THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date: April 25, 2023

Subject: Agreement with the Mills River Partnership

Staff Resource(s): David Melton, Water Resources Department Department
Elise Ayers, Budget Revenue Manager

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a multi-year Agreement with the Mills River Partnership, Inc., for the Mills River Watershed Best Management Practices project for a not-to-exceed amount of $180,000.00 over three (3) fiscal years contingent upon funding each year.

Background:

- In 2020, City Council authorized a three year agreement between the City of Asheville Water Resources Department and the Mills River Partnership (MRP) for a not-to-exceed amount of $180,000 ($60,000 per fiscal year; approximately $0.01 per CCF system-wide) to provide financial support of projects intended to protect and/or improve water quality in the Mills River Watershed.
- The department desires to continue to partner with the MRP to help fund water quality projects in the Mills River Watershed.
- The Water Resources Department is willing to provide cost-share funding for projects that are directly related to water quality protection and/or improvement.
- These activities include selection and installation of Best Management Practices to control contamination of the river from storm runoff, and educational materials and activities.
- The City of Asheville has an ongoing interest in watershed management. Water quality in the upper watershed continues to be excellent and overall water quality indices have improved during the past 10 years.
- The strategy now is to focus on efforts to protect and improve water quality.
- Funding initiatives are to be considered with an understanding of their long-term impact on water quality.
- The level of participation recommended is an amount up to $60,000.00 per fiscal year with the understanding that funding is project-specific and subject to the appropriation of funds.

Vendor Outreach Efforts:

- The Mills River Partnership (MRP) is a not-for-profit organization that addresses water quality in the Mills River watershed. MRP has a diverse board of directors, with members from the agricultural community, local governments, and conservation organizations.
- Formed in 1998, MRP focuses on educating the local community about water quality issues and helping farmers and other landowners implement best management practices to control sediment pollution.
- This is a continuation of services with a vendor that has a unique and singular focus, with no comparable vendors/non-profits. As such, no additional outreach has been conducted.

Council Goal(s):

- A Clean and Healthy Environment.

Committee(s):

- None

Pro(s):

- Opportunity to partner with the Mills River Partnership to strategically address areas of concern in the Mills River watershed.
- Funding from the City of Asheville could make some water quality projects feasible.
- Funding from the City of Asheville could support public education efforts related to water quality protection.
- Projects in the watershed could improve source water and drinking water quality.The City of Asheville Water Resources Department wants to maximize benefits to water quality.

Con(s):

- If the City does not participate in the funding of specific water quality projects, these projects may not occur and there could be potential negative impacts on water quality.

Fiscal Impact:

- The full $180,000 for the three year agreement is currently planned in the Water Resources Operating Fund for Fiscal Year 2023-24.
- The MRP will only be allowed to request a not-to-exceed amount of $60,000 per fiscal year for the next three years.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a multi-year Agreement for the entire agreement with the Mills River Partnership, Inc., for the Mills River Watershed Best Management Practices project for a not-to-exceed amount of $180,000.00 over three (3) fiscal years contingent upon funding each year. The level of participation recommended is an amount up to $60,000.00 per fiscal year for a maximum of three fiscal years with the understanding that funding is project-specific and subject to the appropriation of funds.

Attachment(s)

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 23-____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE MULTI-YEAR GENERAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH THE MILLS RIVER PARTNERSHIP, INC., FOR THE MILLS RIVER WATERSHED BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES PROJECT

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 160A-312, the City of Asheville has authority to operate a public enterprise; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 160A-20.1, the City of Asheville may enter into contracts with private entities to carry out any public purpose the City is authorized to engage in; and

WHEREAS, the Water Resources Department has an opportunity to partner with the Mills River Partnership to strategically address areas of concern in the Mills River watershed;

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

The City Manager, on behalf of the City of Asheville, is hereby authorized to execute the multi-year Agreement for the entire Agreement with the Mills River Partnership, Inc., for the Mills River Watershed Best Management Practices project for a not-to-exceed amount of $180,000.00 over three (3) fiscal years contingent upon funding each year. The level of participation recommended is an amount up to $60,000.00 per fiscal year for a maximum of three fiscal years with the understanding that funding is project-specific and subject to the appropriation of funds.

Read, approved, and adopted this 25th day of April, 2023.

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

_____

City Attorney