

**Caroline County  
Board of Supervisors Agenda  
Executive Summary**

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**Meeting Date:** August 9, 2022

**Title:** New Business – Discussion of Possible Grant Writer Position

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*(Check Mark)*

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consent                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Closed Meeting          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action            | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No Action (Information Only) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution                   | <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint Presentation |

**Summary:** Vice-Chairman Jeff Black previously asked staff to investigate the possibility of hiring a Grant Writer to identify, write and submit applications for state and federal grant funding opportunities for Caroline County. Staff reached out to Spotsylvania, Stafford, King George, Fredericksburg, Hanover, Louisa, Dinwiddie and Orange County to determine whether they employ a grant writer. Based on responses received to date, only Spotsylvania and Dinwiddie have active positions dedicated to grant writing (Louisa has an approved position, but has been unable to fill it). Thus far, staff has identified one locality (Prince William County) that contracts for grant writing services.

**Spotsylvania County**

Spotsylvania County has an approved full-time **Grants Writer** position at Grade 18 of their pay plan (\$53,869 to \$86,191 or \$25.90/hr. to \$41.44/hr). The position is currently unfilled.

The job summary for the position reads as follows:

*“The Grants Writer plays a critical role within the County’s Grants Division and performs a variety of tasks in order to advance the County’s vision, mission, and values. Primary duties include locating public and private grant opportunities; obtaining and analyzing data and other supporting grant application materials; reviewing and adhering to grant solicitation requirements; authoring concise, clear, and persuasive grant proposals; and collaboratively editing and finalizing materials for submission. Work also includes assisting with award acceptance, programmatic and fiscal compliance, and*

*other grant administrative functions. Excellent writing and editing skills are a must. This position will also be assigned special projects as determined by the Grants Manager.”*

Spotsylvania also has a **Grants Manager** position at a Grade 26 (\$79,590 to \$127,343 or \$38.26/hr to \$61.22/hr) and a **Grants Assistant** position at a Grade 14 (\$44,318 to \$70,910 or \$22.31/hr to \$34.09/hr).

**Dinwiddie County**

Dinwiddie County employs a full-time **Grant Writer/Community Information Coordinator** at a Grade 121 on their pay plan (\$64,059 to \$100,089). However, this position goes significantly beyond the responsibility of identifying grant opportunities and writing grants. It is an administrative position that performs public relations and communications related activities to promote the County and is included in the County’s leadership team.

The general definition of the work for the position reads as follows:

*“Performs difficult professional and administrative work providing assistance to the County with an emphasis on procuring grants and communication, both internal and external. Performs the day-to-day public relations activities, driving the efforts internally and externally to promote the County, its mission and overall public awareness of the County’s services. Operates in a highly visible and independent manner and includes extensive contact with County staff and the general public requiring a high degree of discretion and judgment. Work is performed under the moderate supervision of the County Administrator.”*

**Prince William County**

Prince William County contracts for grant writing services with Innovative Emergency Management of Morrisville, North Carolina through a joint purchasing contract with the Houston-Galveston Area Council. The services appear to relate largely to all hazards preparedness, planning, consulting and recovery services and do not appear to be directly related to the services Caroline County is seeking.

**Budget Impact:** There appear to be three options if the Board is interested in obtaining grant-writing services with the following estimated costs:

**Option #1 - Part-Time Position**

Option #1 is to create a part-time position with the duties limited to identifying grant opportunities and authoring concise, clear, and persuasive grant proposals. This would be similar to the Spotsylvania **Grants Writer** position, except on a part-time basis. Staff believes a minimum pay rate of \$25 to \$29/hr. will be necessary to attract qualified candidates. At a maximum of 25 hours per week, the total estimated annual cost for the position is \$40,614.45.

### **Option #2 – Full-Time Position**

Option #2 is to create a full-time position that combines grant writing with community information coordinator responsibilities patterned after the Dinwiddie County position. Staff has evaluated and scored this position and recommends placing it at a Grade 25 (minimum \$65,582 to maximum \$110,178.40) on the County Pay Plan based on the knowledge, skills and abilities required. The total annual cost for the new position, including benefits, would range from \$94,390.63 to \$141,487.78.

### **Option #3 – Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to Identify and Apply for Grant Opportunities**

Option #3 is to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to contract for services to identify and apply for grant opportunities. The cost of this option is largely unknown. Prince William County pays approximately \$115 to \$125 per hour for Grant Manager services that appear focused largely on emergency services related issues. The true cost of contracted grant writing services cannot be determined until the RFP is issued.

**Analysis:** Caroline County previously employed a part-time Grant Writer for a short time in the mid-2000s. At that time, the majority of the grants available were for Fire & Rescue or Sheriff's Office related funding. These individual departments continued to handle grant applications for the most part because of the specialized knowledge required to prepare the applications. As a result, the Grant Writer position was not used to the fullest extent possible and was discontinued.

Some departments believe adding a Grant Writer now would be helpful. For example, there are many grant opportunities available for libraries, but Library staff members do not have the time or skills to commit to completing all the work required. The Department of Parks & Recreation also believes adding a Grant Writer position could lead to increased opportunities for expanded park facilities. The Sheriff's Office also believes a grant writer position would be beneficial.

Other departments such as Fire/Rescue believe a grant writer would not be particularly beneficial or effective. For Fire/Rescue related grants, the grant writer must have direct knowledge of the problem, solutions and alternatives available, which can only come from someone experienced in the field. A general Grant Writer position would not be able to prepare a Fire/Rescue related grant application without Department of Fire & Rescue staff investing essentially the same amount of time in the process.

In the past, the Department of Fire & Rescue has used contract services for grant writing on an as-needed basis to help increase knowledge of what grant graders were looking for in particularly large or complex grants.

Another issue associated with potentially hiring a Grant Writer is the lack of available office space in County buildings. The County Administrator or Deputy County Administrator would presumably supervise the position. The County Administrator's Office and Finance Department are down to one remaining cubicle in the back portion of

the second floor of the Administration Building on North Main Street. The one remaining cubicle is needed for job candidates to take employment tests, new hires to fill out paperwork or receive computer based training or when County employees are temporarily transferred from other departments to work on special projects for the County Administrator's Office.

**Requested Action from Board of Supervisors:** Discuss topic and provide direction to staff.