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COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

September 17, 2012

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, Fourth Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: LEWPA Coordinator Funding and Position

Dear Honorable Members:

Enclosed please find a memorandum and proposed resolution from the Department of Environment and Planning authorizing the County Executive to enter into an agreement with the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District to assist with the *Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance Project* funded through a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation grant. The resolution also establishes a grant budget and staffing for the project.

Should your honorable body require further information, I encourage you to contact Thomas R. Hersey, Jr., Deputy Commissioner, at the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

MCP/bl
Enclosure

cc: Commissioner Maria R. Whyte
Deputy Commissioner Thomas R. Hersey, Jr.

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Department of Environment and Planning
Re: LEWPA Coordinator Funding and Position
Date: September 5, 2012

SUMMARY

It is recommended that the Legislature approve the attached resolution prepared by the Department of Environment and Planning (DEP) authorizing the County Executive to enter into an agreement with the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District (ECSWCD) in the amount of $42,453.80 to have Joanna Panasiewicz, Junior Environmentalist in DEP fulfill the role of Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance (LEWPA) Coordinator. ECSWCD is the recipient of a three-year 604b grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) for the LEWPA Project, which involves a regional planning effort with Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties. This resolution also establishes a grant budget and staffing for the project.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

100% of funding for this position will be paid through grant funds. No in-kind match is required.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

It is vital that the LEWPA project does not lose momentum as it is crucial to securing funds to make improvements to water quality along the Lake Erie shoreline in New York State, as well as the associated watershed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ECSWCD has NYSDEC grant funding to form and implement LEWPA – a three-county collaborative effort to better align our communities to address our needs and protect Lake Erie water quality. This effort also involves working with NYSDEC to develop work plans and pursue funding for Great Lakes Restoration Initiatives. ECSWCD originally staffed the program with a contracted employee. However, that contracted employee has left the position and it is necessary to fill it as soon as possible in order to meet grant deadlines and maintain project momentum. Ms. Panasiewicz is uniquely positioned to fill this role as she has been involved in the effort since its inception and wrote the grant for the position. Ms. Panasiewicz has the background and familiarity needed to step in and manage the work associated with this project. Because of Ms. Panasiewicz's experience and proven abilities to manage this effort, the ECSWCD would like to contract with Erie County to allow the DEP to create a grant position for her to fill the role of LEWPA Coordinator for the 604b grant instead of hiring their own contracted employee.

Ms. Panasiewicz is currently funded by the *WNY Stormwater Coalition: MS4 Mapping Project Grant.* If she is hired as the LEWPA coordinator, this would cause an opening for a Junior Environmentalist (JG-7) position on the *WNY Stormwater Coalition: MS4 Mapping Project Grant.*

The contract would pay for the remainder of Year 1 for the LEWPA project, which is 40 weeks. Funding for Year 2 of the position is expected to be paid mostly by the LEWPA project. The budget for Year 2 of LEWPA will be contracted separately as the budget has not yet been established within ECSWCD. In addition, other sources of funding are being pursued for this position as projects have been identified by LEWPA. One federal grant and three state grants have been submitted and are awaiting response. It is anticipated that between these various funding streams, the position will be funded for at least 2 years. In the unlikely event all of these grant efforts are unsuccessful, Ms. Panasiewicz will return to her previous position on the *WNY Stormwater Coalition: MS4 Mapping Project Grant.*

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

Without the requested authorization, the LEWPA project will be further delayed and fall behind in its deliverables and lose momentum. Such a delay will result in lost opportunities to secure funding to make improvements to water quality along the Lake Erie shoreline in New York State, as well as the associated watershed.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The County Executive will enter into an agreement with the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District for $42,453.80. A grant budget will be established within the Department of Environment and Planning. A Junior Environmentalist (JG-7) position will be created. A Junior Environmentalist (JG-7) will also be hired to replace Ms. Panasiewicz for the *WNY Stormwater Coalition: MS4 Mapping Project Grant*. Currently, funding for more than two and one-half years remains in that budget.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:
Department of Environment and Planning

RE: LEWPA Coordinator Funding and Position

WHEREAS, the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District has New York State Department of Environmental Conservation 604b grant funding to form and implement the Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance (LEWPA), a three-county collaborative effort to better protect Lake Erie water quality; and

WHEREAS, the contracted employee hired by Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District to coordinate LEWPA recently resigned from the position; and

WHEREAS, it is vital that the LEWPA project does not lose momentum as it is crucial to securing funds to make improvements to water quality along the Lake Erie shoreline in New York State, as well as the associated watershed; and

WHEREAS, Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District would like to contract with Erie County to have a Junior Environmentalist (JG-7) fulfill the role of LEWPA Coordinator for the 604b grant instead of hiring their own contracted employee.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the County Executive is authorized to enter an agreement with the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District to coordinate the Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance in an amount not to exceed $42,453.80 in grant resources; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the revenue from the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District is hereby appropriated in a grant account in the Department of Environment and Planning (Business Area 162, Fund 281) as follows:

Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance Project
(Grant Period: 10/15/12 - 06/21/13)
SAP Grant Account #162LEWPA062113

REVENUE:

Account	Description	Current Budget
409000	State Aid Revenue – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	($42,453.80)
TOTAL REVENUE		($42,453.80)

APPROPRIATIONS:

Account	Description	Budget
500000	Personnel Services	$28,302.53
502000	Fringe Benefits	$14,151.27
TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS		$42,453.80

and be it further

RESOLVED, that a Junior Environmentalist (JG-7) position, B-100 #0000006981, for which sufficient grant funding for personal services and fringe benefits exists, will be created and approved; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Director of the Division of Budget and Management is hereby authorized to implement any budget adjustments as required to comply with State and local funding requirements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the County Executive's Office; the Comptroller's Office; the Director of the Division of Budget and Management; the County Attorney; and the Commissioner of the Department of Environment and Planning, Rath Building, 10th Floor.