



## 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 – January 6, 2022  
**Date:** January 12, 2022

A Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee meeting was held on Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 9:00am via Zoom video conference.

*Committee Chair Holtaway opened the meeting at 9:00am. The following participants were present:*

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

Highlands Staff: Lisa J. Plevin, Gabrielle Gallagher, James Humphries, Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, Judy Thornton, Kelley Curran, and Annette Tagliareni.

Governor's Authorities Unit: Jeffrey Nielsen, Associate Counsel

#### **Award Recommendation - Award of Contract to Develop a Guidance Document and Scope of Services for Municipal Land Use Plan and Environmental Sustainability Master Plan Elements, including a Municipal Climate Change Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment**

Ms. Plevin initiated the discussion by reminding the committee of recent amendments to the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requiring municipalities to incorporate environmental sustainability, climate change, and resiliency planning into municipal master plans. Ms. Plevin also noted that two Executive Orders were issued incorporating climate resiliency and environmental justice. As a result of these, and in keeping with associated RMP goals, the Highlands Council released a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking expert assistance for development of a guidance document which will provide a much-needed template for municipalities in the Highlands Region to meet the requirements of the amended MLUL. She asked that Judy Thornton, Principal Planner, who will be managing the project, provide a summary of the RFP results as well as the staff's recommendation.

Ms. Thornton indicated that the RFP was posted on July 19, 2021 with proposals received through September 20, 2021. Six proposals were received. The Council staff team reviewed all proposals and selected three of the six for follow-up interviews. All respondents committed to the scope of work outlined in the RFP and all agreed to complete the tasks within the 9-month timeframe. The firms had varied approaches to conducting outreach, gathering relevant data, developing the guidance document, and implementation.

Ms. Thornton discussed the review process and indicated that the staff team unanimously agreed that the best proposal was the one from New Jersey Future ("NJ Future").

She explained that the NJ Future proposal was notable for its significant outreach component and for the organization's strong experience working with municipalities, including Highlands municipalities. NJ Future also stood out for its commitment to go beyond completion of tasks within the RFP. It plans to test the eventual model material directly with one or more municipalities, to polish and refine it as needed, and to then offer it for use by municipalities throughout the state. Ms. Thornton noted that the NJ Future team offers a wealth of experience, including not only NJ Future representatives, but professionals from Sustainable Jersey, Brownfield Redevelopment Solutions (BRS) Inc., and The Land Conservancy of New Jersey (TLCNJ). The assembled group has contributed to and completed a variety of projects similar to this one. Highlands Council staff are familiar with the work products of the organizations represented on the team, and each organization is well regarded.

Finally, Ms. Thornton noted that the NJ Future proposal is fiscally conservative, being the lowest cost proposal of the three teams interviewed. For a total cost of \$89,000, the team would complete the project within an organized framework consisting of the following five components:

- Background Research
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Develop Guidance Document
- Presentation to Plan Conformance Committee and Highlands Council
- Municipal Workshops

In conclusion, the Highlands Council staff's recommendation is to award the contract to New Jersey Future, in the amount of \$89,000.

At this time, committee members provided comments/questions.

Committee Member Visioli stated that the review team did a thorough job and he agreed that the NJ Future proposal was comprehensive and offered the best deal.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked what BRS will be doing as part of their 23% task. Ms. Haddock-Weiler responded that she has worked with BRS and they have expanded their business to more than brownfields. Mr. Humphries added that BRS' work on redevelopment projects has turned significantly toward climate resiliency issues and the technical means of addressing them.

Chair Richko asked who the stakeholders will be. Ms. Thornton noted that Highlands Council staff will work with the consultant on this list to include municipal/county representation, as well as

professionals, state agencies, etc. Ms. Haddock-Weiler added that staff have already been contacted by municipal professionals regarding the MLUL requirement and some have volunteered to work with the consultants as stakeholders. In addition, Mr. Humphries stated that stakeholders will include many state agencies and state interests, as all are working to integrate climate resiliency into their areas of responsibility.

Committee Member James noted that this will be an opportunity for up-county areas within Passaic County to flourish since it will be vital to sustainable economic development.

Chairman Richko concluded that he felt this is a great program and that New Jersey Future has a strong sense of the benefits this guidance document will have for the Highlands region, as well as statewide.

Ms. Curran noted that the timeline for the project is nine months.

Ms. Plevin stated that she is excited about the project and the technical knowledge and savviness of New Jersey Future, as well as the many benefits the project will offer. She mentioned that it would provide an important service to Highlands municipalities/counties; build relationships throughout the Green Team communities with the assistance of Sustainable Jersey; and provide a template for the Region which will ultimately be applied statewide.

*Committee Chair Holtaway asked for a motion to move the Award Recommendation to the Council for consideration. Chair Richko made a motion and Member James seconded it. A roll call vote was taken, and all were in favor.*

*The meeting was adjourned at 9:23am.*