



State of New Jersey

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MEMORANDUM

To: Budget & Finance Committee
From: Lisa J. Plevin, Executive Director
Subject: Committee Meeting Minutes – May 6, 2021
Date: May 11, 2021

A Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee meeting was held on Thurs., May 6, 2021 at 2:30pm via teleconference.

The following Committee Members and Highlands Council Staff were present:

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

Highlands Staff: Lisa J. Plevin, James Humphries, Gabrielle Gallagher, Keri Green, Judy Thornton, Herb August, and Annette Tagliareni.

Committee Chair Holtaway opened the meeting at 2:31pm.

Roxbury Township – “Field Assessment and Engineering/Planning Design Plans for Streambank Stabilization and Habitat Creation Measure along the Section of the Musconetcong River between Lake Hopatcong and Lake Musconetcong” - \$89,500

Committee Chair Holtaway reported that Roxbury Township is requesting a grant in the amount of \$89,500 for the above project.

In response to the Chair’s request, Keri Green, Science Manager gave an overview of the grant application from Roxbury Township. Ms. Green noted that approximately 2 ½ years ago the Council funded a Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), which was recently completed by the Lake Hopatcong Commission for the Upper Musconetcong Watershed, including Lake Hopatcong and Lake Musconetcong. The plan was developed in large part to address the phosphorus issue affecting these lakes and Highlands Council staff urged municipalities around the lakes to use grant funding to implement projects identified in the WIP.

Ms. Green noted that the requested grant funding will enable the first phase of a streambank stabilization and restoration project along the Musconetcong River, immediately downstream of the Lake Hopatcong dam but upstream of Lake Musconetcong. The outflowing river below the dam has multiple, braided channels and is quite forested. Ms. Green noted that 67% of total phosphorus introduced into Lake Musconetcong originates from the outfall from Lake Hopatcong. The WIP thus prioritizes this area for attention, recommending streambank stabilization and restoration as a goal. The full project will require significantly more funding to complete, which the Lake Hopatcong Commission is seeking through the National Fish and Wildlife Federal (NFWF). This Roxbury request will serve as a portion of the match funding needed for an NFWF grant.

Committee Member Visioli inquired if this project will serve as a match and will be the first step and required to do the larger stabilization plan. He also asked specifically how that would be accomplished. Ms. Green confirmed his understanding and added that is exciting and putting the WIP to work. The stabilization work will include significant plantings along the streambank. Other portions of the project include the removal of a concrete slab from the riverbank, and the improvement of public access for fishing.

Committee Chair Holtaway noted that the project proposal indicates that it would remove 114 pounds of total phosphorus, equivalent to just 2 bags of fertilizer. Ms. Green explained that a single pound of phosphorus can create 1,100 pounds of algal mass per year, which is a significant input to the ecosystem and a cause of Harmful Algal Blooms.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked what the distance is between the dam and Lake Musconetcong. Ms. Green responded approximately 7,000 feet.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked what percentage of the total project is represented by Roxbury Township's match. Ms. Green will provide confirmation of that figure but noted that the entire grant request to NFWF includes two other project areas in the lake system, and multiple entities are providing matches, in either in-kind services or financial contributions. They include:

Roxbury Township
Hopatcong Borough
Mount Arlington Borough
Morris County
Sussex County
Lake Hopatcong Commission

Lake Hopatcong Foundation
Princeton Hydro
NJDEP/Hopatcong State Park
Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum
Rutgers University
Musconetcong Watershed Association

Committee Member James noted that severe HAB problems are destroying local economies. He also asked if phosphorus-containing fertilizer is banned. Ms. Green noted that years ago phosphorus-containing fertilizers were banned from use, with an exception only for establishing a new lawn.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked for a motion to move the Roxbury Township Grant 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.

Ms. Plevin noted that a representative from Roxbury Township will be in attendance at the Council Meeting.

Committee member Visioli made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Committee Member James seconded it.

The committee meeting adjourned at 2:46pm.