THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date: January 27, 2026

Subject: Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) Request for Federal Authorization and Funding

Staff Resource(s): Bridget Herring, Recovery Coordinator,
Jaime Matthews, Deputy Recovery Coordinator

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution authorizing staff to submit a request to the North Carolina Congressional Delegation requesting a federal authorization and funding for a City of Asheville comprehensive water system resiliency and capacity enhancement project designed to expand service reliability, strengthen system redundancy, and reduce vulnerabilities that could result in future potable water service disruptions and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents necessary to accept funds if allocated.

Background:

- The City of Asheville's potable water system is critical public infrastructure supporting public health, safety, and continuity of operations for Asheville and surrounding communities, including regional medical facilities, major employers, and public safety partners.
- Recent storm events, including Tropical Storm Helene, exposed system-wide vulnerabilities that resulted in prolonged potable water service disruptions and demonstrated the risks posed by watershed instability, sediment mobilization, and limited operational redundancy.
- Post-storm conditions continue to threaten water quality and production capacity during rainfall events, increasing the likelihood of future service interruptions without targeted resilience investments.
- Authorization under the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is needed to advance priority water system resilience improvements that reduce these vulnerabilities and protect essential regional services.
- WRDA allows for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to engage with a non-federal partner in a water infrastructure project, but that project must have a viable non-Federal project Sponsor, a project authorization, and funding appropriation supporting it.

Vendor Outreach Efforts:

- Not applicable

Council Goal(s):

- A Well Planned and Livable Community
- A Clean, Safe and Healthy Environment
- Thriving Local Economy

Committee(s):

- None

Pro(s):

- Would support additional resources for water system improvements to increase resilience, reliability, and redundancy of the municipal potable water system, including measures to reduce vulnerability to watershed instability, sedimentation, and storm-related impacts.
- Allows the city to advocate for additional federal resources to recover from Tropical Storm Helene.

Con(s):

- Work must be conducted by United States Army Corps of Engineers which will impact the total cost of the project

Fiscal Impact:

- The City anticipates requesting a total of $87 million, If allocated, the City will be required to provide a 25% match of $21.75 million. This match is expected to be provided by the Water Resources Capital Improvement Plan although staff continues to explore other sources of funding to satisfy this requirement.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to adopt a resolution authorizing staff to submit a request to the North Carolina Congressional Delegation requesting a federal authorization and funding for a City of Asheville comprehensive water system resiliency and capacity enhancement project designed to expand service reliability, strengthen system redundancy, and reduce vulnerabilities that could result in future potable water service disruptions and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents necessary to accept funds if allocated.

Attachment(s)

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 26-_____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING STAFF TO SUBMIT A REQUEST TO SENATOR BUDD REQUESTING FEDERAL AUTHORIZATION AND FUNDING FOR A CITY OF ASHEVILLE COMPREHENSIVE WATER SYSTEM RESILIENCY AND CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT AND AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO ACCEPT FUNDS IF ALLOCATED

WHEREAS, the Congressional Delegation are accepting funding requests under the Water Resource Development Act, and

WHEREAS, the City's potable water system serves the City of Asheville and surrounding jurisdictions and is critical to supporting regional medical facilities, major employers, public safety partners, and the broader economic health of Western North Carolina.

WHEREAS, recent storm events, including Tropical Storm Helene, caused significant watershed destabilization, landslides, slope failures, and debris influx that stressed system operations and resulted in prolonged service disruptions.

WHEREAS, should the City project be approved, the work will be conducted by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the City will be required to provide a 25% local match totaling an estimated $21.75 million.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

City staff are hereby authorized to submit a request to the Congressional Delegation requesting a federal authorization and funding for City of Asheville comprehensive water system resiliency and capacity enhancement project designed to expand service reliability, strengthen system redundancy, and reduce vulnerabilities that could result in future potable water service disruptions and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents necessary to accept funds if allocated.

Read, approved and adopted this the 27th day of January, 2026.

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City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney