



## State of New Jersey

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*Lt. Governor*

**CARL J. RICHKO**  
*Chairperson*

**LISA J. PLEVIN**  
*Executive Director*

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Budget & Finance Committee  
**From:** Lisa J. Plevin, Executive Director  
**Subject:** Committee Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2020  
**Date:** November 23, 2020

A Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee meeting was held via teleconference on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 1:30pm. The following participants were in attendance:

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

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

*Committee Chair Holtaway opened the meeting at 1:32 p.m.*

#### **Highlands Protection Fund Capital Budget – FY2020**

Executive Director Plevin gave an overview of the Highlands Protection Fund Capital Budget (Plan Conformance Grants). She discussed that the State adopted a budget appropriating almost \$2.2M to the Highlands Protection Fund Capital Budget for FY2021 (the period of October 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021) allowing the awarding of grants to resume after the recent budget freeze in FY2020, due to COVID.

Mr. August added that at the October 2020 Highlands Council meeting, the Council approved grants in the amount of approximately \$500,000. The Committee will review three more grants for Council consideration. Mr. August noted that all of these grants will be represented in the Highlands Protection Fund Capital Budget at the Council's January 2021 meeting, when there may be additional grants to be considered.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked how staff is collecting and prioritizing these grants. Mr. August responded that staff is in the process of prioritizing the requested municipal grants based in part, on

the timing of submission and with consideration of the municipality's status in both Plan Conformance and its participation in our grant program.

Committee Member Visioli commented that the process should be fair and consistent when prioritizing.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked if the additional grants being considered will exceed the actual budget. Ms. Plevin responded that Council staff does not expect incoming requests for FY21 will exceed the actual budget.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked if we are cancelling any grants due to inactivity. Mr. August responded that there has not been an ask to cancel from last year to this year. Some of the grants approved by Council for Lake Management Planning, and others are starting to be addressed. In addition, Mr. August noted that the Department of Treasury is honoring all contracts.

### **Chester Borough (Morris County) – Sewer Study - \$97,200**

James Humphries, Director of Planning & Science, gave an overview of Chester Borough's request for a Sewer Study. The request is for a comprehensive planning and engineering scope of work that will result in an NJDEP-approved Water Quality Management Plan Amendment and the design of an expanded sewage collection and treatment system to serve existing and future wastewater needs in a manner that is consistent with Chester Borough's Highlands Center designation.

There were no comments and/or questions by the Committee.

*A roll call vote was taken to move Chester Borough's Plan Conformance Grant to the Council for consideration. All were in favor.*

### **Hopatcong Borough (Sussex County)– Economic Corridor Planning - \$32,700**

Judy Thornton, Principal Planner, gave an overview of Hopatcong Borough's request to conduct a redevelopment study for several areas in the community that the Borough wishes to designate as Areas in Need of Redevelopment under the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. She explained that the project would begin with a Highlands Resource Analysis to first determine the allowable extent of disturbance for each redevelopment area.

There were no comments and/or questions by the Committee.

*A roll call vote was taken to move Hopatcong Borough's Plan Conformance Grant to the Council for consideration. All were in favor.*

*Member James recused himself regarding the next Plan Conformance Grant and left the meeting at 1:47pm.*

### **Ringwood Borough (Passaic County) – Economic Sustainability Planning - \$50,000**

Judy Thornton, Principal Planner, gave an overview of Ringwood Borough's request, which would enable development of a municipal trail system for bicycle and pedestrian accessibility intended to provide linkages between commercial corridors, tourism sites, and public facilities. The project would require the assistance of a planning/engineering firm with GIS capabilities to assess and map existing trail segments, identify gaps and potential new linkages. The municipality would support the trail system with the assistance of a resident and business partnership committee to remediate and maintain the trails.

Committee Chair Holtaway commented that trails of this type exist in his community, Bedminster, and are very popular. He felt that they would be of great benefit to Ringwood Borough, too.

Ms. Plevin added that she is very excited about the project as it shows the benefits of working with the Highlands Council to further the goals of municipalities.

Member Visioli commented that a project like this could promote outside interest.

Council Chair Richko commented that Ringwood Borough is 100% in the Preservation Area and that a project like this seems a perfect fit. This project would complement the other work we're doing in Ringwood to build relationships by working with the lakes communities.

*A roll call vote was taken to move Ringwood Borough's Plan Conformance Grant to the Council for consideration. All were in favor.*

In conclusion, Committee Chair Holtaway stated that these grants will be brought before the Council for consideration at its next meeting scheduled on December 3, 2020.

*The committee meeting adjourned at 1:55p.m.*