THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date: March 24, 2020

Subject: Authorization to submit a grant application for the Fiscal Year 2020 Section 5339(b) Buses and Bus Facilities Discretionary Grant Fund Program.

Staff Resource(s): Ken Putnam, PE, Transportation Department Director
Jessica Morriss, Assistant Director of Transportation
Eunice Lovi, Transit Planning Manager

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit a grant application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the FY 2020 Section 5339(b) Bus and Bus Facilities Discretionary Grant Funds Program, and if successful, to accept the grant funds and sign all the appropriate agreements with the FTA, Federal and State agencies. This grant program is a competitive program and receipt of funds is not guaranteed.

Background:

- In January 2020, the Federal Transit Administration published Notice of Funding Opportunity for the FY 2020 Section 5339(b) Buses and Bus Facilities discretionary grant program.
- The grant is competitive and discretionary, whereby the FTA solicits project proposals from applicants, and awards funding to successful applicants for eligible capital projects through a competitive process.
- The Buses and Bus Facilities Funding program can be used for the purchase or lease of buses, related equipment, as well as to rehabilitate, construct or lease bus-related facilities. Funds awarded for both grants may include incidental costs related to acquiring buses, construction of facilities and infrastructure, workforce development and training activities, and project administration.
- The City plans to submit an application in the amount of $1,250,000 to continue the City's bus stop improvement program. The funding will be used to provide curb-ramp improvements, sidewalk connections, shelters, seating, solar lighting, and digital signage at bus stops with the top 15% ridership, as well as locations serving vulnerable populations, such as the Veterans Restoration Quarters, Mission Hospital, the Veterans Administration Hospital, public housing locations, etc.
- The application deadline for the Buses and Bus Facilities grant is March 30, 2020.

Council Goal(s):

- Transportation and Accessibility

Committee(s):

- None (Finance & Human Resources cancelled)

Pro(s):

- Project funding will enable the City of Asheville to use federal funds to help fund additional high-priority bus stop improvements.

Con(s):

- The match for the Buses and Bus Facilities grant is 20%, however improvements related to ADA and facilities have only a 10% match, which a significant portion of the grant will likely qualify for. The maximum match amount assuming a 20% match would be $250,000, and assuming a 10% match would be $125,000.

Fiscal Impact:

- The local match is included in the Transit Capital Projects Fund budget.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to approve a resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit a grant application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the FY 2020 Section 5339(b) Buses and Bus Facilities Grant in the amount of $1,250,000 and if successful, to accept the grant funds and sign all the appropriate agreements with the FTA, Federal, and/or State agencies.

Attachment(s):

- Resolution

RESOLUTION 20-

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS IN RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY PUBLISHED BY THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION AND TO APPLY TO THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2020 SECTION 5339(b) GRANT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C.G.S.§ 160A-17.1, the City is authorized to make contracts for and accept grants and loans from the federal and state governments and their agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has announced an opportunity for FY 2020 Section 5339(b) Discretionary Grant Program for the purchase or lease of vehicles, related facilities and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the City has identified projects that would be eligible for this funding program that would fund continued high-priority bus stop improvements; and

WHEREAS, the FTA will reimburse grant applicants for up to 80 percent of the capital cost of projects implemented with this funding program (or 90% for ADA and facility improvements); and

WHEREAS, the local match would come from the City of Asheville Transit Capital Projects Fund; and

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

City Council approve a resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply to the Federal Transit Administration for the FY 2020 Buses and Bus Facilities Grant in the amount of $1,250,000 and if successful, to accept the grant funds and sign all the appropriate agreements with the FTA, Federal, and/or State agencies.

Read, approved and adopted this 24th day of March, 2020.

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney