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MEMORANDUM

To: Budget & Finance Committee
From: Benjamin L. Spinelli, Esq., Executive Director
Subject: Committee Meeting Minutes – March 2, 2023
Date: March 6, 2023

A Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee meeting was held on Thursday, March 2, 2023, at 2:00pm via Zoom.

Committee Chair Holtaway opened the meeting at 2:00pm. The following participants were present:

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

Highlands Staff: Ben Spinelli, Gabrielle Gallagher, Neda Hartman, James Humphries, Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, Kelley Curran, Corey Piasecki, Herb August, and Karen Castanhas.

Also present was Thomas F. Holl, Associate Counsel of the Governor's Authorities Unit.

PLAN CONFORMANCE PLANNING GRANTS

Committee Chair Holtaway announced that there are four (4) grants being proposed today and staff will provide a summary for each.

Morris County: Stormwater Management Planning (\$42,500)

Kelley Curran, Science Manager, reported the request from Morris County for a Stormwater Management Planning grant. In 2019, Lake Hopatcong experienced a large and persistent harmful algal bloom (HAB), largely caused by the excess phosphorus entering the lake. Morris County proposes to install three (3) Hydrodynamic Separators or Vortech swirl systems at each of the outfall systems at the Shore Hills Beach Club property in Roxbury Township. These systems are designed to treat, detain, and convey stormwater. If properly designed and maintained, the proposed treatment

system can filter down to 50 microns, store up to 7 cubic yards of debris and aid in the prevention of adsorbed phosphorus and hydrocarbons from flowing into the lake.

Morris County is requesting a grant to cover the cost of \$42,500 associated with the survey work and engineering design of this stormwater treatment project. The Morris County Board of County Commissioners provided a signed resolution in support of this grant application.

Ms. Curran noted a timeline for completion will be requested.

Committee Chair Holtaway added that phosphorus also binds to the sediment located in the water.

Morris County: Lake Management Planning (\$80,300)

Ms. Curran reported that the elevated June 2019 phosphorus concentrations that triggered the HABs in Lake Hopatcong were largely the result of external phosphorus loading, in the form of phosphorus-rich stormwater and septic leachate, caused by the heavy rains. Further analysis determined that internal phosphorus loading allowed the HABs to perpetuate over the entire 2019 growing season. The goal of aeration is to oxygenate the water immediately over the sediments to minimize the internal phosphorus loading process. Additionally, the system can be designed to preserve, and even enhance the cool-water, carry-over brown trout habitat.

Morris County is requesting grant funding in the amount of \$80,300 to conduct a feasibility analysis and develop designs for an oxygenation system for Lake Hopatcong in an effort to reduce the occurrence of HABs.

The Morris County Board of County Commissioners provided a signed resolution in support of this grant application.

Butler Borough, Morris County: Initial Assessment Grant (\$15,000)

Corey Piasecki, Principal Planner, reported that Butler Borough is a 100% Planning Area municipality and is interested in plan conformance. The first step in the process is for the municipality to conduct a self-assessment. A grant of the standard amount for \$15,000 is recommended.

Union Township, Hunterdon County: Planning Area Petition Grant (\$15,000)

Mr. Piasecki reported that Union Township, a municipality that is 80% Preservation Area and 20% Planning Area, is currently conforming for only the Preservation Area. The Township is interested in expanding their plan conformance petition to include the Planning Area. The Township proposes to conduct a self-assessment on the impacts of Planning Area conformance. Should they determine that they wish to conform in the Planning Area, the remaining funding will also be used to prepare an amended petition for plan conformance to include the Planning Area. A grant of \$15,000 is recommended.

Committee Member James was present at 2:15pm.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked for a motion to move the Plan Conformance Planning Grants to the Council for consideration. Member Visioli made a motion and Council Chair Richko seconded it. All were in favor.

Committee Chair Holtaway noted that he will provide a report to the full Council at its meeting on March 16th.

The meeting adjourned at 2:17pm.