



## State of New Jersey

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**CARL J. RICHKO**  
Chairperson

**LISA J. PLEVIN**  
Executive Director

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Budget & Finance Committee  
**From:** Lisa J. Plevin, Executive Director  
**Subject:** Committee Meeting Minutes – June 30, 2021  
**Date:** July 6, 2021

A Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee meeting was held on Wed., June 30, 2021, at 9:30am via teleconference.

*The following were present:*

Committee: Committee Chair Holtaway, Council Chair Richko, and Members James and Visioli.

Highlands Staff: Lisa J. Plevin, Christine LaRocca, James Humphries, Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, Keri Green, Gabrielle Gallagher, Ranji Persaud, Herb August, Kelley Curran, Steve Simone, and Annette Tagliareni.

Governor's Authorities Unit: Lauren Nathan-LaRusso, Senior Counsel; and Jeffrey Nielsen, Associate Counsel.

*Committee Chair Holtaway opened the meeting at 9:31am.*

#### **Extension of FY2021 General Operating and Protection Fund Budgets**

Committee Chair Holtaway announced that the first agenda item is the extension of the FY2021 General Operating and Protection Fund Budgets. Committee Chair Holtaway noted that this is a resolution that the Council considers every year which extends the existing budget at the same average monthly spending level until the next budget is formally approved by Council.

*Member James was present at 9:35am.*

There was no Committee comment.

*Committee Chair Holtaway asked for a motion to move the Extension of FY2021 General Operating and Protection Funds Budgets to the Council for consideration. Member Visioli made a motion and Member James seconded it. A roll call vote was taken, and all were in favor.*

### **Highlands Council FY2022 Highlands Protection Fund Grants:**

#### **Harding Township Water Use and Conservation Management Plan - \$65,000**

Kelley Curran, Senior Resource Management Specialist, gave an overview of Harding Township's grant request. Ms. Curran noted that Harding Township is a non-conforming municipality, 100% in the Highlands Planning Area. In November 2020, the Highlands Council was notified by the NJDEP of an application for a site-specific amendment to the Northeast Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) for a proposed development in Harding Township. The proposed development triggered Executive Order 114 requiring the Council to review and provide comments and recommendations for WQMP amendments regarding consistency with the Net Water Availability (NWA) provisions of the Regional Master Plan (RMP). Harding Township is required to develop and implement a municipal-wide Water Use and Conservation Management Plan (WUCMP) as the proposed project is located in a subwatershed that has a NWA deficit. It is estimated that a total of \$65,000 will be needed for the completion of the WUCMP.

Committee Chair Holtaway inquired since the site-specific amendment triggered this project, is the developer responsible for the cost. Ms. Curran responded that the developer is responsible for the site-specific water deficit mitigation plan and imposed conditions to conserve water. The Township is responsible for the municipal-wide plan, with Highlands Council grant funding.

*Committee Chair Holtaway asked for a motion to move the Harding Township Water Use and Conservation Management Plan (\$65,000) to the Council for consideration. Member James made a motion and Member Visioli seconded it. A roll call vote was taken, and all were in favor.*

#### **Vernon Township - \$80,500 (3 projects)**

##### Farmland Preservation Plan - \$15,000

Steve Simone, Land Preservation Coordinator and Regional Planner, gave an overview of Vernon Township's grant request for a Farmland Preservation Plan. Mr. Simone noted that the proposed Farmland Preservation Plan would take stock of the Township's existing agricultural lands, its current Farmland Preservation Program, and resources that are available to assist in natural resource conservation. The Township's current plan is dated 1995 and is due for an update. The plan would analyze historic and projected trends in the local agricultural industry, ensure consistency with state and local plans, review means to promote economic development and retain agricultural resources, and envision a future version of the Township's Farmland Preservation Program. The development of the Farmland Preservation Plan is proposed for \$15,000.

Committee Chair Holtaway inquired if the Council has funded Farmland Preservation Plans before. James Humphries, Director of Planning & Science, responded that the Council has approved these Plans with Plan Conformance Petition approvals. Mr. August, Grants Manager, added that Hopatcong Borough, Pohatcong Township and Holland Township were approved by the Council for Farmland Preservation Plans.

#### Stormwater Management Plan - \$27,500

Kelley Curran gave an overview of Vernon Township's supplemental grant request. Ms. Curran noted this supplemental funding is to complete the background studies and data collection needed to develop a Stormwater Management Plan pursuant to Highlands Council plan conformance requirements. Vernon was initially allocated \$15,000 to complete the required components which include digital mapping of stormwater facilities, development of a mitigation plan, and adoption of Highlands-specific amendments to the municipal stormwater control ordinance. Ms. Curran added that given Vernon is nearly 70 square miles in size, additional funding is required to complete the facilities mapping component. The Township is requesting an additional \$27,500 (for a total of \$42,500) to complete the required field work and associated deliverables which will enable Vernon to meet their Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirements. The estimated timeline to complete the plan is 9 months.

Committee Chair Holtaway noted that the common estimate for a Stormwater Management Plan is \$15,000. Ms. Curran responded that \$15,000 funding is typically sufficient for smaller municipalities.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked if this is the first time a municipality has come back for additional funding. Ms. Curran responded that West Milford came back for considerably more funding for a similar scope. Vernon Township's scope includes completion of all program components and submission of required deliverables.

*Member James left the meeting at 9:48am.*

#### Municipal Center and Trail Feasibility Plan - \$38,000

Steve Simone gave an overview of Vernon Township's grant request for a Municipal Center and Trail Feasibility Plan. Mr. Simone noted that the Township is in the process of developing a Town Center walking/biking trail to run parallel to NJSH Route 94 through the Town Center Area. Mr. Simone added that the Township has engaged with the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) for Plan Endorsement, and their petition includes redrawing the Vernon Township Town Center boundaries to encourage a greater density of development along the Route 94 corridor. The proposed trail would link the Town Center to nearby resorts and amenities, and potentially connect to other trail systems such as the Appalachian Trail. The scope, which includes siting, design, preliminary engineering, and analyses of cultural and environmental impacts has a proposed budget of \$38,000.

Committee Chair Holtaway commented that this is an important plan for Town Centers.

*Committee Chair Holtaway asked for a motion to move the Vernon Township grant for a Farmland Preservation Plan (\$15,000); Stormwater Management Plan (\$27,500); and Municipal Center and Trail Feasibility Plan (\$38,000) for a total amount of \$80,500 to the Council for consideration. Member Visioli made a motion and Chair Richko seconded it. A roll call vote was taken, and all were in favor.*

#### **Town of Phillipsburg, Circulation Plan Element - \$50,000**

Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, Planning Manager, gave an overview of Phillipsburg's grant request for a Circulation Plan Element as part of their municipal master planning. The comprehensive circulation plan will provide a needed update to the plan adopted in 2004 and will restate the vision for safe pedestrian and cycle movement through the town, connecting to in-town and regional trail networks. The Plan will offer recommendations for improvements to existing infrastructure and construction of new infrastructure where needed and will provide the comprehensive strategy for

mobility of all modes of transportation for the entire town. The estimated timeline to complete the plan is 8-10 months.

*Committee Chair Holtaway asked for a motion to move the Town of Phillipsburg Circulation Plan Element grant in the amount of \$50,000 to the Council for consideration. Member Visioli made a motion and Chair Richko seconded it. A roll call vote was taken, and all were in favor.*

### **Washington Borough, Economic Development Plan - \$40,000**

Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, Planning Manager, gave an overview of Washington Borough's submitted scope of work to prepare an Economic Development Plan to create the foundation for long-term economic viability within their municipality. The Plan will include development of a baseline profile of economic conditions, as well as a review of relevant county, regional and state economic plans and documents. A municipal subcommittee will be formed to review gathered data and participate in a robust outreach effort to enlist local knowledge and contribute to the Vision Statement for the Borough's economic future. The Economic Development Plan will include an Action Matrix, which will include a timeline with the recommendations that the Borough take to achieve its vision. The Economic Development Plan will be used as the basis for policies and actions that will promote future economic development in the Borough. The estimated timeline to complete the plan is 8 months.

Committee Chair Holtaway commented that the grant might be redundant or too soon to consider due to the Council's Economic Sustainability Plan currently being prepared for the entire Highlands Region. Member Visioli agreed.

There were discussions amongst Committee members and Highlands Council staff regarding this grant and whether the Committee should move it to the full Council for consideration since the regional Economic Sustainability Plan is near completion. It was noted that a presentation will be provided to the full Council at its July Council meeting on the Economic Sustainability Plan for the Highlands Region.

Chair Richko commented that he supports the Plan but wants to have a coordinated effort.

Ms. Plevin emphasized that at the July Council meeting members can ask consultants how local plans could fit into the regional Plan.

At this time, Committee Chair Holtaway tabled the Washington Borough grant request for consideration at a future meeting.

*The committee meeting adjourned at 10:15am.*