

Mobile Bay NEP

Financial Committee Meeting Minutes

virtually via Zoom Meetings

Monday, February 14th, 2022 at 10:00AM

In Attendance: Roberta Swann, Henry Perkins, Tiffany England, Jennifer Denson, Helene Hassell, Lynne Chronister, Dana Foster-Allen, Ralph Hellmich, Patti McCurdy, Ronald Cink, Chip Brown, Jimmy Lyons, & Beth Thomas

The meeting started at 10:15

1. Welcome and Introductions

Members greeted each other. Dana Foster-Allen had to leave for another meeting shortly before the Financial Committee was called to order. Co-chairs Helene Hassel and Jennifer Denson called the meeting to order.

Helene called for the minutes to be approved, Jennifer and Jimmy Lyons seconded.

2. Non-Federal Match Discussion

Roberta Swann gave updates on the non-federal match budget to date.
ADCNR gave \$90,000. \$8,000 reduction from saved cost on space no longer rented.
State of Alabama gave \$100,000 through education trust fund.
Mobile County increased amount given from \$17,888 to \$50,000.
Baldwin County steady at \$75,000.
City of Chickasaw gave no money, MBNEP has done no work there yet. MBNEP will likely receive when work there has started.
Daphne stable at \$50,000.
Fairhope stable at \$50,000.
Foley up to \$27,000, increase from \$20,000.
Gulf Shores gave \$2,500, first time in almost a decade.
Mobile gave \$50,100.
Saraland gave \$5,000, first time donor.
Satsuma still deliberating.
Spanish Fort stable at \$5,000.
Dauphin Island gave \$5,000, first time donor.
Total budget, \$440,988, total received, \$474,600. Net surplus of \$33,612.

Surplus rolled into next year's work plan.

3. EPA Annual Plan: Match Plan 2023

\$750,000 coming from EPA on Oct 1, moving into planning for how to spend the money.

Requires 1:1 matching (NFWF counts, covers it generally). Continuing to push for increased local share to become (ideally) theoretically independent from Federal dollars.

Will request appropriation from congressmen and senators in next month. That money will be appropriated in 2022/2023, MBNEP receives at end of that fiscal year. \$750,000 on Oct 1 is from last year's appropriation (increase of \$50,000). National goal is to increase appropriation to \$1m.

March 31st, look at Budget vs. Actuals and status of expenditures.

April 30th, will draft match projection and develop plan of action.

Most dollars go towards operation of the program. Some used for projects, but not much.

June-Sept, submit match requests.

Finance Committee to engage with EPA Action Plan on front end, approve it, and report out to Executive Committee. Workplan to go to Finance Committee sometime in April for introduction.

4. Infrastructure Bill

% likely goes to DISL

EPA wants projects to be transformational, priorities include Environmental Justice and Community Resilience

MBNEP is reviewing projects recommended in past WMPs for investing in with this \$, and how to prioritize these projects.

FC will have say in prioritizing these

Recently published Western Shore WMP – number 1 concern shoreline erosion, community wants to address the issue. Living Shorelines Matching Fund will likely have strong immediate traction.

Dirt Road Paving Support – County has pay-as-you-go program, unclear if they need additional financing. Could be used to fund low-political priority roads.

Public Housing Green Infrastructure – fund delta in development of public housing projects to incorporate green infrastructure, use as demonstration sites.

Hellmich: Baldwin County authority updating project in Foley, could work there. Would need to figure out public-private relationship.

EPA suggests this could be a national model if pulled off.

Monitoring Support – we need a stronger monitoring network across the Alabama coast. ADEM is insufficiently funded to provide adequate monitoring. Would be done in partnership with

ADCNR.

Would like to stand up long-term programs and add more money to them each year, not redevelop new projects each year of infrastructure funding.

What level does FC want to be involved?

Chronister: Is input needed, or review of final plan?

Denson: Helps to provide input, not minutia, but some input. How will it be matched? How will it continue? How is this related to other financial commitments?

Move the needle and incorporate long-term funding from other sources with success from projects. We don't want these projects to be a flash in the pan.

Living Shorelines: Is there an opportunity to bring the port together with the property owners for long term funding? Jimmy Lyons doesn't think so.

Public Housing: Is there an opportunity to get HUD to incorporate it over that 5 year period for long term funding?

Monitoring: Invest for five years, get state to recognize value for long term funding?

Patti McCurdy: establish long-term goals early and keep them in mind at early stages. What else is needed? Personnel, expertise, political work, etc. Finance Committee can help figure out how to manage that.

Lynne Chronister: ask HUD to set up an endowment

R: will be issue of changing minds. HUD has land assets but are not versed in green infrastructure. They're not thinking about green buildings, construction materials, cutting edge practices. Just replacing units with minimum input. HUD can change requirements for private developers to include green practices.

Patti McCurdy: What is the timescale on this? These are long-term projects. In a 5-year period, can you make enough of an impact on HUD?

Ralph Hellmich: Incentivize the developers instead of trying to change HUD, easier elephant to turn. In Foley, HUD developer is already meeting high standards. They could incorporate a greener infrastructure in phase 2 with grants, a matching grant. Phase 2 begins in a year and a half, there is time to get in with the developer.

R: Environmental justice aside, there are lots of developers in Baldwin County where this kind of work is important.

Ralph: Green neighborhood was able to sell homes at a higher price. May be able to push grants for all developers, especially smaller ones, to incorporate green design into their common areas.

Chronister: Terry Harbin at SouthTrust Bank is looking at low-income housing, he may be a partner to bring in.

R: Barry Fagan, used to work with ALDOT, now at Volkert. Works on green infrastructure installation, working on HUD side right now.

R will reach out individually to FC members to get thoughts.

Patti McCurdy: State Housing Authority, oversees applications for developers who use tax credits. May be an opportunity to work through that, not technically HUD, but to develop those sorts of tax credits. Extra points of the application.

5. Long Term Planning

Finance plan for the organization, reaching out to other agencies, coordinating across events and partners, coordinate asks with Sea Lab, if EPA disappeared how would we survive, should MBNEP be available for external project management to communities we do WMPs in, how do we finance Coastal Alabama Fisheries Fund long-term?

We have a finance plan in current CCMP, should be reviewed by FC in some capacity.

Lynne Chronister: makes sense to have a long-term plan, may be other areas to find funding, other organizations we can partner with. For instance, on public housing, might partner with medical school.

Denson: makes sense to have a plan, update plan in CCMP

Helene: makes more sense to develop plan with full group, need to do it in person. This planning is difficult on Zoom.

R: sole focus of next meeting will be long-term plan. As we build out infrastructure plan and action plan, we will do as much as possible via email and surveys. August meeting will bring input from planning together, already synthesized to streamline process.

6. Bays and Bayous

MBNEP is host this year, will need to raise \$125,000, usually comes from state, engineering firms, sea grant, MBNEP, non-profits, etc. Some of you may be hearing from us for funding on that.

Convention Center, Jan 23-25

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 11:32AM.