

MOTION:

**October 20, 2020
Regular Meeting**

SECOND:

Res. No. 20-

RE: ACCEPT, BUDGET, AND APPROPRIATE \$631,420.50 IN GRANT FUNDING FROM THE CENTER FOR TECH AND CIVIC LIFE FOR COVID-19 ELECTIONS SUPPORT

ACTION:

WHEREAS, on March 12, 2020, Governor Ralph S. Northam declared a state of emergency in the Commonwealth of Virginia due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), a communicable disease of public health threat; and

WHEREAS, the threat to the public health and safety of the residents of Prince William County from exposure to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) constitutes an emergency, crisis and disaster of such sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant a coordinated response by various County departments, agencies and voluntary organizations; and

WHEREAS, on March 31, 2020 the Board of County Supervisors ratified and confirmed the actions taken by the County Executive, acting in his capacity as Director of Emergency Management, to declare a local emergency for Prince William County, to perform all of those acts set forth in Section 44-146.21(C) VA Code Ann.; and

WHEREAS, the Center for Tech and Civil Life has established a COVID-19 Response Grant program to provide grants to local jurisdictions across the country to ensure that all localities have the necessary resources for the General Election during COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, this funding must be used exclusively for the public purpose of planning and operationalizing safe and secure election administration in Prince William County during COVID-19;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors hereby accepts, budgets, and appropriates \$631,420.50 in grant funding from the Center for Tech and Civil Life for COVID-19 elections support and authorizes the County Executive to execute all documents that are in a form approved by the County Attorney's Office.

Votes:

Ayes:

Nays:

Absent from Vote:

Absent from Meeting:

ATTEST: _____

Clerk to the Board



STAFF REPORT

Board Meeting Date:	October 20, 2020
Agenda Title:	Accept, Budget, and Appropriate \$631,420.50 in grant funding from the Center for Tech and Civic Life for COVID-19 Elections Support
Requested Action:	Approve proposed resolution.
Department / Agency Lead:	Executive Management
Staff Lead:	Brian Misner, Emergency Management Coordinator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center for Tech and Civic Life is a certified 501(c)(3) organization, confirmed through Charity Navigator, with a mission to increase civic participation by modernizing engagement between local governments and the people they serve. They have established a COVID-19 Response Grant program to provide grants to local jurisdictions across the Country to ensure that all localities have the necessary resources for the General Election during COVID-19. The grants funds must be used exclusively for the public purpose of planning and operationalizing safe and secure election administration in Prince William County during COVID-19.

The Office of Elections expects 90% of the County's 314,000 eligible voters to participate in the 2020 Presidential election, with 25% of those expected to vote by mail. On August 4, 2020, the Board approved eight early voting locations that will open two weeks before the election. Additional election officers will be needed to prepare and process the vote by mail requests. With more than 200,000 voters expected to vote in person between September 21 and November 3, the Elections Task Force is giving full attention to possible mitigation strategies. The funding from this grant will be used to support all elections-related needs to ensure safe and secure elections operations in the COVID-19 environment.

Staff recommends that the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) accept, budget, and appropriate \$631,420.50 in grant funding from the Center for Tech and Civic Life for COVID-19 elections support.

BACKGROUND

COVID-19

On March 12, 2020, Governor Ralph S. Northam declared a state of emergency in the Commonwealth of Virginia due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), a communicable disease of public health threat. The threat to the public health and safety of the residents of Prince William County from exposure to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) constitutes an emergency, crisis and disaster of such sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant a coordinated response by various County departments, agencies and voluntary organizations. On March 31, 2020, the BOCS ratified and confirmed the actions taken by the County Executive, acting in his capacity as Director of Emergency Management, to declare a local emergency for Prince William County, to perform all of those acts set forth in Section 44-146.21(C) VA Code Ann.

The County activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on March 8, 2020, to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and place the County in a flexible position to scale up services and operations as necessary and appropriate. The EOC has been the primary lead in directing and standing up all response activities including coordination with County departments/agencies, the Virginia Department of Health, local hospitals, businesses, and not-for-profit organizations, including the faith-based community.

COVID-19 Elections Support

The Office of Elections expects 90% of the County's 314,000 eligible voters to participate in the 2020 Presidential election, with 25% of those expected to vote by mail. On August 4, 2020, the Board approved eight early voting locations that will open two weeks before the election. Additional election officers will be needed to prepare and process the vote by mail requests. With more than 200,000 voters expected to vote in person between September 21 and November 3, the Elections Task Force is giving full attention to possible mitigation strategies. Precautions must include adequate PPE, availability of hand sanitizer, frequent sanitizing of touched surfaces and the enforcement of social distancing which will require additional staffing. The funding from this grant will be used to support elections-related needs in the COVID-19 environment, to include printers, supplies, and staffing for early voting and ballot drop-off sites, additional precinct voting equipment, cleaning expenses for early voting sites or precincts, and other related expenses.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) accept, budget, and appropriate \$631,420.50 in grant funding from the Center for Tech and Civic Life for COVID-19 elections support.

Service Level / Policy Impact

This funding will be used to augment ongoing COVID-19 elections support coordinated by the Elections Taskforce.

Fiscal Impact

Jurisdictions can use this funding to cover certain 2020 expenses incurred between June 15, 2020 and December 31, 2020. There is no local match requirement to receive this funding.

Legal Impact

BOCS approval is required for the ratification of the grant application and acceptance, budgeting, and appropriation of grant funds.

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Brian Misner | (703) 792-5828
bmisner@pwcgov.org