUAL FY 25/26 DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Fairgrounds

Organization & Operation

The Fairgrounds is a year-round community asset.



*Current Org Chart – FY 25/26 was Director & 1 FT Maintenance Worker

City staff *manage and maintain fairground's facilities, RV Park, Speedway, and open spaces. Directed by the council, generate revenue utilizing existing assets and improve the property as approved by the council.*

Host fairs, races, community celebrations, recreation, and private rentals.

Provide space for emergency staging, shelter, and community services.

Support the City's reclaimed wastewater system through irrigation and distribution on the property. #1 distributor of reclaimed water, over 39 Million Gallons of water, 35.4%

Fairgrounds Use

18 Regular Rentals & 12 Public Events (Birthday parties, Quinceanera, memorials, weddings & Ag Fair, Jaripeo, Safety Day, Hoist training, Egg Hunt, Carnival, Circus, Holiday Bazaar, Tour De Calistoga, Haz Waste, Louie Vermil Classic, Baseline Data Outreach, Public Works Water Outreach, Car Show.

9 Special Meetings/Trainings (START, HR, PW, Summer BBQ, NCLOG, etc.) *Does not include regular weekly meetings.

10 Community uses – CERT, CHS Cross County Practices, CHS Homecoming Floats, Chamber, Up Valley Family Center, Calistoga POA, Garden Club. Helicopter Rescue & Ambulance site. CDF, St. Helena, Napa County and Calistoga Fire training site.

Leases - Calistoga Cares, Calistoga Arts Center, Verizon, AT&T, PGE, Calistoga Vines.

Emergency Response and Community Support – Pickett Fire - The **Calistoga Fairgrounds** served as a CAL FIRE staging site during the Pickett Fire, providing space for firefighting personnel, equipment, and emergency response resources. This use demonstrated the Fairgrounds' important role in regional emergency preparedness and community protection. The fire began on August 21, 2025, near Pickett Road in Calistoga, burned approximately 6,820 acres, and destroyed five structures before reaching full containment on September 7, 2025. The incident prompted evacuations and affected surrounding communities through smoke and disruption. Napa County initially estimated at least $65 million in agricultural losses, underscoring the fire's significant impact on local livelihoods and the agricultural economy.







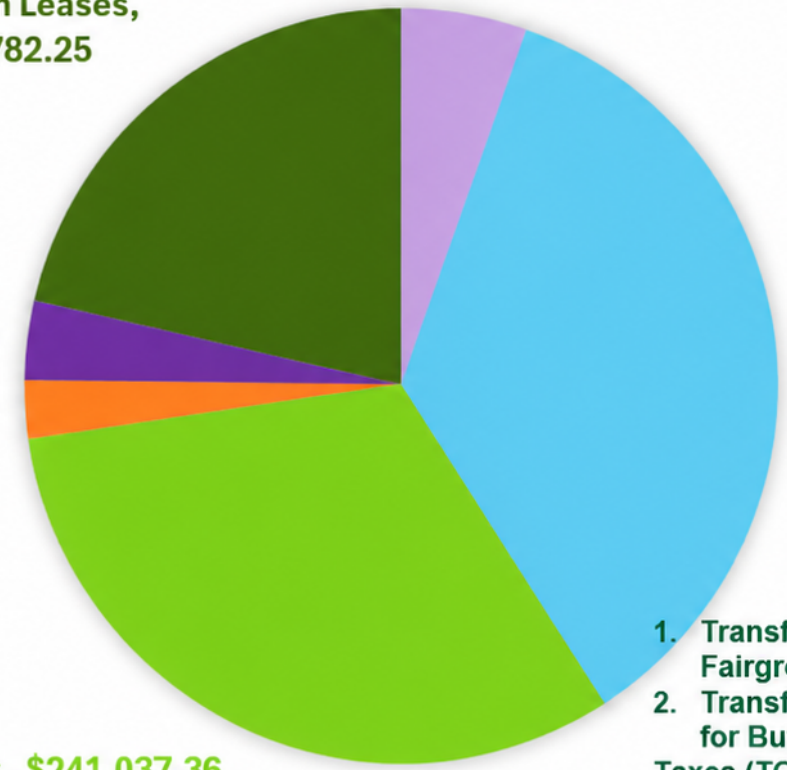




25/26 Revenue

$759,183.13

REVENUE 25/26 FISCAL YEAR



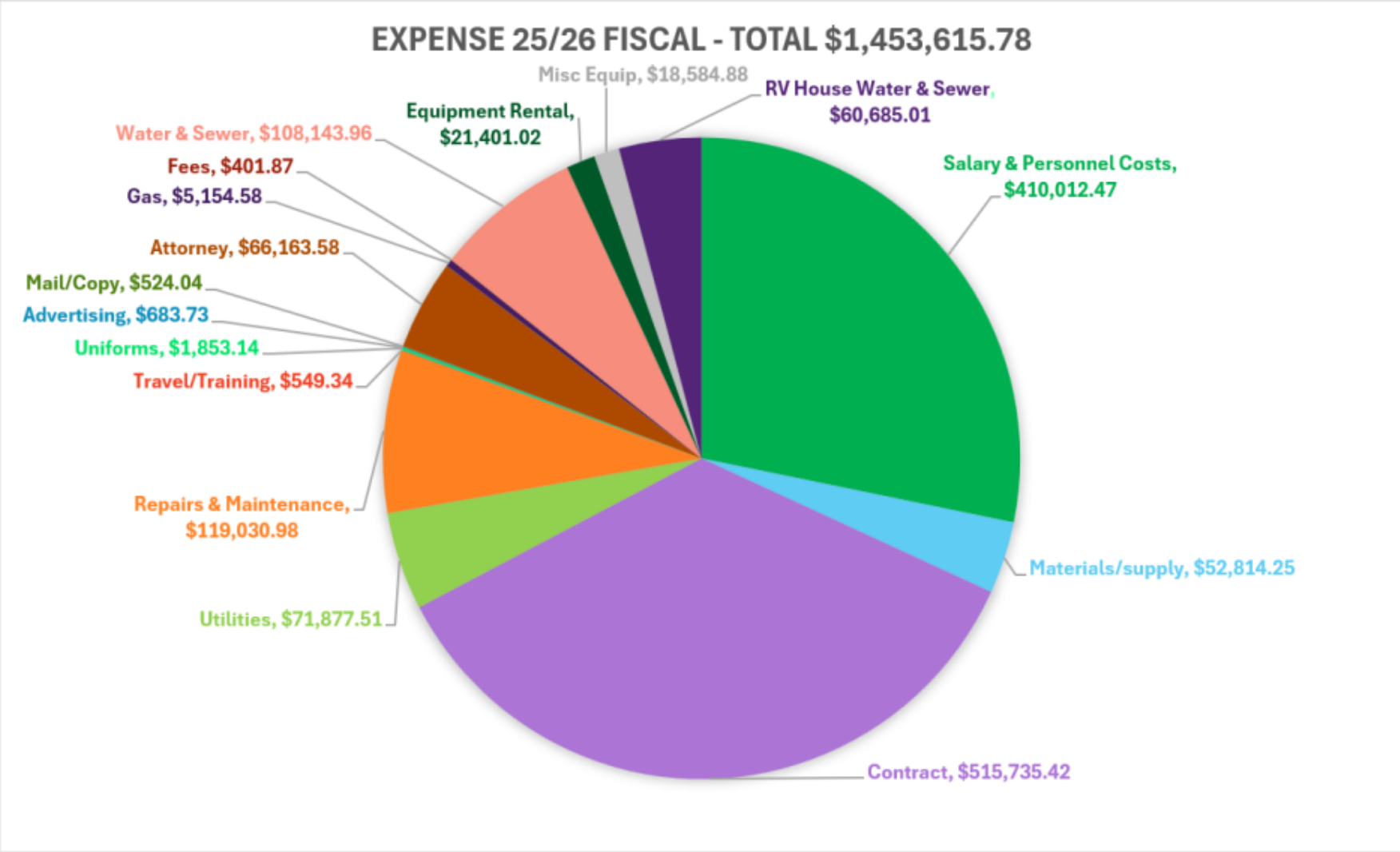
Fund Transfers

1. Transfer from General Fund (Fund 101) for Fairground Operation- $822,392.00
2. Transfer from Infrastructure Fund (Fund 110) for Butler Roof Replacement- $16,000

Taxes (TOT, TBID, Measure D) paid - $26,074.50

Total Fairgrounds Funding Sources - $1,571,500.63

25/26 Expenses $1,453,615.78



Calistoga City Council FY 25/26 Priorities

- The Calistoga City Council is mindful of the following values, in no order of ranking, as they consider city business and focus on the annual priorities: economic vitality, housing, infrastructure, our environment, professional services, public safety, recreation, & small-town character.



1) **Infrastructure –** Human and Physical- The Calistoga City Council wishes to maintain a "Human and Physical Capital Infrastructure Reserve Fund" based on fiscally responsible principles for the following purposes:

a) Continue prioritizing planning and investment to allow for increased revenue generation from the RV park.

b) Following community survey and Fairgrounds committee input, prepare a plan to prioritize other Fairground infrastructure projects that will allow for additional Fairgrounds revenue generation to offset General Fund subsidies to the Fairgrounds.

d) Disaster response or major systems failures including wildfires, flooding, earthquakes, or infrastructure

3) Fairgrounds

a) Continue prioritizing planning and investment to allow for increased revenue generation from the RV park.

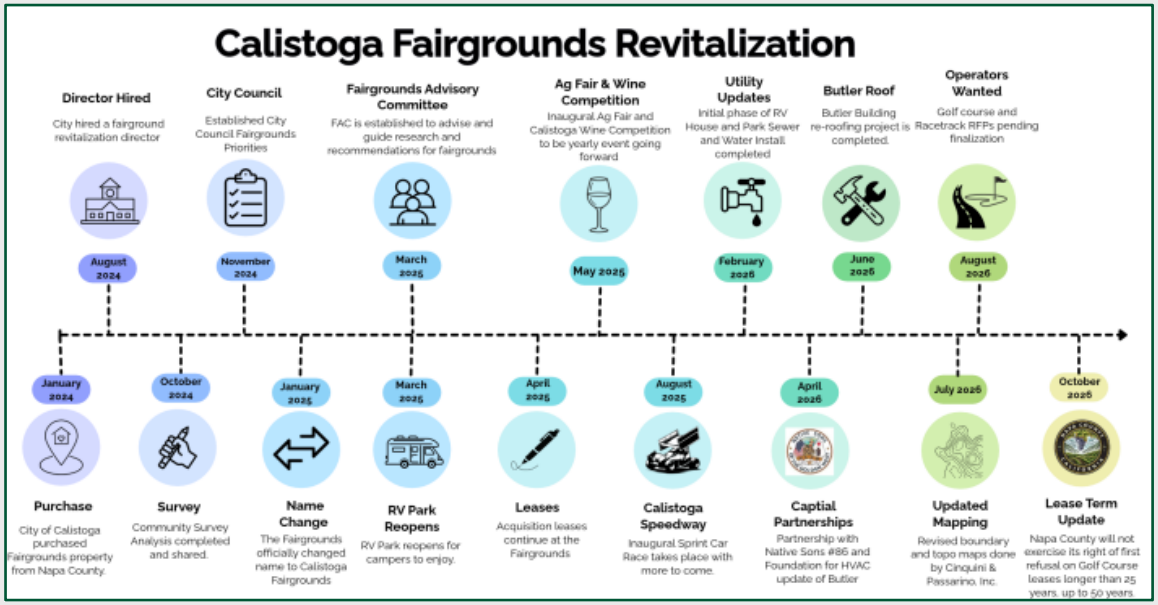
b) Conduct a citywide assessment of the community wishes for uses of the property prior to the next set of decisions about financial investment, re-openings, and uses.

25/26 Accomplishments

- Hosted the first sprint car races since 2019.
- Completed $250,000 in grandstand repairs.
- Celebrated a successful “I ❤️ Calistoga” Ag Fair.
- Generated over $240,000 in RV Park revenue.
- Generated $430,000 in rental and lease revenue.
- Repaired the Butler Building roof.
- Located and repaired a major water leak.
- Painted the Tubbs Building and installed new lighting.
- Continued improving the grounds’ appearance, with ongoing repairs and revitalization moving forward.







CIP Projects

- **Butler Roof - total $165,380.00**
- **Grandstand Repairs- $250,000 work of infrastructure repairs were paid by the speedway promoter.**
- **FY 25/26 - $450,000 NE Infrastructure – (Allocated from Development Impact Fees)**
- **RV House $60,685.01**

FY 26/27 –

N.E. Infrastructure Improvements Carry Over from FY 25/26 (Allocated from Development Impact Fees)	**$389,314.99**
Sewer Project (Infrastructure Fund)	$500,000
Water Leaks (Infrastructure Fund)	$506,400
Forklift (Infrastructure Fund)	$33,000
Total Capital Improvement Expenditures Available	$1,428,714.99

*** Full Time Admin. and Maintenance Personnel $233,655** (Infrastructure Fund)