

RESOLUTION 2024-10
NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL
APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR BRANDING AND MARKETING PLAN

WHEREAS, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (Highlands Act), N.J.S.A. 13:20-1 et seq., has created a public body corporate and politic with corporate succession known as the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council); and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Council is tasked with implementing the Highlands Act; and

WHEREAS, section 6.g of the Highlands Act authorizes the Highlands Council to enter into any and all agreements or contracts to effectuate the purposes of the Highlands Act; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Act at N.J.S.A. 13:20-2 declares that the New Jersey Highlands is an essential source of drinking water, providing clean and plentiful drinking water for one-half of the State's population and contains exceptional natural resources such as clean air, contiguous forest lands, wetlands, pristine watersheds, and habitat for fauna and flora for the citizens of the State; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Highlands Act charges the Highlands Council with protecting the Region's natural resources, as well as supporting sustainable economic conditions; and

WHEREAS, on July 17, 2008, the Highlands Council adopted the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP), which became effective on September 8, 2008, to guide implementation of the Highlands Act; and

WHEREAS, an Economic Sustainability Plan for the Highlands Region was developed over an 18-month period, and subsequently released by the Highlands Council in December 2021 to supplement the economic development section of the RMP, analyzing current economic conditions in the Highlands and setting forth a series of goals and objectives to strengthen the Region's economy; and

WHEREAS, the Economic Sustainability Plan identifies a series of actions devised to advance the stated goals and objectives, one of which is the creation of a branding and marketing plan which is intended to create a distinct Highlands image and reach a broad audience; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Council prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking firms with varied expertise in tourism, branding, and marketing for the purpose of positioning the Highlands Region to increase tourism, support agriculture, bolster local businesses, and improve economic sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the project is to develop a comprehensive Branding and Marketing Plan for the Highlands Region and shall include development of a unique brand, a marketing campaign, and an implementation action plan; further, it should encapsulate the unique environment of the Highlands Region and the various types of tourism and recreation it has to offer visitors from all areas; and

WHEREAS, the RFP was released to the public on November 28, 2023, and eight (8) Teams submitted proposals on or before the deadline of January 16, 2024; and

WHEREAS, after reviewing the proposals, staff selected four (4) Teams to participate in in-depth interviews to determine the extent of their expertise in all facets of developing a branding and marketing plan and their overall suitability to provide the services contemplated in the RFP; and

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WHEREAS, Highlands Council staff recommends that the Burdette Agency, Inc. dba North Star Place Branding + Marketing (North Star) is best suited to meet the needs articulated by the Highlands Council’s RFP; and

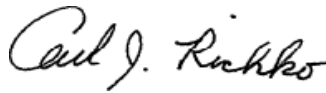
WHEREAS, Highlands Council staff further recommends that the Highlands Council authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with the aforementioned Team to develop a Branding and Marketing Plan; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:20-5.j, no action authorized by the Highlands Council shall have force or effect until ten (10) days, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays excepted, after a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Council has been delivered to the Governor for review, unless prior to expiration of the review period the Governor shall approve same, in which case the action shall become effective upon such approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Highlands Council that the Executive Director, or their designee, is hereby authorized to enter into a contract with North Star, for an amount not to exceed \$200,000.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Highlands Council at its regular meeting held on the 21st day of March, 2024.



Carl J. Richko, Chairman

Vote on the Approval of This Resolution	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Councilmember Alstede			√			
Councilmember Bush			√			
Councilmember Dougherty			√			
Councilmember Dressler						√
Councilmember Francis			√			
Councilmember James						√
Councilmember Sebetich		√	√			
Councilmember Van Abs			√			
Councilmember Visioli	√		√			
Councilmember Vohden			√			
Chairman Richko			√			