To: Council Members

From: Staff

Date: June 12, 2020

Subject: U.S. Economic Development Administration Partnership Planning Grant Supplemental Funds

Background

Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act which became law on March 27, 2020, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) received a supplemental appropriation to “prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus…including for necessary expenses for responding to economic injury as a result of coronavirus”. On May 7, 2020 the EDA announced funding availability for competitive grant applications for which a number of applications are being prepared by Council staff or with Council staff’s assistance. On May 8, 2020 the EDA invited existing Economic Development District recipients of partnership planning grants (such as Council) to apply for supplemental funds on a non-competitive basis for activities consistent with a related scope of work.

Analysis

The supplemental funding from EDA will allow Council to undertake the following scope of work:

1. Short-term and long-term economic development planning and coordination to develop a disaster and resiliency economic development plan with a pandemic focus and which is consistent with our CEDS plan. One aspect will be to analyze how COVID-19 has affected the Region’s small businesses and industries. Data will be collected and analyzed to determine which businesses have suffered, which have survived, and which have prospered, during the pandemic. Statistics such as loss/gain of full-time positions; the demand and supply for particular products; and consumer retail behaviors (during and after the pandemic) will be considered.

2. Hiring a Disaster Economic Recovery Coordinator for a two-year period to serve the communities and local governments across the Treasure Coast Region. The Disaster Economic Recovery Coordinator will serve as a liaison in identifying potential resiliency, mitigation, and economic recovery projects in the Region; implement economic recovery and resiliency plans; assist in planning efforts in the most impacted communities; help identify economic development grant-eligible projects to ensure impacted communities...
take full advantage of funding opportunities; identify and foster partnership opportunities; serve as a liaison between local, state, and federal agencies in order to speed the recovery process through technical assistance and local capacity augmentation; and facilitate locally generated disaster recovery economic development projects developed as part of the Regional CEDS-aligned recovery plan.

3. Technical Assistance and capacity building for communities, businesses, and other stakeholders in the Region impacted by COVID-19. Council staff has already been working with the Region’s economic development agencies to provide web-based information on available resources for business recovery funding opportunities. This new funding will allow us to explore expanding this effort by providing assistance to businesses with activities such as setting up websites to be more competitive in the ever-increasing environment of on-line shopping.

4. Organizational capacity support including technology and personnel costs Council staff members working directly or in a support role on the coronavirus-related economic development response.

**Conclusion**

The EDA will be providing a total of $400,000 to the Council to fund completion of the scope of work. The funding is available for a two-year period on a reimbursement basis. There is no match required. The funding will assist Council in orchestrating the Region’s response and recovery from the Coronavirus Pandemic.

**Recommendation**

In accord with the special authorities provided in Resolution #20-01, due to the short timeframe provided to respond to the invitation and recognizing the need for these activities in the Region, on May 27, 2020 the Executive Director submitted the attached application package accepting the invitation from EDA to receive supplemental funds. Council should approve the necessary actions to meet the commitments made in the grant application (hiring of a Disaster Recovery Coordinator, etc.) and associated budget amendment (item 7 on the agenda for Council’s June 19, 2020 meeting).

**Council Action – June 19, 2020**

Mayor Gerwig from Village of Wellington moved approval of the staff recommendation. Vice Mayor Hmara from the Village of Royal Palm Beach seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**Attachment**