City of Asheville Staff Report

City Council Meeting Date: May 12, 2026

Staff Resources:

- Amy Deyton, Director, Public Works Department
- Derek Wainscott, Division Manager, Public Works

Action Requested:

- Adoption of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract with VHB Engineering NC PC in the amount of $6,246,094 for design and engineering services for Helene Recovery Project - Citywide Road Structures Repairs and Replacements to repair and replace damaged bridges and large culverts; and further authorizing the City Manager to execute any change orders that may arise during the project up to the 15% contingency amount of $936,914; and approval of a budget amendment of $7,183,008 to add federal and state funds to the General Capital Projects Fund.

Background:

- The City of Asheville has a need to hire qualified engineering professionals to help the City rebuild its roadway infrastructure after catastrophic damage from Tropical Storm Helene.
- There are twenty-one (21) locations in the Helene Recovery Project - Citywide Roadway Structures Repairs and Replacements where standalone roadway conveyances were damaged from the storm, including bridges and box culverts.
- On November 20, 2025, staff posted a Request for Qualifications (298-FY26-PW-RFQ-RoadwayStructures - Helene Recovery Project) for professional services to design repairs or replacements to the damaged roadway structures.
- The statement of qualifications by interested firms were due December 15, 2026. Sixteen (16) statements of qualifications were received and evaluated by a five-member selection committee from the Public Works and Capital Management departments.
- The scope of design and engineering services encompasses:
    - Permanent restoration design services of the damaged infrastructure including FEMA PA restoration and cost-effective hazard mitigation projects to protect the infrastructure from future damage.
    - Structural inspections with formal inspection reports to include structure foundation review.
    - Structural and geotechnical design including professional services needed for any integral components to the structure.
    - Stream/flood/watershed modeling or stormwater calculations needed.
    - Applications for any necessary Federal, State, or Local permits.

    - Preparation of beneficial cost analysis and FEMA cost reasonableness for all designs to ensure the more cost-effective option.
    - Preparation of construction drawings and specifications, cost estimates, and bid documents.
    - Costs tracking associated with the multiple Federal and State programs for reimbursement and/or funding.
    - Construction administration during construction of repairs or replacements.
    - General structure maintenance recommendations or repairs as part of the regular inspections performed by NCDOT.

Vendor Outreach:

- The Selection process was a qualifications-based selection process.
- Staff performed outreach to minority- and women-owned businesses through solicitation processes which included posting on the State's Interactive Purchasing System.
- 4 MWBE vendors were notified of the City of Asheville professional services opportunity.
- VHB Engineering NC PC was selected by staff as the best-qualified firm to deliver the requested services for Helene Recovery Project - Citywide Road Structures Repairs and Replacements.

Council Vision 2036 Focus Area(s):

- A Clean, Safe and Healthy Environment
- Transportation and Accessibility

Council Priority Recovery Area(s):

- Infrastructure & Environment

Committee(s):

- N/A

Fiscal Impact:

- This project is expected to be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency - Public Assistance (FEMA-PA) program and by Federal Emergency Management Agency - Hazard Mitigation Assistance (FEMA-HMA). Any expenses not eligible under the Federal Grants will be covered by the existing Streets budget in the General Capital Projects Fund.
- City funds may be required to cover the costs for one of the contract sites, as it does not qualify for Federal Emergency Management Agency - Public Assistance (FEMA-PA) funding.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract with VHB Engineering NC PC in the amount of $6,246,094 for design and engineering services for Helene Recovery Project - Citywide Road Structures Repairs and Replacements to repair and replace damaged bridges and culverts; and further authorizing the City Manager to execute any change orders that may arise during the project up to the 15% contingency amount of $936,914; and approval of a budget amendment of $7,183,008 to add federal and state funds to the General Capital Projects Fund.

Attachment(s):

- Resolution
- Budget Amendment

City of Asheville Resolution Number 26-___

Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract with VHB Engineering NC PC (VHB) for design and engineering services for Helene Recovery - Citywide Roadway Structures Repairs and Replacements to repair and replace damaged bridges and large culverts.

Whereas, over the course of September 26-29, 2024, the City of Asheville experienced unprecedented rainfall both from Tropical Storm Helene and a predecessor heavy rain event, resulting in catastrophic damage, primarily from the ensuing flooding and landslides; and

Whereas, the equipment and staffing capacity needed for recovery efforts exceeded that which was available of the City's internal capacity, rendering it necessary to contract for these services; and

Whereas, pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-64.31 qualifications were solicited for Engineering and Design Services for Citywide Roadway Structures Repairs and Replacements Asheville, NC 298-FY26-PW-RFQ-RoadwayStructures - Helene Recovery Project ("RFQ"), on November 20, 2025, and VHB Engineering NC PC ("Contractor") was selected by staff as the best qualified firm to deliver the requested services; and

Whereas, funding for the project is expected to be fully offset by reimbursements: 90% through the Federal Emergency Management Agency - Public Assistance program and the remaining 10% from state sources for damages. Furthermore, additional funding will be pursued for project mitigation and enhancements from Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR); and

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Asheville that:

The City Manager is hereby authorized to enter into a contract with VHB Engineering NC PC, in the amount of $6,246,094 for design and engineering services for Citywide Roadway Structures Repairs and Replacements; and further authorizing the City Manager to execute any change orders that may arise during the project up to the 15% contingency amount of $936,914; and approval of a budget amendment of $7,183,008 to add federal and state funds to the General Capital Projects Fund.

Read, approved and adopted this 12th day of May, 2026.

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Esther E. Manheimer, Mayor

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Brad Branham, City Attorney

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Magdalen Burleson, City Clerk

City of Asheville Budget Amendment Ordinance Number ____

Be it Ordained by the City Council of the City of Asheville:

That Section 2 of the City of Asheville Annual Operating Budget Ordinance be amended to provide an appropriation of $7,183,008 to the General Capital Projects Fund for Helene Recovery - City-wide Roadway Structures Repairs and Replacements Professional Services as follows:

General Capital Projects Fund

Revenues:

Federal Revenue Distribution - Federal Emergency Management Agency - $6,464,707
State Revenue Distribution - Federal Emergency Management Agency - $71,301

Expenditures:

Professional Services - $7,183,008

Read, approved and adopted this 12th day of May, 2026.

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Esther E. Manheimer, Mayor

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Brad Branham, City Attorney

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Magdalen Burleson, City Clerk