

Mobile Bay NEP

Financial Committee Meeting Minutes

Virtually via Zoom Meetings

Thursday, June 10th, 2021 at 10:00AM

In Attendance: Roberta Swann, Henry Perkins, Tiffany England, Jennifer Denson, Helene Hassell, Lynne Chronister, Ralph Hellmich, Patti McCurdy, Chris Lee, Ronald Cink, & Beth Thomas

The meeting started at 10:03

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jennifer Denson introduced herself as Chair of the Financial Committee. All other members present introduced themselves.

The minutes from the last meeting were introduced. Jennifer described the goals and objective from that meeting. Acceptance of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting for those who had not read them to have the opportunity to do so.

2. Presentation

Roberta Swann stated that this would be a one-topic meeting, where the Financial Committee would explore the non-federal match dollars required for EPA funding. She continued:

- EPA funding has increased from \$662,000 to \$700,000
- The MBNEP has forecast fundraising \$440,988 dollars from municipalities this year, based on previous year trends and anticipated increases.
- The education trust fund has increased in size and state appropriations will rise from \$75,000 to \$100,000.
- Baldwin County increased funding last year after working closely with MBNEP on the Marlow project.
- Mobile County is anticipated to increase from \$17,888 to \$30,000
- City of Mobile funding should remain steady at \$50,100
- City of Daphne funding should remain steady, after the work MBNEP has done in D'Olive watershed
- City of Spanish Fort should remain steady at \$5,000 – the MBNEP did work with them years ago, only part of D'Olive Watershed is in their municipality
- The City of Fairhope has historically been at \$5,000, increased recently to \$15,000 and should increase next year when MBNEP has completed the relevant watershed plan
- City of Foley to increase from \$20,000 to \$30,000
- The remainder of the \$700,000 will be sourced from National Fish and Wildlife Fund dollars.

3. Discussion

Swann then asked how MBNEP could grow their non-federal share of dollars, how the organization could ensure its continued operation if the EPA budget was slashed? She asked Ron Cink if now was an opportune time to ask Baldwin County for an increase in funding.

Cink responded that Baldwin County was still recovered from Hurricane Sally, especially as now the price of construction materials has skyrocketed, and the county is involved in many construction projects. Jennifer Denson wondered if MBNEP should ask for an increase, then allow the county to trim the ask. Cink said no, an ask for level funding would be appreciated.

Ralph Hellmich said that the MBNEP should continue to demonstrate value, especially to the relatively new county commissioners in Baldwin. Cink said the relationship between MBNEP and Baldwin County was good, the issue is that they are strapped from Sally. Long term prospects look good however, as Baldwin County is poised for continued growth.

Swann mentioned that Dana Foster-Allen had said this year was the year to ask Mobile County for additional funding, according to the last meeting's minutes. Hellmich suggested a goal might be to have Mobile County match Baldwin County in funding.

Swann expressed the desire for MBNEP to become a SARPC like institution, where every municipality expects to pay some amount each year. Hellmich said that communication the value of MBNEP would get there. Not necessarily a dollar-for-dollar amount, but a broader understanding of services provides.

Cink added that the health of Mobile Bay was the mechanism that fueled growth in the region. Increasing the water quality increases quality of life, especially with Work From Home having become an institution, more people will be looking for an ideal place to live that isn't necessarily where their company is located.

Lynne Chronister said we should ask Mobile County for more, and that \$30,000 seemed reasonable. Beth Thomas iterated that it doesn't hurt to ask. Chris Lee agreed it was appropriate to ask for an increase, and to mention all the work that had been done.

Lee also suggested to bump up the ask for the City of Mobile, and Chronister agreed and suggested an increase to \$60,000 would be appropriate.

Swann mentioned that Daphne wouldn't increase their allotment, not would Spanish Fort or Fairhope at this time. Orange Beach is involved with the new Pensacola Estuary Program which would be difficult moving forward.

Chronister suggested we ask Gulf Shores for a nominal \$5,000 to get them involved. Swann suggested Dauphin Island would be a logical ask, and Helene Hassell agreed and suggested MBNEP ask for \$10,000.

Hellmich suggested Saraland should give an entry level amount, \$5,000. Denson said to ask every year even if you expect a no, because they will expect you next year. Hassell suggested we petition Chickasaw and Satsuma as well. No one in attendance knew the Mayor of Chickasaw, and Hassell suggested reaching out to broader networks to identify a contact, such as the larger Financial Committee or the Business Resource Committee.

[Scheduling]

Adjourn

Jennifer Denson and Helene Hassell adjourned the meeting