

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, December 2, 1999, 8:30 AM**

Present: H. Mac. Tyson II, Chairman
Billy R. King, Commissioner
Ed G. Melvin, Commissioner
Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager
James Martin, Deputy County Manager
Grainger Barrett, County Attorney
Amy H. Cannon, Finance Director
Juanita Pilgrim, Assistant County Manager
Rhonda C. Raynor, Deputy Clerk to the Board

Others: Press

INVOCATION: Chairman H. Mac. Tyson II

1. Approval of Minutes: August 5, 1999

MOTION: Commissioner King offered a motion to approve the August 5, 1999 Finance Committee meeting minutes.

SECOND: Commissioner Melvin

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

3. Discussion of Grants Program.

BACKGROUND: The Finance Committee heard a presentation by Don Duncan with Griffin Grant Writing and Consulting on August 5, 1999. The Committee agreed to have management review this further and make a presentation at the next meeting.

James Lawson, Personnel Services Manager and Howard Abner, Accounting/Budgeting Manager, have contacted the following references regarding the services provided by Griffin Grant Writing and Consulting (Information attached to and made a part of these minutes):

- County of Fort Bend, Texas
- City of Fort Myers, Florida
- County of Prince Georges, Maryland
- County of Oakland, Michigan
- City of Naples, Florida
- County of Guilford, North Carolina

Management believes there are three options to consider in pursuing a grants program:

1. Move forward in hiring a county employee to write grants.
2. Contract with Griffin Grant Writing and consulting for a 24-month period at a cost of \$95,000 plus costs and expenses not to exceed \$5,000.
3. Contract with Griffin Grant Writing and Consulting as listed in Option 2 and delay filling the county grants position until we know the progress Griffin Grant Writing and Consulting is making. (At some point, the county may need to fill the grants position with grants writer/coordinator depending upon future needs).

RECOMMENDATION/PROPOSED ACTION: Management recommends Option 3 as stated above.

Mr. Martin reviewed the information for the committee. Most of the references indicated they would highly recommend Griffin Grant Writing and Consulting. The County Attorney made some small changes to the proposed contract. County Management has been satisfied with certain provisions of the contract. GGW&C has requested authorization to apply for 3.5 million in grants. They guarantee \$1 million in grants for the County or they will return the \$95,000 fee. Some companies have opted to extend their contract rather than have the fee returned. The County could do that as well. If GGW&C gets more than \$1 million in grants for the County, the County must pay GGW&C 10% of the amount over the \$1 million.

Mr. Strassenburg noted GGW&C would seek grants from all funding sources. If the County finds a grant program that GGW&C is not aware of, the County can authorize them to prepare an application so long as the grant is a competitive one.

Commissioner King asked if GGW&C does not get the \$1 million in grants that they guarantee, he understands the County will only be out a maximum of \$5,000. Is that correct?

Mr. Martin advised Mr. King was correct. He noted GGW&C must submit \$3.5 million in grant applications in the first ten months of the contract with the County.

Commissioner King stated it seems the County is only risking a nominal amount for this service. If GGW&C can get the \$1 million in grants, that would equate to .01 cent on the tax rolls.

Mr. Strassenburg noted the County is also not risking the hiring of an employee to seek grants that may not be available.

Mr. Martin noted the County would also not be risking hiring an employee that is not successful.

Chairman Tyson advised the County would not have to pay benefits to a corporation, as it would to an employee. He noted he would prefer the County pay GGW&C the \$100,000 in monthly installments rather than a lump sum payment up-front.

Mr. Strassenburg advised some type of payment schedule could be worked out.

Mr. Barrett noted GGW&C could say they have to do a great deal of work during the first ten months of the contract. He would suggest the County paying GGW&C \$9,500 each month for ten months.

Chairman Tyson stated he would rather see results first rather than paying the money first.

Mr. Barrett stated he does not feel making payments over the 24-month period of the contract will be acceptable to GGW&C.

Commissioner Melvin noted he favors paying the fee over the 24-month period. He is hesitant with paying the fee up-front.

Mr. Strassenburg advised that management could negotiate paying a large portion of the fee in the first ten months.

Commissioner Melvin stated he would be comfortable with paying GGW&C \$50,000-\$60,000 in the first ten months of the contract.

Chairman Tyson stated he feels management could negotiate a favorable term with the payment. He would like to see management get as close to payment over the 24-month period as possible. He asked if this action was sufficient from the committee or would management need a directive from the full Board of Commissioners?

Mr. Strassenburg stated he feels management can proceed with the instructions given by the committee.

MOTION: Commissioner Melvin offered a motion to approve contracting with Griffin Grant Writing and Consulting as outlined by management subject to a mutually acceptable agreement with Griffin Grant Writing and Consulting and Cumberland County regarding a schedule of payments to be timed as close to the performance results guaranteed by GGW&C over the full 24-month contract term. If an acceptable agreement can be reached, this item is to be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners at the December 20, 1999 meeting for approval with a favorable recommendation from the Finance Committee.

SECOND: Commissioner King

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

3. Other Committee Concerns.

Chairman Tyson noted the memorandum dated September 13, 1999 from the County Manager to all the Commissioners concerning the County's bond rating upgrade. He felt this item was worthy of mention and asked that it be placed in the minutes of the meeting.

Mr. Strassenburg noted the next school GO Bond offering is scheduled for February 15, 2000.

Commissioner King mentioned the recent vandalism at Cape Fear High School. He asked if the County would be required to fund any of the repairs to that school.

Mr. Strassenburg noted the school system would handle the expenses as insurance will cover the repairs and the school system will only have to pay the deductible of \$5,000.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 AM.