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Chairman

BENJAMIN L. SPINELLI, ESQ.
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Budget & Finance Committee

FROM: Benjamin L. Spinelli, Esq., Executive Director

DATE: February 13, 2026

SUBJECT: Committee Meeting Minutes – February 10, 2026

A Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 12:00 pm via Zoom. The following participants were present:

Committee: Council Chair Richko, Committee Chair Visioli, Committee Members Kibler and Bush

Governor’s Authorities Unit (GAU): Michael Eleneski, Associate Counsel

Highlands Staff: Ben Spinelli, Gabrielle Gallagher, Neda Hartman, James Humphries, Kelley Curran, Corey Piasecki, Carole Ann Diction, Annette Tagliareni, and Diana Swiderski.

Committee Chair Visioli opened the meeting at 12:00 pm.

A roll call was taken. Committee Member James was absent. All other committee members were present.

Committee Chair Visioli reported that the committee will discuss the following agenda items:

1. Randolph Township, Morris County – Agricultural Sustainability Grant
2. Hope Township, Warren County – Plan Conformance Assessment
3. Washington Township, Warren County – Center Study
4. Green Township, Sussex County – Drainage Study
5. Pohatcong Township, Warren County – Open Space & Recreation Plan

At this time, Highlands staff gave an overview of the agenda items:

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Randolph Township, Morris County – Agricultural Sustainability Grant (Farm to Table) (\$25,000)

Corey Piasecki, Principal Planner, stated that Randolph Township, in collaboration with the Morris County Economic Development Alliance Agriculture and Resiliency Committee, is seeking a grant to establish a Farm to Table food event at County College of Morris that would feature local agricultural products and local chefs from within the Highlands region. Mr. Piasecki explained that although the project is a good fit for the Agricultural Sustainability Grant program, it is being funded through the Plan Conformance grant program for timing reasons.

Member Kibler asked if Randolph Township is a conforming municipality. Mr. Piasecki responded that they are not.

Committee Chair Visioli asked what the timeline is for this grant. Mr. Piasecki responded that the timeline is approximately six months (it will be a summer food event).

Committee Chair Visioli asked for a motion to move Randolph Township's Agricultural Sustainability Grant to the full Council for consideration. Council Chair Richko made the motion and Committee Member Bush seconded it. All were in favor.

Hope Township, Warren County – Plan Conformance Assessment (\$15,000)

Corey Piasecki, Principal Planner, stated that Hope Township, a Planning Area municipality, is interested in plan conformance. A grant of \$15,000 is standard for conducting a municipal self-assessment, which should be completed by the end of the year.

Committee Chair Visioli asked for a motion to move the Hope Township Plan Conformance Assessment grant to the full Council for consideration. Council Chair Richko made the motion and Committee Member Bush seconded it. All were in favor.

Washington Township, Warren County – Center Study (\$30,000)

Corey Piasecki, Principal Planner, stated that Washington Township has submitted a Scope of Work to conduct a Center Designation Study and a petition for the Washington South Redevelopment Area. The Study will begin with a Phase 1 Environmental Review to determine the extent of PFAS contamination within the 108-acre area located along Route 31. Pending the results of the Environmental review, a Center Designation Study would follow, including a map of the proposed Center, description of the built and natural resources, and discussions of the Center's relationship to the Regional Master Plan and how the Township intends to implement the Center. Mr. Piasecki noted that Washington Township is a fully conforming municipality.

Member Kibler asked why it is not a Phase 2 Environmental Review given the situation in that area and would we fund that as well. Mr. Piasecki clarified that although there is PFAS contamination near the site, it remains to be determined if there is contamination present, and therefore a Phase 1 study is most appropriate. If contamination is found, Mr. Spinelli added that we would be obligated to consider funding Phase 2.

Committee Chair Visioli asked for a motion to move the Washington Township's Center Study grant to the full Council for consideration. Committee Member Bush made the motion and Committee Member Kibler seconded it. All were in favor.

Green Township, Sussex County – Drainage Study (\$26,510)

James Humphries, Director of Planning, Science & GIS, stated that Green Township has submitted a Scope of Work to conduct a drainage study for Lake Tranquility, with the goal of providing the Township with the necessary tools to enhance stormwater management and support sustainable watershed improvements. Funding would go towards the remaining tasks, which include quality assurance review of stormwater mapping; final capacity calculations,

analysis, and plans to determine and address existing drainage deficiencies and proposed solutions; development of the Master Plan for proposed conceptual improvements over a 10-year period; and meetings with the Township to present and discuss findings and draft deliverable materials.

It was noted that Green Township is a non-conforming municipality. Kelley Curran, Science Manager, noted that the Township already started the project and that Highlands will not fund work already completed but because it is a matter of water quality, we are considering this grant request.

Member Kibler requested that in all future staff memos to the committee, RMP conformance status of the municipality requesting a grant be included.

There was additional discussion about providing grant funding to non-conforming municipalities. Mr. Spinelli confirmed that this has been done in the past when state-wide mandates (such as with stormwater/MS4 permit compliance, affordable housing) do not provide sufficient funding, the Council will supplement. It was also noted that when funding has become limited, conforming municipalities are always prioritized.

Committee Chair Visioli asked for a motion to move the Green Township Drainage Study grant to the full Council for consideration. Committee Member Bush made the motion and Council Chair Richko seconded it. All were in favor.

Pohatcong Township, Warren County – Open Space & Recreation Plan (\$16,000)

James Humphries, Director of Planning, Science & GIS, stated that Pohatcong Township is requesting funding to prepare an Open Space & Recreation Plan Element. The Township's current plan is more than ten years old and is no longer valid. The new plan will include an inventory and assessment of facilities, goals and objectives, recommendations, and acquisition plan, and will take 6-9 months to complete. The new plan will help Pohatcong qualify for future Green Acres funding.

Committee Chair Visioli asked for a motion to move the Pohatcong Township Open Space & Recreation Plan grant to the full Council for consideration. Committee Member Bush made the motion and Committee Member Kibler seconded it. All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 12:23 pm.