



# City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Department Source: Cultural Affairs

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: December 21, 2020

Re: Appropriation request to purchase historic piano for Blind Boone Home

## Executive Summary

The Office of Cultural Affairs is requesting Council action to appropriate funds. The John William Boone Heritage Foundation is seeking assistance in the purchase of a historic piano that was owned by John William "Blind" Boone. The total cost of the piano is \$15,000 plus \$850 for shipping. Council authorization is requested not-to-exceed \$7,500 to assist in the purchase of the piano and \$850 for shipping.

## Discussion

The John William Boone Heritage Foundation is seeking assistance in the purchase of a historic piano that was owned by John William "Blind" Boone. The total cost of the piano is \$15,000 plus \$850 for shipping. Council authorization is requested not-to-exceed \$7,500 to assist in the purchase of the piano and \$850 for shipping. The following departments have funds available to be used for the purchase of the piano: City Manager's Office - \$2,785; Office of Cultural Affairs - \$2,780; and Convention & Visitors Bureau - \$2,785.

The Boone Foundation has already put a deposit of \$7,500 on the piano and made additional requests for funding to Boone Electric Community Trust for \$3,850 as well as raised approximately \$1,200 in private donations. Once purchased, the piano would be placed in the Blind Boone Home, where it would be covered on the city's insurance.

## BACKGROUND

The following statement explains the significance of this acquisition:

Until October 2020, the 1891 Chickering grand piano on display at the Boone County Historical Society was thought to be the only extant piano to have been owned by Columbia musician and composer, John William "Blind" Boone.

However, in October, a man named Markus Still found an 1889 Chickering parlor grand in a music store in Lightfoot, Virginia, which he considered buying. In researching the history of the instrument, Still looked up the piano's factory assembly number in Chickering's sales ledgers, which are available online. There, he discovered the piano was made-to-order by the Chickering Company for the Blind Boone Touring Company. It is likely that the piano was kept in his home in Columbia and may possibly have gone on tour with him. Mr. Still immediately contacted the Boone Heritage Foundation to alert them to this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to purchase one of two pianos known to have belonged to this musical pioneer.



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The Boone Heritage Foundation has elected to return this beautiful instrument to Boone's home, where they believe it belongs. They envision that the piano, which has been restored and is in very good working condition, will greatly enhance their ability to tell Boone's story. In addition, it will offer the public another chance to connect with this ragtime pioneer. Just as the Foundation strives to make Boone's home a living part of the community, they plan to do the same with the piano. The organization anticipates that it will be played by professional and amateur musicians alike for recitals, concerts and other events. They are especially excited to be able to provide young piano students with the opportunity to perform on this historic instrument.

## PHOTOS





## Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: \$7,500 plus \$850 for shipping

Long-Term Impact: None

## Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impacts

### Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Economy, Secondary Impact: Social Equity

### Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Economic Development, Secondary Impact: Livable and Sustainable Communities, Tertiary Impact: Inter-Governmental Cooperation

## Legislative History

Date	Action
N/A	N/A

## Suggested Council Action

Approve the ordinance authorizing the appropriation of funds.