



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 – June 6, 2024
Date: June 12, 2024

A Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee meeting was held on Thursday, June 6, 2024 at 12:00pm via Zoom. The following participants were present:

Committee: Committee Council Chair Richko, Members Bush and James.

Committee Chair Visioli was absent.

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

Highlands Staff: Ben Spinelli, Gabrielle Gallagher, James Humphries, Sarah Friend, Casey Ezyske, Carole Diction, Roberta Burkhart and Annette Tagliareni.

Council Chair Richko opened the meeting at 12:10pm.

Highlands Council FY2024 Highlands Protection Fund Grant Requests

James Humphries, Director of Planning, Science & GIS, gave a follow up regarding the closure of inactive grants. Mr. Humphries noted that those funds were transferred back to the Highlands Protection Fund. At the end of June, any unused funds will be subsequently transferred to the Regional Master Plan budget.

Stormwater Management Planning

Mr. Humphries reported that several Highlands municipalities 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. The committee considered three (3) grant requests (totaling \$244,000) from Alexandria and Bethlehem Townships (Hunterdon County) and Hope Township (Warren County). Mr. Humphries noted that Alexandria and Bethlehem Townships are conforming municipalities. It was noted that Hope Township (Warren County) is not a conforming municipality and requested this funding in February 2024. Highlands staff waited until there were sufficient funds before bringing this grant to the committee.

Lastly, Mr. Humphries noted that after these Stormwater Management Planning grants are processed, Council staff plans to initiate a deadline to municipalities for this funding.

The amount for these requests is shown in the table below and the tasks associated with the funding requests include some or all of 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).

Municipality	County	MS4 Tier	Amount
Alexandria Township	Hunterdon	Former Tier B	\$61,000
Bethlehem Township	Hunterdon	Former Tier B	\$89,500
Hope Township	Warren	Former Tier B	\$93,500

Hunterdon County – Watershed Management Plan Phase 1 (\$230,269)*

Casey Ezyske, Environmental Scientist 2, reported that Hunterdon County is seeking a grant in collaboration with Musconetcong Watershed Association for the development of a watershed management plan for a section of the Musconetcong watershed. The project will be conducted over a 2-year period and the current grant is for Phase 1 to begin this calendar year. The project will involve assessment of the unassessed Hunterdon County reach of the Musconetcong River, from Bethlehem Township to Delaware River confluence in Holland Township, to develop locally-informed solutions to prevent further bacterial contamination and to restore water quality, as well as engage Hunterdon County officials on water quality planning in support of the County’s role as Wastewater Management Planning Agency. Ultimately, this project will result in an EPA 9-Element Watershed Management Plan and identify a replicable water quality planning approach for other watersheds in the County.

Committee Member Bush recused himself from voting on this grant as he is the Mayor of Holland Township and is employed by Hunterdon County.

Jefferson Township, Morris County – Trout Study – Phase 3 (\$43,500)

Sarah Friend, Environmental Scientist 2, reported that Jefferson Township is seeking a grant in collaboration with Princeton Hydro, LLC to build upon the data collected in 2022 and 2023 for the final phase of a study aimed at evaluating water quality and trout habitat conditions at Lake Hopatcong.

Committee Member James joined the meeting at 12:17pm.

At this time, Mr. Humphries gave Committee Member James an overview of the grants discussed prior to his joining the meeting.

Plan Conformance Grants:**Union Township, Hunterdon County – Planning Area Conformance Initial Assessment and Route 78 Corridor Study (\$20,000)**

Mr. Humphries reported that Union Township is currently conforming in the Preservation Area and this grant is to conduct a self-assessment for the Planning Area of the Township. The Township is also seeking a grant for a Route 78 Corridor study that will better assist the Township to understand the implications of conformance in the Planning Area.

Peapack-Gladstone, Somerset County – Initial Assessment (\$15,000)

Mr. Humphries reported that Peapack-Gladstone Borough, 100% Planning Area municipality, is interested in plan conformance. The first steps in the process is for the municipality to conduct a self-assessment.

Bernards Township, Somerset County – Initial Assessment (\$15,000)

Mr. Humphries reported that Bernards Township, 100% Planning Area municipality, is interested in plan conformance. The first step in the process is for the municipality to conduct a self-assessment.

Boonton (Morris County) – Plan Conformance Petition Preparation (\$25,000)

Mr. Piasecki reported that Town of Boonton, 100% Planning Area municipality, recently completed an initial assessment grant and is planning to move forward with the preparation of plan conformance.

Council Chair Richko asked for a show of hands if the committee is in favor of moving the following grants, except Hunterdon County, to the full Council for consideration: Alexandria & Bethlehem Townships (Hunterdon County) and Hope Township (Warren County) Stormwater Planning grants; Jefferson Township (Morris County) Trout Study Phase 3; Union Township (Hunterdon County) Initial Assessment Grant and Route 78 Corridor Study; Peapack-Gladstone Borough and Bernards Township (Somerset County) Initial Assessment; and Boonton Town (Morris County) Plan Conformance Petition Preparation. All were in favor.

* Due to a lack of quorum and Member Bush's recusal for the Hunterdon County Watershed Management Plan Phase 2 grant, it was discussed that the full committee will meet before the June Council meeting to discuss/vote on this grant.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm.