



State of New Jersey

Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council
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BENJAMIN L. SPINELLI, ESQ.
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

To: Budget & Finance Committee
From: Benjamin L. Spinelli, Esq., Executive Director
Subject: Committee Meeting Minutes – February 5, 2024
Date: February 6, 2024

A Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee meeting was held on Monday, February 5, 2024, at 9:00am via Zoom. The following participants were present:

Committee: Committee Chair Visioli and Council Chair Richko.

Governor’s Authorities Unit (GAU): Alexis Franklin, Associate Counsel.

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

Chair Visioli opened the meeting at 9:06am.

Amend Bylaws to Increase Executive Director Contract Amount

Mr. Spinelli reported the Highlands staff would like to increase the Executive Director’s (ED) contract authority threshold in accordance with the bid authority thresholds of other state agencies. It would be indexed to an independent amount controlled at the state level. That level is currently \$44,000.00. The existing authority was set in 2008 at \$25,000.00. This authority is rarely used.

Committee Chair Visioli asked for a motion to move the resolution to amend the bylaws to the full Council for consideration. Council Chair Richko made a motion and Member Visioli seconded it. All were in favor.

Highlands Council FY2024 Highlands Protection Fund Grant Requests

Stormwater Management Planning

Kelley Curran, Science Manager, reported that the Council has two (2) municipalities that have requested funding to comply with the enhanced regulations of the NJDEP Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit. Highlands Council grant funding will be used to supplement NJDEP grant funding. Bedminster and Liberty Townships have requested funding for Stormwater Management Planning. Both Bedminster and Liberty Townships have applied for the NJDEP grant. Their grant request amounts are shown in the table below and tasks associated with the funding requests include some or all the following:

- MS4 stormwater facilities mapping update.
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan development or update.
- Municipal Stormwater Management Plan update.
- Local public outreach.
- Preparation or revision of required community-wide ordinances.
- Inspection and maintenance of private stormwater facilities.
- Employee training.
- Storm drain inlet retrofitting assessment.
- Storm drainage, catch basin, and infrastructure inspection.
- Preparation of a Municipal Maintenance Yard BMP Manual.
- Stream scouring and illicit discharge outfall inspection.
- Development of a Watershed Improvement Plan (Phase I).

At this time there was a discussion about Liberty Township's conformance status.

Bloomsbury Borough, Hunterdon County – Circulation Plan

James Humphries, Director of Planning, Science & GIS reported that Bloomsbury Borough is a 100% Preservation Area municipality and is requesting funding to prepare a Circulation Plan element as part of their municipal master plan.

Committee Chair Visioli asked for a motion to move the following grants to the full Council for consideration: Bedminster Township (Stormwater Planning); Liberty Township (Stormwater Planning); and Bloomsbury Borough (Circulation Plan.) Council Chair Richko made a motion and Member Visioli seconded it. All were in favor.

Municipality/County	Purpose	Amount
Bedminster Township	Stormwater Planning	\$34,500
Liberty Township	Stormwater Planning	\$50,000
Bloomsbury Borough	Circulation Plan	\$15,000
Total	FY 2024 Plan Conformance Grants	\$99,500.00

Open Space and Recreation Plan – Award Contract

Allison Bittner, Regional Planner/Land Preservation Coordinator reported that Highlands staff would like to award a contract in the amount of \$298,500 to the team of The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and TwentyTwenty Public Affairs to develop an Open Space and Recreation Plan for the Highlands Region. The anticipated project work is to be completed within 18 months. Funding for this contract will be through two funding mechanisms: \$126,500 will be funded through the Highlands Council RMP Implementation Account and \$172,000 of the contract will be funded through a Capacity Building Grant obtained under the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Highlands Conservation Act Grant Program.

Mr. Spinelli explained that staff interviewed five (5) of the seven (7) respondents and The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and TwentyTwenty Public Affairs is the best choice.

Alexis Franklin left the meeting at 9:18am.

Committee Chair Visioli asked for a motion to move the contract award to Develop an Open Space and Recreation Plan for the New Jersey Highlands Region to the full Council for consideration. Council Chair Richko made a motion and Council member Visioli seconded it. All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:19 am.