STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date: July 26, 2022

Subject: Partner on Department of Energy Resilience Planning Grant

Staff Resource(s): Bridget Herring, Sustainability Director

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to partner on a grant application to the Department of Energy Renewables Advancing Community Energy Resilience grant with the North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center, NC State University on planning resilient renewable energy to diminish disaster impacts on communities and execute all agreements if awarded.

Background:

- The Renewables Advancing Community Energy Resilience (RACER) grant focuses on the research, development and demonstration of equitable and resilient clean energy technologies.
- The objective is to increase community energy resilience to power disruptions caused by extreme weather events.
- To accomplish RACER's objective, this grant focuses on three topic areas: 1) innovative community-based energy resilience planning, 2) automation strategies for rapid energy restoration, and 3) innovative solutions to increase the resilience and hardening of PV power plants.
- The North Carolina Clean Technology Center of NC State University (NCCTC) is the lead applicant for this grant application and will do the majority of the grant implementation work, if awarded.
- NCCTC will use grant funds to lead in the development of a playbook for Emergency Managers and their communities to assess and implement enhanced energy resilience to mitigate the effects of energy loss during a disaster.
- The playbook will be the product of a collaboration with a team that includes local and state government, university based researchers, community organizations, and others.
- The City of Asheville was one of three local governments in the state invited to participate in the grant application. The other local governments participating in the grant are the City of Wilmington and Halifax County.
- The primary objectives of this project are to 1) understand existing emergency management protocols as they relate to extreme event preparedness and recovery, 2) collect data required to establish and evaluate community energy resilience, 3) provide information on the City's prioritization of critical infrastructure for extreme events, 4) provide input and identify sites where enhanced energy resilience would be most beneficial, and 5) develop a playbook for building energy resilience in local communities.
- Work associated with the grant will be a collaborative effort between Emergency Management staff in the Asheville Fire Department and the Sustainability Department.
- This is a two year grant, if awarded, work will tentatively begin February 2023.

Vendor Outreach Efforts:

- Not applicable

Council Goal(s):

- A well-planned and livable community
- A clean and healthy environment

Committee(s):

- None

Pro(s):

- Supports Council's FY2022-2023 Neighborhood Resilience and Improve and Expand Core Services Strategic Priorities
- This effort would complement Council's recently approved funding for the Emergency Preparedness Study proposed to start this year as well as the Climate Justice Initiative
- Supports Resolution 18-279 Establishing a 100% Renewable Energy Goal
- Supports Resolution 20-25 Declaration of a Climate Emergency

Con(s):

- None identified

Fiscal Impact:

- No match is required from the City.
- The grant application is for a period of 2 years and a total of $1,000,000.
- If awarded, the anticipated amount awarded to the City of Asheville is expected to receive is $61,500.

Suggested Motion:

- Adoption of resolution authorizing the City Manager to partner on a grant application to the Department of Energy Renewables Advancing Community Energy Resilience grant with the North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center, NC State University on planning resilient renewable energy to diminish disaster impacts on communities and execute all agreements if awarded

Attachment(s)

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 22-____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO PARTNER ON A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RENEWABLES ADVANCING COMMUNITY ENERGY RESILIENCE GRANT WITH THE NORTH CAROLINA CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGY CENTER, NC STATE UNIVERSITY ON PLANNING RESILIENT RENEWABLE ENERGY TO DIMINISH DISASTER IMPACTS ON COMMUNITIES AND TO EXECUTE ALL AGREEMENTS IF AWARDED

WHEREAS, the City of Asheville has authority pursuant to N.C.S.G. 160A-17 to apply for and receive grants from the Federal Government and to enter into contracts with said grants; and

WHEREAS, the Clean Technology Center of North Carolina State University will be the lead applicant; and

WHEREAS, no match is required from the City;

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

The City Manager is hereby authorized to partner on a grant application to the Department of Energy Renewables Advancing Community Energy Resilience grant with the North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center, NC State University on planning resilient renewable energy to diminish disaster impacts on communities.

Read, approved and adopted this the 26th day of July, 2022.

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney