

RESTORE LOUISIANA TASK FORCE
January 20, 2017
Livingston Parish Council Chambers
20355 Government Boulevard
Livingston, LA

Approved

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Jacqui Vines Wyatt called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM. First, a special thank you to Parish President Layton Ricks, where he is right in the front row, for hosting the task force in the wonderful parish of Livingston. This parish was federally declared in both the March and August 2016 floods; and certainly, the August flood event was unprecedented for this parish. We recognize President Ricks and his team for their efforts in both response and in long term recovery for this parish. Now I would like to do the roll call, Lori, if you can. The roll was then called.

II. ROLL CALL

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Johnny Bradberry
Mr. Roland Dartez
Mr. Jimmy Durbin
Mr. Michael Faulk
Mr. John Gallagher
Representative Edward "Ted" James
Mr. Raymond Jetson
Mr. Adam Knapp
Mayor Dave Norris
Mr. Michael Olivier
Representative J. Rogers Pope
Mr. Sean Reilly
Representative Robert Shadoin
Mayor Ollie Tyler
Ms. Jacqui Vines Wyatt

TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Randy Cloutre (non-voting, ex-officio)
Senator Dan "Blade" Morrish
Mr. Don Pierson
Dr. James Richardson
Mayor-President Joel Robideaux
Commissioner Mike Strain
Dr. Shawn Wilson

Ms. Dupont: Madam Chair, 15 members are present, we do have a quorum.

SUPPORTING STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patrick Forbes, Executive Director, Office of Community Development
Rowdy Gaudet, Office of Community Development
Dan Rees, Office of Community Development
Lori Dupont, Office of Community Development
Kim Jupiter, Office of Community Development

LET THE RECORD SHOW THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS ARRIVED AFTER THE ROLL CALL:

Mayor-President Joel Robideaux

III. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2, 2016 AND DECEMBER 16, 2016 MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Wyatt: Great, that's wonderful.

Representative Shadoin: I'm really glad coming from Ruston that we do. And Shreveport. And West Monroe.

Ms. Wyatt: And we welcome you all, always. We need to do approval of the minutes. We have two sets of minutes, December 2, 2016 and December 16, 2016. I need a motion for December 2, 2016 meeting minutes.

Mr. Olivier: Motioned.

Mr. Knapp: Seconded.

Ms. Wyatt: December 2, 2016 meeting minutes approved unanimously. I need a motion for December 16, 2016 meeting minutes.

Mr. Jetson: Motioned.

Mayor Tyler: Seconded.

Ms. Wyatt: December 16, 2016 meeting minutes approved unanimously.

IV. CHAIRPERSON OPENING REMARKS

~ Jacqui Vines Wyatt, Restore Louisiana Task Force Co-Chair

Ms. Wyatt: I'll start out with some opening remarks. Members, please keep in mind that your microphones remain hot and we are live the entire time so please make sure to keep conversations among yourselves to a minimum or push your chairs away from the microphones if you don't want something heard that you are saying. I think it's very important today for me to emphasize 3 main points for my colleagues on the Task Force here, and for the Louisiana public we serve. First, this Task Force and Governor Edwards' administration are doing everything we can to bring home these federal dollars as quickly as we can. There is no delay in the process caused by us here in Louisiana. Period. Everyone got that, no delay in the process caused by us here in Louisiana. As an example, for this second \$1.2 billion appropriation by congress, if our recommendation on the second action plan is finalized at this meeting today, it means the state's recommended action plan likely would go out for translation and public comment just two days after the federal register notice was published on Wednesday of this week. This is an unprecedented pace. Second, we and Governor Edwards' administration are doing everything we can to bring home these federal dollars at the most efficient and smallest cost that we can. We expect to spend a lower administrative cost than other states – lower than even the amount HUD allows for administrative costs. Finally, we on this Task Force and Governor Edwards' administration are going to do the very best, when we receive the federal money for which we are preparing and submitting these action plans now, to spread that rebuilding assistance money to as many people as we possibly can, so that as many Louisiana citizens, businesses and communities can rebuild as possible under this limited amount of money. This is not for the faint hearted. We all know that this money is not enough to help everyone we want to help. It is \$2 billion short of what Governor Edwards requested from the federal government. But we are going to make wise decisions on how to invest it the very best we can in our Louisiana people, to stretch it to benefit as many impacted families as we can. We would like to remind everyone to sign-up for updates on the Restore Louisiana Task Force website, <http://restore.la.gov/>, to stay informed on the latest developments. If anyone in the audience would like to comment on a specific agenda item please fill out a comment card with a notation of which agenda item you would like to comment on and send it up here. We will take public comments on each Resolution ahead of the Task Force vote on each resolution. If your comment is not on a specific agenda item, we will address it during the Public Comment section of the meeting. Now I would like to ask Parish President Layton Ricks to take the witness table and address the task force.

V. LIVINGSTON PARISH OFFICIALS

~ Parish President Layton Ricks

President Ricks: Thank you ma'am. First of all let me say welcome to Livingston Parish. I appreciate you all taking the time to come. Certainly I know you all have a daunting task and obviously the Governor felt very confident in putting you on this board to make the difficult decisions and tough decisions and advise him on how these monies should be dispersed. I certainly applaud him and his efforts in getting us this \$1.2B and the \$435M or \$438M prior to this. As you know Livingston Parish has suffered somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1.4B. So, Ms. Jacqui, you are right, there is not enough money. It's tough when you are in this position, to look at an 82 or 83 year old couple, look at them in the eyes, and you can't offer them, and that's bad language, but you cannot offer them anything, because they only lost \$4,000 or \$7,000 worth in that particular case, but that was 100% of what they have. SBA, flood insurance programs, the individual assistance, all these processes are flawed. We all know that. Not the people on the ground who are trying to help and do the best they can to help us help people, they are doing everything they can, but the process is absolutely flawed. So, now here you all are charged, and maybe with a way to try to help the people in our parish and all parishes that suffered flood damage from August. There were six parishes that you mentioned that suffered damage in March and in August, our hope and one of the things we are challenging you all to do is look at those six parishes and realize which ones did and did not and help us as best you can with as much as you possibly can. The flood waters showed no discrimination on income level, color, gender, make-up of any kind. It washed everything away that most people had, a lifetime. So, what you all are doing is some kind of hope that people are sitting back waiting on now, and nothing happens overnight in government, we all know that, but I

applaud your efforts in meeting around the clock trying to get some things done. One of the rumors that we have been hearing a lot of is administrative costs, and that has always been an astronomical number if you are the guy that's sitting there and has lost everything, whether that be 2%, 20%, whatever. The money is always going to the top but I'm very encouraged to hear that you all have, through the efforts of Julie, Ben Nevers and Pat Forbes, done all you possibly can and are still working towards reducing those administrative costs. That is certainly welcoming news to me and to the people of Livingston Parish. Someone told me the other day, this isn't personal but it (expletive) sure is personal. When you are sitting there, again, looking in the eyes of these people who were flooded and lost everything, who are not getting the necessary help and means from these other programs, it is absolutely personal. I know you all feel the same way because you are listening to these stories as you trying to find a way to spend these dollars. So, I am encouraged by the administrative costs portion and I realize there's a difference in these different kinds of grants with HUD and how money can be spent and how it has to be done versus these HMGP grants and money and all of that too, but ladies and gentlemen we have got to find a way to somehow or other stretch these borders out to get people the help as quickly as we possibly can. We still have people who are just now starting because what has happened with these other programs, some of them are just getting their insurance checks but the insurance companies don't want to turn loose of the money until they go do the work. They can't go do the work because they don't have the insurance money given to them. Mortgage companies are holding the money on the front end until they do the work. I know personally of a lot of single individual moms with two, three, four children, they don't have the income to get started until the checks are released. Now I know this is a little outside of what you do but on the other hand the quicker you do what you do the quicker we can these monies approved and get it out in their hands that will help a lot of folks in Livingston Parish, and I'm assuming in other parishes as well. So I applaud your efforts. I thank you for what you are trying to get done and I know you will accomplish. Certainly I consider Governor Edwards a friend. I've told him point blank on how I think this all ought to be done, and it's real simple, proportionate to the damages that the parishes received. I don't want anything that East Baton Rouge Parish is due, or Tangipahoa, or any of these other parishes, St. Helena, Ascension, but I want every dime that Livingston Parish is due to come to Livingston Parish. Former Mayor Jimmy Durbin is a very close personal friend of mine, so is Representative Rogers Pope, and I've told them the same thing. I am concerned about our parish because of the significant amount of damage we received, of becoming a ghost parish. Now, our people are resilient. They are doing all they can to make sure that doesn't happen. We're doing all that we can to assure and assist and help them in any way we can. We will rebuild, we will come back stronger than ever. I'm confident of that, but it's going to take some time, as it will in all these other parishes. So the quicker you all can do what your challenged to do, and get to the Governor, and hopefully he will be successful in getting some additional funding. He has worked tirelessly to get it and I just cannot thank him enough for his efforts on our behalf and on behalf of the state of Louisiana, but it is imperative that we get this done and I think imperative that we be fair and if it is proportionate to the damage that the parish received, no one can argue with that process. There are a lot of elected officials in the audience, I don't know who all is here so I'm not going to call names but if you would stand up if you are an elected official. Thank you all for coming and certainly thank you all in the audience for coming. I have three council members here, thank you for coming, and certainly everyone else that came. I know Senator Bodi White has asked for a few minutes, so if you will allow him to come up and speak for a few minutes, but again I want to say thank you to all of you for coming to Livingston Parish and thank you for the job that you are doing, I know in some sense it's thankless but it is very, very important and I know you all know that. The Governor told me he has full faith and confidence in you all. He told me he has full faith in Pat Forbes. Well, if he does, I do too. So we appreciate anything and everything you do. Thank you.

Ms. Wyatt opened the floor for questions.

Representative Pope: I have a question.

President Ricks: This isn't a test now is it? I don't do well on tests Rogers.

Representative Pope: It's not true or false either. And remember, we are live. Thank you Madam Chair.

President Ricks: Well I'm glad you just reminded me of that. I was nervous already.

Representative Pope: You okay, and it's not a trick question, it's just a comment. I appreciate, number one, your efforts in leading the parish in this devastation. You really are doing well and I'm making a public comment, not a political comment, just as a citizen, I think you have done an admiral job in leading this parish in the direction we need to go and I appreciate that as a citizen, but also as a public official.

President Ricks: I appreciate that, thank you.

Representative Pope: You had made a statement that you wanted this process to be done expeditiously. I made that same statement and maybe the people on the committee are getting tired of hearing where I'm going. You made a statement that it had nothing to do with gender, race, economic status, and those kinds of things. If you recall I was written up in the Baton Rouge Advocate in the editorial because I made those comments but it is absolutely true. My question to you, in the comment

you made toward the end of your thing, do you think that you're being, and this is not a trick question, but do you think that we are being handled equitably in this parish? I'll answer it first, I don't. Now, you answer it.

President Ricks: I did not. I did not. Now a lot of that was based on things I was hearing from a lot of different folks. After speaking with, I hate to single Julie out, but after speaking to Julie this morning, who I have known for a long time and have a lot of confidence in, it seems there are an effort now to change some of the ways that these things have been looked at that you all are going to be talking about. If that is in fact the case, I do feel a little bit better, but Representative Pope you know like I do that there's always seemingly an effort to try to make money go to Baton Rouge. Now that is just a fact by me. That's no reflection on any of you all but that is simply a fact, it's always seemingly been the case. Numbers can be used and twisted, for instance, Baton Rouge was not a declared emergency in March, East Baton Rouge was not declared in March. They did have some flooding, no doubt. My initial question was, are we using those numbers to boast the figures for Baton Rouge? I don't know that answer, I'm not accusing anyone of anything, and my fear though is that is some of what is going on. Baton Rouge is the capital city so it's always been looked at, we've always in the past, not so much today as it used to be but the step child to Baton Rouge. That's no longer the case. We have 130,000+ people out here, somewhere before it's all said and done we're going to average somewhere around 63% to 65% of our parish was affected by this flood, not necessarily everyone getting 2, 3, 4' but we were affected by this flood. Numerous businesses, over 30,000 structures. Over 30,000 structures in our parish. Again, the other processes have hampered, and I've had these conversations in DC about what I thought and felt was going on and some I'll allude to is exactly what you're talking about. Listen, I am a Christian, I have no problem trying to help low income, we are charged to do that, we want to do that, but don't bypass the middle and the business owners who long term can help the low income. Who do you think is going to provide jobs for them? If we forget about the middle income and the small business owners and we let them go out here and wither away, there's no one left once you hand this initial money to your low income because they are going to spend it as fast as they can and rightfully so, they are sitting up in their backyard waiting on help. What happens tomorrow when you all are gone and this money is spent? If you haven't helped the middle income, the upper income and the business owners, there is no one there to take their back. There's no one to provide the tax base for municipalities to turn around and provide jobs and utilities and services to all of us, to everyone. Again, the waters didn't discriminate.

Representative Pope: I think that what you said is absolutely and that's my philosophy intact, 100%, but I also think that the middle, the middle income we'll talk about, primarily most of our people fall into that group. Look, I'm not getting into Amite River border war here that's not where I'm going, but what I'm saying is, and it's nothing to do with Pat Forbes and his group are doing, it's nothing what the Governor has done, it's nothing that this task force has done, it's come down to Washington DC. I understand that and I applaud those people for making every effort but I am not representing the people that I represent if I don't make this known that I'm not happy with Washington, but back to the point that I'm trying to make, we talk about the middle income, these are the same people that are having problems, as you alluded to and I hear it every day with their mortgage companies, which this committee has no control over the mortgage companies or the insurance companies, and that's what is holding our process up. I know in the 45,000 people I represent, without a doubt, most everyone fall in that category and they are there and they can't complete anything, they are doing everything that they can, they scrapped every dollar that they can, they went everywhere they could to get a dollar, they are trying to borrow money from banks, the banks won't loan them money because they don't have a complete house, all those kinds of things fall in place. Now, how do we move on, if we as a committee up here, don't help those people? That's my question.

President Ricks: Well, you don't if you don't help them because you are not going to get it changed in DC anytime soon since we have a new administration going in today. Hopefully he can reach out and make some changes through FEMA, through Army Corps of Engineers, and all these other folks, but right now you are our last hope. Right now you are the only thing that we can actually reach out and put our hands on. Listen, I'm one of the easiest going guys I know that's an elected official, I really am. I can get along with just about everybody. When it gets so bad that I threaten to go to DC and whip somebody's, we recorded, behind in their office under their security cameras on top of his desk, that's the frustration level. I say that to you all not because I'm anybody but I'm the parish president, I've got the connections, I've got the names, I know who to go to. If I can't get it done, how are all these other folks that are living in their backyards on their patios and porches in tents, how are they going to reach out? Who are they going to go to? They are never going to attend a meeting. They are never going to meet any of you all, some are never going to meet me.

Representative Pope: That goes back to the 45 minute conference call we had with the lady that runs SBA.

President Ricks: Absolutely.

Representative Pope: With the senators and congressmen on the call with you and we absolutely nothing but rhetoric.

President Ricks: Again, this is not

Representative Pope: I'm venting people and I apologize to the committee for doing it.

President Ricks: I wasn't going to do that today.

Representative Pope: I wasn't either.

President Ricks: I'll tell you, I'm angry.

Representative Pope: Well, there are a lot of things I'm not supposed to do, this is probably one of them, but it upsets me.

President Ricks: You have discussed it and some of you all may be in the same boat. We just had bought our home two weeks prior to the flood and most of you know that if you are married when you buy a new home or another home then obviously you've got to buy new furniture, I wasn't aware of that but you do, and I've waited basically 62 years to have an electric recliner and (explicative) near, darn near, got electrocuted because the water came in before I could almost get up and get out of it. The point being though that now I have to go through SBA, which is an entire nightmare that I won't bore you all with the details of and still wound up not getting all that money and here's the point I want to make, I make a good income right now, but I'm in debt up to my behind, I will never live to pay back everything, matter of fact, I told the SBA give me the whole thing because I'm never going to live long enough to pay you back anyway, but it affects my kids and my grandkids, and that's who all this is ultimately going to affect. So, the money that you all are in charge of trying to do something with is something that could help a lot of folks get past some of this and you are their last hope right now. That's why again I applaud you in your efforts and I certainly cannot thank the Governor for working as hard as he has worked. You know, people fault him for flying to DC, I'll pay for the gas. How are we going to get help if he doesn't go up there and reach out and try to get it? So, please just look at this thing realistically, be fair about it, and do everything you can and obviously I'm asking for Livingston Parish, as I know other parish presidents and mayors are asking for their municipalities. Our city of Denham Springs, as most of you know, was 80% wiped out, basically a new mayor, can you image the daunting task he has? Money should be put in his hands directly to help his city. Same thing with former Mayor Rick Ramsey in Walker. Our school system, \$122M, and after all the insurance and all the help, this and that, they are still in debt \$42M+. One of the finest school systems bar none across the south, if not across the United States. \$42M in debt, and it wasn't their fault. Who do they reach out to? So, we have got to get this money in the people's hands. We've got to give small business owners. We've got to get people going again so that we can start turning revenue to help our sheriff's departments, our school systems, our parish governments, our local governments, so they can in turn help all of these people. I wasn't going to do all that, thank you Representative Pope. Anyway I would like to ask Senator Bodi White if you would like to come up now and say a few words. Thank you all so much panel, I appreciate you all so much.

Senator White: Thank you for allowing me to talk today. I was within 40 miles, I've come in from out of state last time when it froze and got called off at the last minute, they cancelled it, but it's that important to me. I have been a legislator 13 years, this is my 14th, I'm Chairman of Homeland Security almost the entire time and I've dealt with every hurricane, flood and natural disaster and oil spill during that. It's never easy. There's always lots of meetings. There's lots of decisions to be made. I think the task that you have before you is a daunting task but some things since I've turned my attention from another venture I've dealt with for several months I spent a lot of time back in my district and I'll give you an idea of my district, my district goes from the Ascension line along the Amite River up Airline Highway cross Florida Boulevard, Central and the northeast part of East Baton Rouge Parish. I have the whole southern end of St. Helena Parish with the Amite and the Tickfaw and the Tangipahoa River going through it. I have Tangipahoa Parish from Independence, all the way to Lake Maurepas. I have 4 parishes, I have North Livingston, above Albany. I have 4 parishes. My constituents were flooded, the worst I've ever seen, in all 4 parishes. I am probably the most affected state official in the state in their district. Some of the things that when I started asking questions, and I kept up with it every morning, I got up when I was running for another office and I dealt with it for about 4 hours before I got going, but some of the things that I hear that you are going to vote on and talk about I never saw happen before. In my time when we decided how to disperse money and how to rebuild Louisiana, some things worked and some things didn't work. The first infusion of money, I think it's going to be \$438M, as I understand you made recommendations, and I don't know if they came from you or from the Governor, but they have been presented and you have to be 62 or older and low to moderate income, and what I was told the moderate income will be somewhere around joint \$50,000, is that correct? You don't know? Well, that's what the Governor's staff is telling me. The second infusion, \$1.2B, I think this is what you're going to talk about and vote on today. I hope you don't use the same criteria because the people I represent, 135,000 of them now, most of them are working middle income families and if you and your wife worked in the Greater Baton Rouge area or own a small business, \$50,000 is not a lot of money anymore to own a home. In a lot of cases in my district they pay for private schools, they pay the mortgage, they pay their insurance, you can't make it on \$50,000, but nonetheless, there was no discrimination with the water. I watched it come across my back fields from the woods and the Comite River 5 to 6' in one hour. It come within 30' of taking my house. I hope you open that up. That's what I'm telling you to at least, you heard the parish president talk about hope, you just put a lid on a whole bunch of people. If you do that in the second round of money, you give them no hope to get any help and they're holding these mortgages, and I've been working with some mortgage folks and one in particular holds 2,000 mortgages of flooded homes, and those people with no hope they're going to walk away. We're already in a recession in this state, 15 months straight of job losses, whether they admit it or not, when you get to that point you're in recession. Start walking away from all these \$200k, \$300k, and \$150k homes and see where we are. You can't raise enough taxes to catch up. I'm just hoping you take that into consideration, that's my major, I'm happy for the people over 62 that have finished out

there working career and live on a fixed income, but I hope the second round you consider income levels to raise that some because you've just took the hope out of a lot of husbands and wives and families if you do that, just remember that. There's another thing I want to touch on and I won't stay here and blame it because I've been all over these areas and helicopters as soon as it quits raining, it was worse than I ever saw, except after Katrina. At least we didn't have holes in our roof and salt water and it didn't sit in our houses for a month, that gave me hope that we could rebuild and most people got in there in my district and tore out as soon as they can and now they are fighting with FEMA, whether it be through their insurance company or whatever, that is the most dysfunctional organization, maybe in the world. I've been dealing with them for 13 years, there's no rhyme or reason why we are next to each other, same subdivision, same size house, same comparable fixtures and you get help and I don't, just makes no sense to me and they can't answer it. I know why, because they send people in from all over the United States that have no experience. They don't really care about that, they got a two week tour and they are out of here. So, our citizens have been through a lot. Mr. Durbin I think you understand if you put those criteria's that you put on that first money, the folks you represented in Denham Springs and Livingston Parish for a long time and those businesses, you have wiped their hope out. You at least have to give them hope to get a piece of the money. Secondly, and this will be the last thing I close on, I had a discussion with the Governor staff and the Capitol Region delegation a few months back, well not a few months, a few weeks, that Ms. Baxter and Ms. Wesley I think they had it wrong and I was trying to explain to them, these dollars that come down, when you decide how you're going to tell the government your suggestions, they have to be appropriated, they can't come straight to you and go straight to the Office of Community Development and dispersed, by constitution it either has to go through the budget or it's got to go through a BA7. I've already got agreement from the Legislative Auditor and the attorney general is finishing another opinion for me now, but you can't just take this money as an executive committee and direct it and spend it. The legislature will have some oversight. So, just keep that in mind and the people in the legislature, are from all over the state, from North Louisiana, from all these parishes I named, Ascension. I spoke with Senator Lambert on the way over here and he concurs because his district is just like mine. You couldn't get here because of a previous appointment he couldn't cancel, and that's all I have to say. I in Homeland Security hearing next Thursday at one o'clock, Mr. Durbin, if any of you all want to come and testify, you are welcome, I'll have my secretary call you, but we are going to start looking at all the things that have been done with FEMA and GOHSEP and start wading through it, it is going to be long and it is going to be intense over the next year so it won't be our last meeting. Thank you very much again for allowing me to come talk.

Ms. Wyatt opened the floor for questions.

Representative Shadoin: Senator White, if you could, would you give me that constitutional citation of authority of it going through the budgeting process, please?

Senator White: It's our attorney general opinion, I'll send it to you.

Representative Shadoin: Okay.

Ms. Wyatt: Can Pat or Julie address that?

Ms. Julie Baxter Payer with the Governor's Office approached the witness table.

Ms. Payer: I'm Julie Baxter Payer with the governor's office, his Deputy Chief of Staff. Excuse me, I'm trying to pull up the message on my phone to read the response, when we were in the meeting in the Capitol with Senator White he asked us to get this information and so we did from the Division of Administration that works with budgeting and we've also talked with the Legislative Auditor and there was never any intention on the part of the Governor's Office or the Office of Community Development or the Division of Administration or any budget folks in the state to receive federal funds for the flood recovery without going to the legislature for procreation. What we're going to do is we have roughly \$30M in the current year federal budget authority under HB1, the state budget bill that would allow us to receive the first wave of the newest congressional appropriation, and if we get to the point or when we get to the point where we might need to expend an amount of funds that's in excess of that \$30M before this fiscal year ends, then we will be required to submit a BA7 to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget and we fully plan to do that, so there's not going to be any problem in the process. What happens is we have \$438M in the first plan that we sent up, the \$1.2B plan that you're going to be hearing about in a moment from Pat that you'll vote on the recommendation today, that those amounts of money, the whole \$1.6B that come to the state in the line of credit and so as soon as HUD approves those plans and then there's a few weeks of grant agreement that has to happen, the line of credit was opened up to the state and we have this \$30M in excess federal budget authority. We don't have the money here but we have under the HB1 that was passed by the legislature, we have that authority so we can get started, and if we need more we'll take a BA7 to the JLCB.

Ms. Wyatt: Was that clear?

Representative Shadoin: Is that clear?

Senator White: What that means Representative is that you can't spend money without it being appropriated.

Representative Shadoin: And I will take this up with the Governor's Office and the administration, so as not to spend time here. I'm just wondering about some logistics. The legislature is going to meet in April, maybe February, maybe March, maybe we are going to move there, I don't know. I'm just timing it, I'll get with you Julie after this.

Senator White: The only other thing I didn't mention and I wanted to, and I talked to Pat about it and Julie during the meeting, Pat's office is going to charge an admin fee and they can go up to 4%. He says they are going to try to keep it to 2%. With the 97 people he tells me they are going to administer this with, 2% of \$1.6B is a lot. I would hope they would look at that and how this contractor consultant to administer this \$1.6B, they can go up to 30% but they say they are going to try to keep it to 15%. I think the public needs to know that 15% of \$1.6B to administer who gets it is going to be a sizable amount of money. So, when you do 15% and at least 2%, 17% of all the money coming in is just going to be spent on admin, that is the minimum. I've never seen one be done at 17%. These are some things you need to think about going through this process, that it will take 17%, at least 17%, of the money off the top.

Ms. Wyatt: Are you saying that this is too low? That you don't think it can be done or you think it's too high?

Senator White: No, I think it's too high.

Ms. Wyatt: The only reason I ask that is because when we did the research for other catastrophes, they go up to 30% on one side, 4% on the other, 34%, compared to the 17% that we are talking about. I'm not frightened of the 4%.

Representative Shadoin: I'm looking at 4% on here for the budget recommendation on today.

Ms. Payer: I'll just answer on the numbers right now and Pat can address it when he comes up here to present.

Senator White: Well, I'm just telling you what they told me two weeks ago.

Ms. Payer: Just to be clear, there are two sets of money that you are asking about. The administrative fee to run the program and then the program delivery, which is the private contractor that comes in to set up, to take the applications, and we have to remember keeps accountability in the program too. We have to make sure that the program, the right people are receiving the money that we're making sure that the money goes to what the purposes are, it's very important when you bring federal money home so that they don't come back and try to recapture it. And so, the limit that HUD allows for the administrative fee is 5% and what Pat has repeatedly said is that we're budgeting 4% and we have a history of lower than that and we want to bring it down as low as we can. In terms of the program delivery fee, it's gone as high as 45% in other states after disasters. In Sandy, it was 45% program delivery fee, terrible. So, we are budgeting 15% and hoping to keep it as low as possible, but Pat will address more details on that.

Mayor Norris: I'm a little uncertain when you reported the fact that the legislature has to appropriate money, I understand that is the process, does that mean the legislature also has the opportunity to check or change the details of the way the plan is put together and then sent to HUD to be approved by HUD?

Senator White: It's always a possibility.

Mayor Norris: Then what are we doing?

Senator White: I didn't appoint you, I don't know. I'm just telling you the facts and the process because I think a bunch of you don't know the process and I've been through it many times. I'm also on Finance and Joint Budget so I understand how the money flows.

Representative Valerie Hodges approached the witness table.

Representative Hodges: I am Representative Valerie Hodges, I represent District 64, which is the Central area and the Watson area. I want to say thank you very much to all of you who are serving on the task force. I want to say thank you to Governor Edwards, I think he's done a phenomenal job responding to this crisis that we are facing, as an ongoing crisis that we're facing, and one of the things that I want to, I'm not changing the subject here, but the subject of flooding that I'm not hearing anybody talk about yet, and I think that it's imperative that we talk about it. While I appreciate every one of your efforts for what we're doing to help the people, help Baton Rouge, and the surrounding areas rebuild, we have to address the flooding problem. Maybe you know, maybe some of you don't know, I've been the chair of the Comite River Diversion Task Force for the last three years, talking about the imperative need to put in the Comite Diversion Canal and to say it's not a matter of if we have another catastrophic flood like 1983, it's a matter of when and unfortunately it came a lot sooner than what we thought it was going to come, and it was a lot worse than what we thought. This flood has, there's a solution to these kinds of problems that we're facing. They said the '83 flood was a 100-year event. Well, guess what, that was only 33 years ago. They said this flood is a one in a 1,000-year event but it could happen in 20 years, it could happen in 10 years, it could happen next year, and what I'm telling you when it rains my neighbors start going crazy. My house got 4' of water in it. We lost everything. We lost our vehicles and everything and it's devastating to go through this and when there is a solution that because the Corps of Engineers own projections, when they started collecting taxes 17 years ago for the Comite Diversion they said it would reduce flooding in Zachary by 7', it would reduce flooding in Central by 5', it would reduce

flooding in Watson by 3', and most of my neighbors got less than 3', in Central just about everybody got less than 5'. Some people got more but by the Corps own estimates when they planned to build a structure but it has been. In the task force we have reiterated that we have brought the Corps, we have brought DOTD together, ARBC who collects the taxes for this, and saying we must get this done, what do we need, and it has been the same refrain. It has been a lot of foot dragging, a lot of disorganization, a lot of finger pointing and we cannot continue to do this and the big excuses where we don't have any money and what we said last year, I put some numbers to it and said if we have a flood equal to '83 it will cost \$2B. All we need is \$220M to get this thing done. Where are we going to get \$4B? We need \$220M to complete this and out by the Corps own estimates at least 25% of the houses would not let it in Central, Watson, and Zachary and so even though despite the multiple warnings and I'm here again to say it, we must do simultaneously while we rebuild people's businesses and lives and help them get over the devastation that we've all faced. We've got to have a plan in action because it makes no sense to go rebuild everything knowing that this is going to happen again and it is not a matter of if it might happen, we hope it never happens, I hope and pray, and everybody's like I said, even the rains yesterday, you know people were saying I'm leaving, I'm going all over Baton Rouge buying stuff, repairing my house, and everybody saying, I'm moving out of state. I have two elderly people who are moving in with family in Georgia, Tennessee. This is something that Layton Ricks, our Parish President, talked about if people leave, and Senator White talked about it, people leaving the state. These are, this is the tax base of people, working, paying taxes, and if they leave then what are we going to do? When the numbers are in and I've heard anywhere from \$4B to \$10B is what this flood is going to cost. This is going to be one of the biggest catastrophic events in the United States history. It is the largest flood, largest spreading flood in the history of the United States of America. So, we're not talking about yet how to fix this problem, and there are a lot of fixes to it, and one of the things that is the biggest thing that I can think of is the Comite River Diversion, which we talked to DOTD this week, talked to Mark Wingate of the Corps of Engineers this week, and we said, if you had the money when would you start building and doing the rest of the Comite Diversion and they said next week, if we had the money, we could get it done in two years. So, you think about that. I'm just here to implore you, to beg you, whatever, because it's not about material things, it's about our lives, people lost, I know several ladies that I've talked to, their husbands died, they had heart attacks after this. Just from heavy lifting and all, so it's just extremely devastating. There are several other flood factors, I wish Dr. Wilson was here, that we want to talk about and I can talk about that that need to be addressed immediately. One of the things that I've talked about at the task force meeting that Representative Pope was at, the clearing and snagging of the rivers. We're not doing that anymore. When I was a little girl, they used to go out on barges and they would dig the Amite, they would dig out the Comite, they would widen it and what used to be 50' wide, now it's 20', so it can't hold the water when we get these torrential rains like this. These things that we must have money, and implore DOTD and other organizations to do this. So, we've got that problem, we've got the Amite River, the Wehr. If you think about the Amite River Diversion Canal that was built that averted, that saved 100s of 1000s of people from flooding and yet there's problems there that I think somebody here is going to talk about, that we are stopped up, you think that all this stuff in Zachary, Watson, and Central that washed down the river, the Amite River, where is it? Who went got it? It is still there. So, it's stopping up the flow of water and while we must rebuild homes and help people rebuild lives, \$220M out of \$1.6B, I don't know exactly what percentage that is but it's not a lot. We could start next week. We've got to. I'm just asking you to please consider doing that, it must be a priority. We go to the taxpayers, who have been paying taxes for 7 years on this project and up until now, I don't think that there's really been a will to get this done. It's the only solution that we have, to widen, clear, and snag the rivers and to build this canal. The Darlington Reservoir, we need to talk about that but we can do this simultaneously. There's enough smart people on this task force and in this state that we can get this done at the same time, simultaneously together, and I can personally testify to you that I've never been through anything more devastating than what I went through, except the loss of my granddaughter who drowned in the river, and I just want to ask you guys to please consider doing something about this and I'm speaking for everyone in this room because it affects all of us in one way or the other. So, thank you very much.

Ms. Wyatt opened the floor for questions.

Mr. Reilly: Thank you for coming and testifying. I can't believe the historic dysfunctionality around not getting the Comite Diversion done being such a huge contributor to massive amounts of damage. I think there is hope and I think we are going to be able to find it in Hazard Mitigation dollars that are coming our way by right. After previous disasters, sometimes we used those dollars for individual mitigation and it's been frustrating and time consuming and very costly. I think we are of the mindset here, those dollars that come, again by right through the hazard mitigation appropriation from the feds, that we should spend it on community mitigation and I would put the Comite Diversion at the top of the list. Pat, what is the estimate of what we will be getting in hazard mitigation dollars and what does the time table look like for that?

Patrick Forbes approached the witness table.

Mr. Forbes: Pat Forbes, Louisiana Office of Community Development. It is at this point, the lock-in is \$252M, they revise that in March I think. If Casey Tingle is here, I think in March is when they look at it again and it's based on FEMA public assistance and individual assistance. A percentage of all those, so that number could go up or down, but right now the estimate is \$252M.

Casey Tingle approached the witness table.

Mr. Tingle: Talking like an expert. Casey Tingle with GOHSEP, Hazard Mitigation. Pat is correct, \$252M is the current estimate, FEMA will revise that at six months which would be February and we'll get an updated estimate. At that point in time they will give us the final number at 12 months, so in August for the August event we will know officially, that is the lock-in amount that the state is allocated. We've got \$252M estimated at thirty days, we'll get an updated estimate in February, the final estimate in twelve months.

Representative Hodges: Is that out of this current \$1.6B that we have allocated?

Mr. Tingle: No, it is in addition to.

Mr. Reilly: It's in addition to, this is dollars by right as a percentage of public assistance that happens with every disaster, and again I think that our task here, thinking about how to best deploy those dollars is to think in terms of community mitigation. It's somewhat analogous, like giving people the confidence in New Orleans that the levees would be rebuilt and would hold and you know we need to give people confidence that we're going to do everything we can to make the water go someplace else so that they can again rebuild with confidence. That would be my message to you, that all of the foot dragging and delays, and I happen to believe dysfunctionality resulted in things not getting done, but we can cut through that and we should have some dollars to get it done and that word needs to be spread because again confidence is important as people rebuild.

Representative Hodges: It really is. I have neighbors, none of my neighbors had flood insurance and they didn't need it, yet they got 3 to 4' of water in their houses as well and some of them are saying I don't even want to rebuild, we don't know what we are going to do, because unless there is a solid plan in place to get this done. Now, the legislative auditor did do a study that, in fact I have a task force for the Comite Diversion coming up next Friday, and the legislative auditor is going to present his finding on why the Comite Diversion Canal has not been built between all of the organizations and so I invite you guys to come to that because that would give people hope that we are actually going to put shovels in the ground and we are going to start working on this because there are a lot of promises for 17 years that have not been fulfilled and people have lost confidence in it.

Ms. Wyatt: When is the meeting?

Representative Hodges: It's next Friday at 10 o'clock at the Capitol.

Ms. Dupont: Friday the 27th?

Representative Hodges: It's Wednesday the 25th. My apologies.

Mr. Knapp: I want to build on Mr. Reilly's comments and commend you for bringing this issue up. The hazard mitigation dollars will require matching. I mean we can do everything in preparation for what Mr. Tingle talked about on August deadline, which is a known number of twelve months from disaster when those dollars can be drawn down and spent and we can begin giving the communities some preparation that on the day after we're at that twelve-month lock in that we could begin the project. If the dollars are available and the match is provided, you can give some certainty that, and that certainty is what is begged for. The match is not a small number either. Casey, can you enlighten on this but on \$252M I guess you are going to need about \$60M match to cover that obligation.

Mr. Tingle: The \$252M to get you to 75% we would have to come up with \$25M additional match.

Mr. Knapp: I think that number has been something that the infrastructure leaders of this task force have been looking at, but between now and then, working with the legislature which is available that can give some certainty of that can be resolved to know where those dollars are that the project has been planned, the dollars are known to be covered, the match is going to be covered, that the community can expect that that is able to be funded if that is a priority.

Representative Shadoin: While you are at the table, you had mentioned about referring back to the August flood, well in a galaxy far, far away, known as North Louisiana down here, we have the March flood and all of the comments that have been made in terms of displacement and the inconvenience, while not as many people were affected, I have some folks in Union Parish which have not yet moved back into their homes and if we are going on a year. Where do we stand on North Louisiana?

Mr. Tingle: As it relates to the hazard mitigation grant program, the Governor announced in December the allocation of those dollars, the state received \$26M in hazard mitigation funding for the March event. We allocated \$23M of that to the parishes.

Representative Shadoin: How much?

Mr. Tingle: \$23M of the \$26M.

Representative Shadoin: Thank you.

Mr. Tingle: We reserved \$3M in case the estimate comes back different at 12 months, as well as to talk to the state agencies about some projects, but of the \$23M that we allocated to the parishes, just as late as last week, we received feedback from all of them on the intended projects and the intended estimated cost estimates for those projects and we'll be working with them now on the actual applications to put those projects into FEMA's hands for approval.

Representative Shadoin: And this happened last week?

Mr. Tingle: Yes, sir.

Representative Shadoin: Thanks for the update, I appreciate it.

Mayor Tyler: Mr. Tingle, we received notice of those dollars but they were very insufficient to help us with the Red River that continues to flood people. We have had flooding three times in the past two years, and with those funds that we received, they do nothing for the Red River, so the hazard mitigation and our people are afraid every time it rains because the FEMA dollars we got for hazard mitigation was very insufficient to do anything for us, now we were able to submit plans with the dollars we received but they were not there to help us mitigate for flooding.

Mr. Tingle: I would say that your sentiments probably are shared by most of the parishes that were allocated. The unique thing about the March event was it covered such a broad geographic area of the state, basically all four corners of the state were declared, as well as certain other areas and geographically that created some challenges with a limited pot of money, that I think everyone would agree that it's insufficient to mitigate the risk that we have and so that's what we have now to work with while we continue to look at other things in terms of, even in our office, scrubbing some funding that was allocated in the past to try to figure out is there anything that we can free up. We're doing that to try to put every dollar that we can towards both either March or August.

Mayor Tyler: Thanks so much.

Mr. Faulk: Madam Chair, I just have a comment and an observation. I've learned a lot since I've sat on this task force, being involved in conference calls, and looking at information and it is really mind boggling to think of a process that is so cumbersome, that is so difficult for us to understand but what about the folks out there? The folks sitting in the audience here? You can look and you can see that there are people here who have their lives have been affected and changed and so I would just hope people would realize that as, I'm speaking as a task force members, as we move forward and we do things, folks a lot of us, except for those that have served on restoration projects before, are learning as we go and our intent is to do the best that we can for the people that we serve and represent with the information that we have available. I just want to say that.

Senator Dale Erney approached the witness table.

Ms. Wyatt: Mr. Erney. Sorry, Senator Erney, I looked up and you were there. Welcome.

Senator Erney: Thank you, members of the committee. I just want to say thank you the time and efforts that you have put in to helping the people, not only Livingston Parish, but other parishes that have been affected by this devastation. I also want to thank the Governor for his on-hands approach working with our parishes in order to get as much relief to us as possible. This is a daunting task, as everybody has said, and I know your job ahead is also one of the most difficult, but as I look around the committee members, I see some very capable minds to help us get through this difficult task. So, having said that, thank you so much and I appreciate the opportunity to come and address. I'll try to be brief because I know there's been a lot said this morning and you've got a lot on your agenda. First and foremost, I just want to say our heartfelt condolences and our thoughts and prayers go out to the members of the families that lost 13 people in this devastation, in this flood. They are unfortunate, we are here as survivors if you will of the event and it is our job to make sure that everyone else that survives gets through this process without pain and suffering as they have felt, so our prayers go out to them. I'm pleased that you folks have talked about the administration cost and trying to keep them down as low as possible because obviously, that frees up more dollars for the needy, for those that are in need of this. I'm not going to belabor a lot of things that were said, I think the rules that have been applied here in the first round of funds are mostly federal rules and that's coming down from, I think, HUD, that \$438M that we talked about initially, it's not so much your job in distribution but it's their rules. However, having said that, the \$1.2B that we are talking about here is certainly something that I hope you have major control of in directing where those funds go. You know, the parish president and I totally agree, I'm for helping the needy. I think that our job is to reach out to those who can't help themselves, for us to do what we can to make their lives better, but you must understand too that it's the working class, the middle class, that are basically carrying the pail of water here. They're the ones that actually pay taxes. They're the ones that are putting the money here, if you would in the

hands of the government. In order for us to be able to distribute accordingly, where you find the priorities to be and I hope that you will because you are a sign of hope for those that are out in the audience and those that are listening, I hope that you will consider in this next round, working class people who may have had insurance on their dwellings but didn't have it on their contents, so they are out there having to go and find resources in other places. Those who had no insurance at all but maybe because of their income brackets, they don't qualify for the round of funding. So, there is a lot of frustration out there that I'm hearing that although we are getting these dollars, a lot of people are not seeing the results and obviously, this disturbs me and people that we represent, small businesses as well. They employ people, everybody, middle income, the low income. They are there to create these jobs, they are suffering. So, we need to look at some benefits for them as well. I know President Ricks has mentioned something about the Livingston Parish School Board and I've got to say we have one of the finest school systems in the state, if not the nation, and I want to go back here for them simply because they provide the education of our children. That's the most important for our economy and the future of the state. The Central school system as well has been one of the top and I can't say enough about them. The school systems are hurting. FEMA has come to the table to help but there's an issue that you need to be aware of and pass the word on because I've already discussed this with the Governor, that during the Hurricane Katrina event, FEMA waived the deductible per building in respect to the flood insurance issue and they went to a per campus scenario. This helped tremendously to free up those FEMA dollars for the schools. So, having said that I want you to be aware of what took place in Hurricane Katrina and what we hope will take place for this flood event, that you will convey to whomever you have contact with that we need to address this, for our public schools, the deductibility issue on a per campus basis rather than a per building basis. I want to share one quick story with you if I may concerning mortgage companies because it ties in kind of what you are dealing with. It is ludicrous what the mortgage companies are requiring these people to go through and it's stated in their policy in writing. They are asking people to put, to take \$20,000 on a draw and telling them when you get 50% of the work done, come to us, we're going to get an inspection done and work on your next draw. Now I personally know situations where you've given the mortgage company \$150,000 of an insurance company check, made payable to the insured and the mortgagee. They put it in their bank, they get interest on it, they're given \$20,000 of that money and say come back when you get 50% of work done and its mind boggling to think that you're asking people to take \$20,000 to do \$75,000 worth of work. I mean this is written in their policy. I said there's no way to do this, the math just doesn't work. Give them the \$20,000 and give them an additional \$55,000 and they can make it work, but they are hoarding this money as if its theirs and it's not, it's a contract between the insured and an insurance company, not the mortgage, and any interest earned on that money, they're keeping and their bank goes to them. I've asked Congressman Graves if he would look at legislation in the future that says give them the interest earnings on all that money, put it in their bank, to the insurer, because it's their money. It's a policy that was issued to them by the insurance company, a contract if you will, between the insurance company and the insurer. And if that's the case they possibly would be hoarding this money like they are forcing these people to go out and get monies elsewhere. And that's where you come to benefit or you can come in and say okay look we understand the dilemma you are in, even though you have insurance, we want to help. So, I want to share that experience with you because it's certainly valid and what you're planning on doing in the next of minutes ahead. And lastly, I just want to say, Representative Hodges hit on it, and I want to speak a little bit about it too. I was there in the very beginning when the locals passed the tax for the Comite River Diversion, mayor you remember, we campaigned hard, if you will, to get that tax passed on the local level because Governor Foster at the time said the state's not going to get involved in financing this kind of project unless the locals get under the table and pony up their part. Well, they did and 17 years later we are still, although they are paying their taxes every year, we're still waiting. We're still waiting and folks I'm here to tell you, I think that the waiting game is over. It has to be done to avoid what we've seen happen over the last several months and in August. So, the Comite River Diversion project, again, it may not be under your purview to look at this today but by all means I think you have some influence just by the very nature of the minds and the quality of capable characters here that I see. You guys can do the job in that respect, so pass that on as well and again thank you for the time you spend here. Welcome to Livingston Parish. I hope you will look at all of this in a much better light, even though we can complain, I'm not going to use the B word but anyway the point being is that we do have some issues and we are frustrated and we want to see that the dollars spent to everybody that has a problem and there are many.

Ms. Wyatt opened the floor for questions.

Mr. Jetson: When you were referencing the situation with the mortgage companies and the irrational approach of use of the money, you said that there was language in the contract and obviously not in the policy and I was not clear, it was in your opinion that the language actually allowed what they were doing or it did not allow what they were doing.

Representative Erney: The only thing that the policy dictates is that the check will be made payable to the insurer and each company, but the insurer is the one that pays the premium, hired the insurance company if you will, to pay the claim to the

insurer, so half of the checks are coming out payable to the insured, just so happens that the checks come in payable to the insured and the mortgage company, as required by the mortgage when they say you have to go out and get insurance.

Mr. Jetson: Thank you for making that clear, and just to your comments and Representative Hodges comments about the reservoir and the Diversion Canal, I shared with Representative James and Mr. Knapp that those were issues that we spoke of when I served in the legislature and I left the legislature in 1999, so these are not new issues and Representative Hodges tapped it very clearly, it's a matter of political will to actually do the things that need to be done but even in the late 1980s when we were wrestling with some of these issues, there was not the political will to make the difficult decisions to do the things necessary to make these projects real and meaningful for people.

Representative Erney: I certainly appreciate that. I see some capable minds here that can help us get onboard and get the reel rolling on that project and those other flood mitigation projects as well.

Ms. Wyatt closed the floor for questions.

VI. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE UPDATE

~ Julie Baxter Payer, Deputy Chief of Staff, Communications/Legal/Special Projects

Ms. Payer: Good Morning, I'm Julie Baxter Payer, Deputy Chief of Staff for the Governor and I want to address a number of the questions that have come up and Pat will also address that more fully. You know as we've been discussing individually with each of you some of these proposals so that you can understand those as we came today with the proposals that we hear you. We hear the people around the state. We hear Livingston Parish. The Governor was here on the ground during the days of the flooding itself here in your emergency operation center where he talked and heard specific emergency requests for people that he acted upon for a group of extremely dedicated parish and state employees who were working to save this parish while their own homes were flooding. We were here, I was here, Aaron was here, we were here in the immediate aftermath and have not ever forgotten about Livingston Parish. I've been here many times since, many of his staff, as we work every single day and many nights acting as quickly as we can to bring this money home. We hear you on the Comite. We hear you on the waiver request from the 70% LMI down to 50%. We hear you on the reimbursement. You will hear about those things today, they're already in the proposed plan that's coming to you, the task force from the Office of Community Development who has worked tirelessly on the first plan and now on the second plan. We hear you on the per campus deductibility question that we know is a problem for schools and other sort of facilities that are in the parish, we are already working with our congressional delegation to try to address that question. We know it's extremely damaging for schools when they have to deal with that, we're trying to see what we can do to address that. A lot of the problems, as you've heard over and over today, are with the federal process. We would urge the people frustrated with federal process, which I haven't met anyone who's thinks it's too fast, so we would urge you to help us to go and work with the congressional delegation from Louisiana, to work with the rest of Congress to fix, that there should be a better way for the federal government to distribute disaster dollars after disasters. It happens across the country. We are moving quicker than any other state has moved in any disaster, and yet we are still not fast enough for the pace we would like to see the dollars come home. Make no mistake about it, the 2016 floods were and remain a statewide disaster. 56 of 64 parishes received federal disaster declarations from the March and August floods and 193,000 families applied for assistance, but if there are 3 or 4 parishes that we would call an epicenter for the extent of the damage that those parishes suffered, Livingston Parish is certainly one of those parishes. Livingston Parish is one of the 10 most impacted parishes now, thanks to the work of the Office of Community Development, the Governor's office, according to the federal government in the HUD plan. HUD has declared Livingston one of the ten most impacted parishes that together must, under the federal regulations, receive 80% of the dollars coming from federal assistance that the governor is bringing home. So, you can rest assured that the amount of dollars that will come into Livingston Parish will be proportionate to your damage. We will be taking applications, I fully expect we will have a very large number in proportion to other parishes applications from homeowners and renters and businesses who need help when we open up this program coming from Livingston Parish and they will be served. We are estimating more than \$8B in economic impact as a result, when it's all said and done for these two floods the Governor is asking for \$3.7B in federal assistance. So far, as you know, we have \$1.6B. That is not enough. It sounds like a lot of money, it's not enough to serve all of these 193,000 families, the businesses, we believe there's more than 6,000 businesses that have been impacted, the parishes, the local communities that all need help to recover. But we hope through the extremely dedicated efforts of our state employees and this task force and the governor's office and many, many people across Louisiana to shorten that time line from the state side as quickly as possible. We need your help, I say it again, from the people here in Livingston Parish, around the state, to call on Congress and ask them to help in the governor's and the congressional delegations endeavor to bring home the remaining \$2B that we request. I want to tell you and the folks that are watching out there where we are today. We know that 10,627 family's homes were completed so that they could take

the next step. Not all the way rebuilt but to take the next step in their rebuilding through the Shelter at Home program. That's more than 32,000 people in those families who have a chance to leave FEMA funded hotels and rebuild from their own site. We talk about the FEMA funded hotels, that's the Transitional Sheltering Assistance Program through FEMA. We continue as of today to have 1,093 families who are living in FEMA funded hotels. We had 11,000 people in shelters at the peak time as you know after the flood. TSA. through your task force request and the governor's office efforts. was just extended through February ninth, I believe is the extension. So, that's extended and we are probably going to ask for an additional extension but I want you to know that there is a very unique team of people including state employees, housing experts, FEMA recovery counselors that are now going family by family through those families that are still staying in FEMA funded hotels to work on solutions. As you know, this is a population that there are not a lot of options, there are not a lot of means. And so this is going to be like we had to make a concentrated effort at the end of the shelters remember the last shelter was Celtic in Baton Rouge and we had to go family by family around the clock working on how can we find a housing solution. We are doing that now with the folks that are staying in FEMA funded hotels so that we can get specific information on where they live, where they can work, where we can find a housing solution, so that they can work and continue to do that. Manufactured housing units. I know that's a frustrating topic. This is a FEMA program that has frustrated the Governor in its lack of speed, in the stories of its cost. It's frustrated many people in this parish particularly we know right now. You should know that we have 3,379 families that FEMA has leased in and who are living in one of these manufactured housing units in the wake of these floods. We have more than 2,000 more manufactured housing units that are coming in and that FEMA says will be set up, families living in them hopefully before the end of Feb. I want to also report to you, jobs, we heard this morning, jobs are very, very important. We know that the Governor's Workforce Commission this month announced an additional \$3.2M in a federal grant called the National Dislocated Worker Grant Money. This means that a total of \$4.2M has come down from the U.S. Department of Labor that the Governor is directly using to hire Louisiana citizens that are hit hardest by the floods in temporary jobs in the cleanup and the recovery work and also to help train and re-employ laid off workers as quickly as possible by offering training to increase their job skills and I want to say to anyone who's here or who's watching in Livingston Parish, 47 workers have been hired, we'd like to hire more. Totalling more than 260 have been hired so far and we're continuing to take applications, if you are someone who would like to work in the recovery and the cleanup efforts under this grant you can go to www.laworks.net and you can click on the disaster work program and that is a way that you can put in your application to try to receive one of these jobs, it's www.laworks.net. Now as you on the taskforce consider this second federally required plan today that the Office of Community Development is proposing to you for this \$1.2B that was appropriated in December, the guidelines to write that plan were just published on Wednesday, working ahead we are continuing to beat just about every previous timeline in this federal process that often frustrates us too in its length. We know it is not fast enough for homeowners, we are asking for your help there too as we work with Congress to act to reform and speed up the federal process to make it move more quickly for the sake of disaster survivors across the country. There has been no delay at any point on the state side, there has been no stopping in our office night and day to work and bring this federal money home and to get it directly into the homes of Livingston Parish and the other 55 parishes that are affected by these floods. The Governor will be going back to DC in just a couple of weeks, along with several staff members in our office, and he will be having some meetings there. I want to tell you in addition to the per campus deductibility question that we're working on with Congress, you should know that he's also requesting \$125M for the Comite Diversion Canal. That has always been in his request to the federal government, that is in addition to the HMGP dollars that were discussed here today. I had a conversation earlier this week, several conversations, with the secretary of DOTD, who's a member of your task force, and there is no delay at the local level. They are ready when the federal money comes down to begin work and so that was also put in the response to the Legislative Auditor when he was looking to see where the delays in those processes and so you should know that the Governor has instructed that there be no delay from the state side or from the local side when it comes to stepping up and finishing that project. That is a desire of the Governor and I wanted you to know to that part that \$125M is being asked for the Comite Diversion, there's also \$600M that the Governor is asking for just what Representative Hodges was talking about. How do I want to move back home if I'm not sure if we're going to have a community or region wide approach to making my community safer so that we don't have to go house by house and talk about elevations every time we have one of these disasters and so the governor is asking for \$600M, that's part of the \$3.7B that we keep talking to you about, and that is for infrastructure, what they call resiliency building back on a region wide approach. We're going to be smarter going forward in Louisiana, we hope to be, and we're going to do our very best to. We know that we can't just have everybody planning in a silo right, we need to be looking at it on a region wide basis. So, I want to hit just a minute the legislative question, we can talk about it more but I just the question that came up about legislative appropriation. That does not replace the task that we need you here to do today. I just want to say this for information for the whole task force. The legislative appropriate creation process approves line items or amounts in a budget and the budget that we're talking about is the state budget bill, HB1. And so, what I am going to plead for is that first of all that's not part of the HUD process. The HUD comes to the state in this timeline that's marching forward since the flood that we have to move as quickly as possible. The HUD comes to the state and says give

us a plan and so that's why we have people who come from all of the cities and the parishes and everybody that was affected to have the eyes and ears on the plan. Coupled with the experience that the Office of Community Development has in working with the regulatory functions and the other agencies, the federal government, to write the plan in the very cumbersome and difficult way that you sometimes have to write to bring home these federal dollars, so we would urge that on this very important day in our national history it doesn't matter what party you are, it doesn't matter if you're federal, if your state, if you're local, that at every step of the process we not have any one of us delay it. None of us, when we come together as a state and when the dollars come through and we need the next lot of money appropriated we are going to ask the legislature not to be any part of a delay. We're going to ask the legislature to work with us and to move forward as quickly as possible to continue to approve the amounts. So, that the plan that you develop, God willing that HUD approves it, can go forward and continue to help more people. I'll just finish up with letting you know the governor's meetings coming up in DC. He'll be working through what it takes to urge members of Congress and the approach on the appropriations and the finance committees in the both the U.S. Senate and the House and in the federal agencies to personally push for moving for a third appropriation hopefully sometime later this spring to bring home the additional \$2B so that we can help more homeowners, more renters, more businesses, and I think on this day when we're about to watch President-elect Trump take the oath of office, know that as Governor Edwards several weeks back that met personally here with Mr. Trump. The president-elect expressed to the governor that he loved Louisiana. He had been here after the floods and that he wanted to help. So we are committed. We ask all of our partners in the legislature, here on the task force, in all these communities to work together with the new administration and we believe that they will work to finish this job and we hope that the new Congress will work to help this state to bring home its additional \$2B that we need so we can help the many more homeowners that we want to help. Two important points I leave you with, there will be a request for a waiver in this new plan as you're going to hear Pat talk about and there will be reimbursement. It is not enough reimbursement. When I say reimbursement, I'm talking about for the go getters that went out and rebuilt their houses as quickly as they could and I'm talking about people like in the South Point Subdivision, I was here a little bit early today and I was talking with someone who lives in the South Point subdivision, I understand that 650 homes not in a flood plain and most of them flooded, almost no one had flood insurance. Those are the kinds of people that the governor recognizes we want to get some sort of reimbursement to you. You're tired of hearing me say this, we do not have enough money to give the level of reimbursement that we want to but you will hear Pat talk about the money that we want to put towards reimbursement. We recognize the leadership role that people who are able to somehow scrape together savings and retirement accounts and family money to somehow get ahead. The leadership role that they play in communities so I just want to deploy that out to you this flood recovery, amidst an extremely difficult budget recovery time that we're in our state, as well as we work to stabilize our state budget remains foremost in our minds and in our actions every single day in the governor's office. We are rebuilding with you as we move forward. We honor the families of Livingston Parish and we are here to help in any way that we can. Thank you.

Ms. Wyatt opened the floor for questions.

Representative Pope: A comment and a question, or two or three dealing with the Shelter at Home, dealing with the manufactured homes, and dealing with schools. Those are the three topics I want to touch on. Before I do that, let me just say, Julie, I really appreciate your report today. I think you have done an admiral job. It's a really, really good report for me and I hope for the people that are listening, it's very inclusive and I appreciate the fact that you, as a representative of the Governor and what the Governor's office has done, we've said that repetitively and we'll continue to do that, we think that it's an admiral job above and beyond, quite frankly, I don't think anybody could have done much better. I do want to talk about Shelter at Home. Is that program, and you have the direct link with FEMA, we don't, you understand? Is that program still intact or is that something that has gone sort of by the wayside?

Ms. Payer: No, it hasn't gone by the wayside, it's mostly completed. We have 10,600 families that has been completed. I think there's about 200 still in construction and those are the cases that there's been some hits in terms of, and I'm not a mechanical person but, all the repairs that need to be made. So I think that those are the difficult houses that we are working through that respect, but it is mostly wrapped up.

Representative Pope: Has the office or your office or FEMA office back to your office had any issues with the way that program has been administered? I've heard a lot of complaints about it.

Ms. Payer: Well, the Governor is very concerned about the fact that the constraints that FEMA puts on emergency dollars, that's why we have to bring home these CDBG dollars, the Community Development Block Grant dollars, as they can be used for the longer-term repairs. The Governor wanted to do sheetrock in the house. The Governor wanted to do walls and we ran into a block there, so we did as much as we could for the homeowners.

Representative Pope: So, would you, my opinion and I'm asking what your opinion, would you be willing to say that may be a waste of, some waste, of money because we go in and put a 2x2 block of sheet rock over an outlet or we can't do the things, we can't use any of this in the construction after the fact.

Ms. Payer: I can't at all say that the program was ever a waste of money because I've had too many people call me and thank the Governor for the ability to get back out of a shelter, out of a friend's house and into their home. I can tell you that I know that we want to improve it. I think a lot of states are looking at us to try to use that. I think that we took a program that had had a lot of problems and tweaked it and made it more Louisiana and rolled it out. I think next time we'll be able to roll it out more quickly. I think that other states can learn from us but just know that the governor's directive was bring communities back together as quickly as possible and this was one option that was a way for families to come home to their own homes and the governor just knew the importance of that. We would like it to roll out smoother next time and we're working to do that.

Representative Pope: We hope there's not a next time.

Ms. Payer: Correct.

Representative Pope: And I'm questioning it and then I'm going to manufactured homes and I'll preface that it goes back to my tirade earlier today and it all ties back in on how our people feel that's totally, anyway, manufactured homes. How many did you say that we have out? 3,000 or somewhere in that neighborhood?

Ms. Payer: Currently, the latest numbers I saw, which I think were from yesterday, is 3,379 families that FEMA has leased in and they are living in those manufactured homes.

Representative Pope: And that is statewide?

Ms. Payer: I believe so.

Representative Pope: Have we had any issues with the delivery of that? I have, I am going to tell you straight up.

Ms. Payer: The Governor has publicly said it's too slow and we have been in repeated contact with all of the different levels of FEMA saying we have got to speed this up. The Governor recognizes that it's the way it's being done right now, it is a rather expensive option.

Representative Pope: That's my next question.

Ms. Payer: That is FEMA's options but for some parishes like Livingston Parish and others it is the only option for some people because of the lack of affordable rentals and other things that are available, so we understand.

Representative Pope: Well, it goes back to the cost and from what I've read in the papers and other issues some where they were in the neighborhood of \$134,000 depending on what number you look at to put these things on site in an individual person's backyard, front yard or some other place you know you ride down the road you see two in some yards, you see people who can't get one for whatever reasons, I don't understand. I'm working with two individuals right now that have been working since October and they still don't have one but we are working through that, I don't know why it can't happen. I see somebody that makes a call two weeks from now, they'll get one tomorrow but they'll sit there for a month before they even operable or are livable. Let me say that, they're not livable, and that goes back to the contractors. Who absolutely solicits or gets these contractors to put these people, all of these manufactured homes on site?

Ms. Payer: I can tell you that that's run through FEMA and we do have a representative here from GOHSEP here that can touch on that if you like, Mark Riley if he is here, he can talk about who does that through FEMA, selects the contractor.

Representative Pope: I don't want to pick on him, that's good. It goes back and it ties in. We see that \$130,000 you're going there for an 18-month period, they're going to have to be moved after 18-months. There's a 90-day window that they come in and then they see in the 90 days you're supposed to be working on your dwelling to get back in hopefully that continues, we feel like that needs to continue but then we also know there's going to be a cost to remove it. There's going to be a cost to store it. So, those are the things the people that I represent, and it's me as an individual who's gone through this, say well look, it costs \$100,000, \$130,000 just, and I know you can't do this, I mean it's common sense, common sense doesn't work in the world that we live in, but just give me half of that \$130,000, I will fix my (explicative) home and get it up and running. Now when they get through, they got a manufactured home in their yard, it's there, and they still have a house they have to fix, makes no sense to me and I know it's not your problem, you just got to listen to me rant, I understand that. It's not a problem the people can understand and I think it needs to be pointed out that it's not just this community, it's not what the Governor's office is doing, or Pat Forbes' office is doing or anything else, I'm not holding you all accountable for this, I'm just saying that the process is flawed and I don't know how to stop it. I don't know if anybody knows how to solve it. People on my street come to Representative Pope, you are representing me, what in the world is going on, I have this trailer, can't get it hooked up number one, when I do it's \$140,000, when it is going to take me \$70,000 to get my house back in order and I can't do that because for whatever reason we talked about already and I'm not going to rehash those because we can't do all the other stuff with loans and insurance and that kind of thing.

Mark Riley approached the witness table.

Ms. Payer: Yes, the question was who selects the contractors to set up the MHUs.

Mr. Riley: There are two general contractors. One is a contractor to the Army Corps of Engineers and one of them is a contractor to the General Services Accounting Office, and those general contractors pick the subcontractors that actually move and install the trailers.

Representative Pope: As well as the contractors for the Shelter at Home?

Mr. Riley: That's an entirely different

Representative Pope: Well, let's talk about that because I will give you one example, she worked for me, she had Shelter at Home and they came in and supposedly what's the number \$15,000, max?

Mr. Riley: Yes, sir.

Representative Pope: They probably, and I'm not a real expert but I've done enough construction work to know that I could go in there for \$3000 and done what they were and probably charge someone \$15,000. It's probably not functional and she never used it because she was in the process of going ahead and trying to rebuild her home. See, those are the things that I'm hearing, that to me is a total waste of money and I don't know if that's a contractor or what but that's another story but I do understand that you've got two contractors for the manufactured homes, general contractors, and then I assume they subcontract, is that correct?

Mr. Riley: That's correct.

Representative Pope: And you have multiple subcontractors?

Mr. Riley: Yes, sir.

Representative Pope: And they are the ones actually doing the ground work, right?

Mr. Riley: Right. Well, everything from plumbing to electrical to carpentry.

Representative Pope: Different crafts to do different work.

Mr. Riley: Right.

Ms. Payer: Representative I just want to add in response that while it is not our faults that the federal process is as long and cumbersome as it is, we are never the less trying to really specifically work on it so, any information that you have in addition to working with any individual cases that you want us to work on, we do it every day, I'm happy to do it and help with anything you're working through but also gathering the specific information for the hurdles that are stopping Louisiana people or slowing us down in any way and taking that up to Congress and to the federal agencies and saying this has got to be fixed so we are taking note of this and we hear you.

Representative Pope: I've been reluctant to call your office or anybody else because my experience with FEMA has not been real good. Let's talk about schools. Where is you all's position on what the recommendation is going to be this morning with the \$105M out of this \$1.2B going for the local schools to get back into that 10% match?

Ms. Payer: What we did for that, and Pat will speak more to this in a minute, but what we

Representative Pope: I want to hear from you. I've heard it from Pat and I like what he said but I want to hear it from you.

Ms. Payer: Well, back me up Pat. The \$105M amount comes from, we gathered what the total local match request was that was coming from all the local agencies, including schools, and so that should cover the match required from the schools that they have made the request to FEMA for and our intent is to cover the entire match that is needed to come from parishes and locals for both the March and the August flooding.

Representative Pope: My question is do you think that's enough money to cover all the requests that you are going to get? I think Pat is shaking his head yes and I got that answer from him the other day which was affirmative and I appreciate that.

Ms. Payer: You're correct.

Representative Pope: Okay. So, my superintendent of schools is here and he wanted to speak after while I think in the closing comments but I want him to understand that you just heard it from what I think is pretty reliable sources that there should be, if in fact this resolution was passed, there should be some monies coming back to help folks at that 10%.

Mr. Forbes: I need to add a little bit answer to this question, the money we have set aside right now covers the match for what we will propose to you shortly. It covers the match for the FEMA public assistance, it does not address that flood insurance deductible issue that was brought up earlier.

Representative Pope: That \$500,000 per building as opposed to \$500,000 per school, that is going to be huge if that doesn't get resolved, and I'll just give one example, Denham Springs High School over here is going to have multiple, I mean 20+ buildings and you are talking about a \$2-\$3M cost or more, he will speak to that shortly but we're talking about a substantial amount of money just for their part.

Mr. Riley: We had the same issue in Katrina and was able to get legislation that limited the deduction to one building per campus and I've sent that letter, that language, to DC to see if we could get some support on it and I understand that there will be some legislative activity in about the April time frame, the House Transportation Committee is going to generate some amendments to the Stafford Act and we could include this, and we have encouraged them to include this so we get that same sort of relief.

Representative Pope: I appreciate that, thank you for that. I've had enough, I won't ask another question.

Ms. Wyatt: I somehow do not believe that.

Mayor-President Robideaux: Julie, just real quick, do the \$125M that you brought up that the Governor asked for for the Amite or the Comite Diversion project, is that eligible to be there as matching money for the hazardous mitigation dollars?

Ms. Payer: No, it is in addition to.

Mayor-President Robideaux: I know but can you use it for the matching portion?

Ms. Payer: I don't know the answer to that but I can find that out for you.

Mayor-President Robideaux: I mean we don't have it, so I'm assuming that if he's successful in securing that funding it would be important to know if it is eligible for the match.

Mr. Riley: Actually, we are going to put together a panel between HUD and FEMA to discuss that issue. The knee jerk from FEMA is if it is going to be other federal money, CDBG is an exception, that it can't be used as match but we're going to try to talk them through that.

Mr. Tingle: I would agree, it would depend on the source of the funding and the requirements tied to that source of the funding, typically CDBG funding is allowed to lose its federal identity when it comes to the state, there may be other funding sources like that but typically something that is just appropriated to the Army Corps of Engineers for example would not be allowable as match.

Mayor-President Robideaux: So, the point then is, Julie, if you could we need to be very careful in how we craft that request so that we might be able to actually leverage those mitigation dollars in a way that we wouldn't be able to otherwise.

Mr. Bradberry: I would like a little more clarity around the legislative oversight relative to the plan that we're putting together. Indeed, can the legislature change the plan? I think the question was made by one of the task force members here, what are we doing here if that is the case, can we provide a little more clarity on what we mean here? No offense to all the fine legislators that are here today and that represent the state but you know you are talking about another layer of discussion, debate, whatever you want to call it. We don't need that, basically.

Mr. Forbes: I can describe for you the process through which we spend money on an ongoing basis for Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike, Isaac, and that is that each year in the House Bill 1, the spending budget bill for the whole state, there is a line item that says \$4.7B or \$350M Office of Community Development Disaster Recovery spending, that's the legislative oversight is the approval of HB1 in our budget. If in fact we wind up spending more or needing to spend more than the \$350M that is in HB1 when we put it in in June, then we do have to go back and ask for a BA7, a budget adjustment, which bumps that amount up, obviously that doesn't impact the state fiscal because federal funds are drawn down but the funds that we spend pass through the budget process in that way. That's the legislative oversight.

Mr. Bradberry: But the fundamentals of the plan that we put together, the formulas that we used, can that be changed?

Mr. Forbes: It is not part of the process, it is a single line item that the legislature approves in HB1. They could reject it, I suppose.

Mr. Bradberry: I just want to make a comment on the Comite River Diversion, the \$125M like Representative Hodges stated, \$225M, I'm not quite sure and understand where that number came from but I have a pretty high level of confidence that we can get a project almost completed with \$125M. Hopefully we don't have to get it through the hazard mitigation money and use that money for that because just as important is the \$600M the Governor is asking for around how we look at flood control in these parishes and the flood basin and that's critical for us to do so we need to understand that \$125M are separate from the \$252M hazard mitigation and if we get both, that's great and we can get this project done within two years in my opinion and I've talked to the Corps about it, I've talked to DOTD about it, we are involved with it and I want to give the people a level of confidence that we can indeed do that.

Mr. Dartez: Thank you, Madam Chair. Julie, you talked about the Governor is going back to DC, I know we are right at \$2.1B short of what we really need. We've talked in the past about our allocation now was part of some of the funding process for Hurricane Matthew as well. Did they get everything? I guess what I'm asking is if we go back for our ask is Hurricane Matthew funding going to be a part of that as well because strength in numbers we talked about, it helps.

Mr. Forbes: That is certainly the case. This last appropriation we got included Matthew states and we know of at least two Matthew states that are certain that they don't have enough recovery funds and are planning to go back. We do indeed have allies in Congress who are seeking the same sorts of relief that we are.

Mr. Dartez: I want the audience to understand, we not asking for money for the East Coast but our allocations could be part of their ask as well. So, we believe in our congressional delegation, that we have strength in numbers and local governments are going to be fully behind the Governor and his second and his third or fourth ask, whatever this number is, but the reality is we're working with associations like parishes and cities and those other states to make sure that their ask is part of ours and vice versa. That way we get their full support in Congress to get that money for Louisiana.

Mayor Norris: Going back to Mr. Bradberry's question about the process in the legislation and HB1 and all of that, when the comments were made about this there was one reference to the fact that somebody is asking for an attorney general's opinion but he didn't say what it was an opinion about. Are we expecting that there ought to be an attorney general's opinion about whether or not this process is the proper process?

Ms. Payer: I'll just say that there was no request from the Governor's Office for an attorney general's opinion and I would just urge that the only thing, other than approving the line item in the legislative process, that any sort of delay in the process is just so counterproductive to the purpose of trying to get the money out to the people. So, I would hope that either through requests for opinions or trying to slow down the process in any manner during the legislative process that we just wouldn't see that happen. And we're happy to answer any questions on it. We're absolutely following the legislative process at every step. We've talked about it with everybody who's asked us about it and made sure and double checked and triple checked and everything is the way the normal legislative process works.

Mayor Tyler: Is there opportunity for the Governor to ask for additional hazard mitigation dollars for the Northwest Louisiana? I'm still concerned that we're going to continue to flood, the hundred-year flood is going to come back, probably in the next few years and we just have not gotten the responses, nor any solutions to our problem.

Ms. Payer: I'll answer your question with if there is any opportunity for the Governor to ask for additional hazard mitigation dollars

Mayor Tyler: For Northwest Louisiana.

Ms. Payer: For Northwest Louisiana, the Governor would be happy to do that. The Governor knows that our needs remain unmet, but in terms of the process I'll let Casey.

Mr. Tingle: The way the funding is calculated is said in statute and FEMA follows that process, I would say the caveat to that is that we will get the final number in March. There is the possibility that number exceeds the current estimate. There's also the possibility that number is less than the current estimate which is why we reserved the \$3M as a cushion so we didn't have to go back out to anybody and adjust what's already been allocated. In terms of the actual federal dollars that come through hazard mitigation program, certainly there are some legislative things that could be done but in terms of policy or something like that that we could ask for a waiver on I don't believe there is anything that would increase the cap. We could request that the cost share be adjusted, I'm just not aware that there have been any success with something like that in terms of reducing the 25% cost share to something less than that and I don't know what the likelihood of that outcome would be, so in terms of the hazard mitigation grant program it's determined by the public assistance cost estimates for the PA damage, individual assistance and then whatever mission assignments FEMA has, it's just simply a formula that they follow based upon those numbers. Those numbers are somewhat fluid which is why the twelve-month time frame. We'll get an updated estimate and there is the possibility that that would increase based upon that.

Ms. Payer: And just know, that's the importance of the Governor making this request for the \$600M in infrastructure because that is where additional dollars would go into the various parts of the state to try to build up the resiliency of that state and in addition to the HMGP dollars.

Ms. Wyatt closed the floor for questions.

VII. LOUISIANA OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

~ Patrick Forbes, Executive Director

Mr. Forbes: Good morning. Sorry, I'm going to revert back to my previous characteristic of having a long presentation.

Ms. Wyatt: Having a what, long presentation cut down?

Mr. Forbes: A long presentation.

Ms. Wyatt: That's in tab 3 for the task force members, correct?

Ms. Dupont: Yes, tab 3.

Mr. Forbes began his PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint can be found on <http://restore.la.gov/> website.

Ms. Wyatt left the floor open for questions during Mr. Forbes' presentation.

The series of questions below were asked during and after Mr. Forbes' presentation.

Mayor Norris: I apologize Madam Chair for just blurting out a question. When you say, they are going to come and audit you in a year, what is your estimate of how many years it is going to take to actually spend this money?

Mr. Forbes: We have a maximum, by definition in the Federal Register Notice, we have a maximum of six years to spend the money.

Mayor Norris: So, this is the six-year expenditure total?

Mr. Forbes: That is correct. That's over the entire lifetime of the programs through close out of the programs.

Mr. Bradberry: Is nine months the maximum allowed to request for an extension?

Mr. Forbes: No, we could ask for a year, we could certainly ask for a year, that's just our estimate of getting the programs stood up, all those things, a year makes just as much sense as nine months.

Mr. Bradberry: Is that a safety factor in that, based on your estimate?

Mr. Forbes: I'll feel better about the year. I also believe that we would be at the liberty to go back and ask for an additional extension should the nine months not be enough.

Representative Pope: I'm going to ask another question. Tell Joel to go back to Lafayette. Your budget, I think it's number 3 there, your bullet point, you deducted FEMA and SBA. I get FEMA but why SBA, because that's a loan that an individual has made and it's going to have to be paid back at some point and time, is that correct?

Mr. Forbes: Yes, sir. While you and I recognize that there's a dramatic difference between those two, federal regulations do not. Federal regulations consider an SBA loan a duplication of federal benefits, just the same as if it were a grant.

Representative Pope: I don't like the answer but that's a good answer. Thank you.

Mr. Bradberry: Pat, how large is that group, that fourth bullet? The homeowners unable to complete construction of their homes because they cannot find a gap.

Mr. Forbes: Well, about 30% of the people, when I get to this next page and show you the proposal, about 30% of the people to whom we will be giving grants will only be getting 50%, being offered 50%, of what we know to be their award amount. So, how many of that group are actually not able to go find the funds, we don't know yet. We will be obviously watching that very closely because that is the single biggest opportunity for program failure, if a great number of those folks do not get back in their homes.

Mr. Bradberry: A gut feeling? Any idea how large that might be?

Mr. Forbes: No, sir, I really don't. I will say that understanding how critical that is to the recovery is extremely important to us to make sure that we have all the lending institutions, nonprofit lending institutions, nonprofit rebuilding programs, we have been having extensive conversations with HUD about how to manage that gap, ways that we can be creative that we can get people back in a home somehow that is at least decent, safe and sanitary, if not everything that they might have wanted so that we can get as many people back in their homes as possible but at this point I do not have an estimate, no sir.

Mr. Bradberry: Thank you.

Mr. Reilly: Pat, I'm assuming that the congressional delegation is working on that environmental legislative solution that we need. Is there a number one, precedent, and a number two, can you handicap it for us? Do we have any sense of that?

Mr. Forbes: We have provided them draft language for the next appropriation to include, to make it as likely as possible that it could be approved. We restrict the request to only rehabilitation of single family dwellings so that it can give Congress some comfort that we're not throwing the entire ERR process, I'm sorry that's environmental review record process, out the window. Precedent, they have always included that language in my experience, since Katrina Rita, which is my first involvement, they have always excluded environmental from the things that the secretary may waive. I don't know whether that means it's impossible. I don't think it's impossible. I think there's a decent chance in the way that we've worded the thing and I hope the outrage Congress people may feel when they recognize that we're spending \$1.7M to do environmental on putting sheetrock back in houses that we could get a favorable review of that.

Mr. Reilly: It's not just the \$107M, I would think that if you get rid of the environmental reviews that the \$191M probably goes down as well.

Mr. Forbes: The \$191M could potentially go down. There is some work in there relative to environmental.

Mr. Reilly: Who is the point in the delegation?

Mr. Forbes: The Governor has been working with the entire delegation. He has regular calls and meetings with them and I don't know if I would say that anybody is the lead on that particular piece.

Mr. Reilly: We should probably get someone to now.

Representative Shadoin: Pat, help me with a little confusion here. You just testified on the program delivery, that calculates out to 15%, is that what I heard?

Mr. Forbes: Yes, sir.

Representative Shadoin: Because sometimes I don't hear things right, but yet in the recommendation that I see is coming, we have an administrative fee of 4%. 4, 15, somewhere, what are we dealing with?

Mr. Forbes: I'm sorry, these terms are not interchangeable. If you look back to the budget, let me go back here, you can see our program totals are inclusive of program delivery expenses, the 4% is essentially the state and local governments administration of the grant. The program delivery costs, which are the 15%, is the work of turning federal funds into a rebuilt house with the requisite paperwork and documentation so that we don't have to pay the money back.

Representative Shadoin: So, 15% plus up to 4%, so one out of every dollar, one out of every five dollars that people need are going to programs?

Mr. Forbes: Close to that.

Representative Shadoin: I had mentioned some time ago that, and I appreciate the perseverance and the tenacity that all of you have shown, but dealing with all of these regulations that seem to be more concerned about putting programs ahead of people would drive me nuts, and so again, we are looking to you all to try to find the right pair of scissors to cut through all this red tape.

Mr. Forbes: Yes, sir.

Representative Shadoin: I do appreciate your work.

Mr. Forbes: It is a lot of money and we recognize that, it is also, if we do it for that, it would be at levels that are well below the average, if not the lowest that anybody has done that I know of.

Representative Shadoin: Is that an average across the states?

Mr. Forbes: For other disasters and yes sir.

Mr. Knapp: I was going to ask on the environmental waiver, if Paul Sawyer could join us and share a little bit about Congressmen Graves' or the congressional delegation members who are otherwise present could share any efforts to try to get this item waived. I think there is a serious concern about this specific item in the urgency of trying to get this done. I want to be sensitive to time though, I know we've had a long day already and I want to make sure we get to the vote item that is pressing but at the appropriate time I think it would be useful to hear how congressional delegation is going to try to push for that waiver.

Ms. Wyatt: We can do that, but to your point we've got three resolutions that we need to get to and we don't want to lose a quorum.

Mayor Norris: What about LMI?

Mr. Forbes: Sorry, I should add that to this presentation. This is probably in the 65% range. Good question, I should have had that in the presentation.

Mayor Norris: I thought about it and you and I have talked about this, it's going to be so disturbing for somebody to apply and because of the size of the gap be told you get nothing. You can't participate in programs because you can't fund the gap. The gap is a function of that scope of work and the amount of money that is in the program, that is where the gap comes from. I'm just wondering about the scope of work, is the scope going to be redone as people apply for this program now or is it the scope of work that was estimated when they originally made an application?

Mr. Forbes: If somebody has started working on their house and are not finished, we actually have two. First, we have to establish what their total need was so we can establish what the reimbursement portion might be from before we got there. Then, we've got to have a scope of work that would be the prospective award amount.

Mayor Norris: From there to there.

Mr. Forbes: Right.

Mayor Norris: It just seems like if the scope of work is over, and one of the ways and this goes back to what Rob was talking about this 15% Rob before you leave, that's the contractor, that's not the state getting that 15%.

Mr. Forbes: That's correct.

Mayor Norris: That's the contractor that you will do an RFP for, and Rob you've got a contractor in Ruston that's done this very kind of work, so we can ask him if this 15% is reasonable or unreasonable, and I think that would give me a real good idea because they've done this on a national level and it seems high but when you start going through all the details involved in this, it's really hard to make sure that you don't make a mistake but if there's some way that we could have, let's say you calculate one of these and the person says I can't make up the gap, is there any way you can have another scope of work that is less inclusive so that people don't get left behind because they can't come up with that different of money? Mr. Bradberry was talking about that earlier and that's where you get more bad publicity and more recriminations against the Governor or against the task force or whomever.

Mr. Forbes: We started talking to HUD about that very idea some months ago, when we were considering how to spend \$438M. There regulatory interpretation right now makes that a difficult thing to do. If we provide a scope of work and pay for that scope of work they are saying that scope of work has to be completed. We're not giving up on that conversation,

we think that we can press the case that decent, safe, and sanitary is accomplishing the national objective and consequently we should be able to go do the things that make the house a livable place without maybe all the things that they had before as a way to close that gap. There are other ways too, including lending institutions, charitable organizations that come out and do the work, we will pursue any and all of those. We recognize that is the biggest challenge of this process.

Mr. Olivier: I'm worried. I know we are focusing on homeowners' recovery but we also have a business recovery portion of it and there are some decisions I think that were taken last week in a sub-committee meeting, our chair can address those, would you?

Mr. Knapp: Yes, the numbers that were on the prior slide take care of a lot of the discussion of the subcommittee about the allocation structure, and as Mr. Forbes was talking about, the priority is small business recovery statewide in the programs, which is why the number is as high as it is. As it has been said so many times, that number is still far too small to help with the number of small business that have been damaged and impacted, even beyond where the SBA assistance can come in. It is a small firm loan and grant program to blend small subsidized loan interest rates lower than the SBA rates have come in, is what we discussed at our subcommittee meeting and some portion of grants as part of that, up to around \$50,000 number is the estimate. It's very similar to the initial program design, just more resources into that initial program design. It took away the bridge loan program and beefed up the technical assistance piece of that. Does that answer that question?

Mr. Forbes: Thank you for the question. In the interest of speeding up the process up I don't want to give short shrift to equally important portions of the recovery. It's one thing we've learned through all the disaster recovery is that we can't just get people back home. We've got to have businesses, we've got to have jobs, we're going to have the vital services that people need in their neighborhoods and communities to get back going. We've got to have infrastructure. All those things are critical parts of the recovery. Thank you.

Mr. Knapp: The question I wanted to ask is about the PA match number. I made a little effort to try to understand from the East Baton Rouge staff who have done at the Mayors' Office of Homeland Security, how they estimated their numbers, which goes into that \$105M estimate and did receive some concern that the estimates that are being used are going off of the current known submitted PA projects that are in the pipeline, but if PA project, I'm sorry to use acronyms folks I hate it too, if they are not in the system, they have not begun estimating, that they may not be in that \$105M target number, so I really just want to ask once more and I just want it as an example, no road or bridge estimates have been provided or started in East Baton Rouge Parish under the public assistance damage estimating because they have not even gotten to that part of their recovery effort overall and if a project is not even started in its estimating, the fear is that it may not be in that number of \$105M and the statements that it will cover the total amount, we are going on that faith that that number of what's in the system already is accurate and that is a concern I think.

Mr. Forbes: Actual obligated project worksheets for August, I think are in maybe \$200M dollar range. The numbers that we are using are FEMA's estimates of total, and they are anticipating all those other project worksheets, so while they may only have \$200M right now, we're still estimating \$750M because that's their best estimate at this time. How good is their estimate? I hope that it is high so that we've got extra money and we can use it for something else and that means less damage to the communities but at this point, those are the FEMA's best estimates of total.

Mr. Dartez: What Adam is talking about, if in the end it goes over that, is there a way to come back and address it or we are at \$105M and we are capped?

Mr. Forbes: There is always the option of doing an action plan amendment, where you modify the distribution of funds among the various programs. We could also prorate it. I mean it just depends on the priorities of the task force.

Mr. Dartez: Okay, thank you, sir.

Mr. Jetson: As it relates to the contractors in the RFP, does it still allow for a contractor to submit to do the totality of the work or any particular segments of it?

Mr. Forbes: No, sir. It is in fact for the whole, both program administration and construction in the program driven construction part of the model. So, people can still choose their own contractors, just like we've talked about before, but if they choose to have the program do the rehabilitation for them it will be this same contractor.

Mr. Jetson: I'm talking about strictly for the administrative portion of the work, the only option is for a single contractor to do the entirety of the work as opposed to various components.

Mr. Forbes: Thank you for the clarification. No, we fully expect, because the skill sets required to do what we are asking of this contract are so broad, we fully expect there will be teams that put in proposals together.

Mr. Jetson: But, nevertheless, a single proposal must be submitted, even if it includes multiple parties. There is not an option for an individual contractor to come in and to offer to provide a particular service that's in this quadria of work for a particular project.

Mr. Forbes: That is correct. As we talked through with multiple other entities that have gone through disasters, the most common comment we got as a lesson learned or a best practice, depending on who you talked to, was that having all that work under the same roof adds infinitely to the efficiency, both in time and money, to get the work done because there is no finger pointing between two different contractors, it is just one contractor that we look to, to deliver on time.

Ms. Wyatt: Makes sense?

Mr. Jetson: Does it make sense? No ma'am, not to me, but I certainly respect the wisdom of the office, I just think that, nevertheless, you have predetermined that it will only be the larger entities that will be able to participate in this and in my opinion, you limit greatly the opportunities for Louisiana contractors to be able to participate in some degree.

Mr. Forbes: In our experience, the big contractors that get this work can't deliver it without lots of local help and we're trying to not only understand and acknowledge that necessity on their part but to drive them to tell us how they're going to maximize it and that will be part of what we score them on and then part of what we write into their contract once they've proposed it because once they put that proposal in writing we can hold them to it in the contract.

Mr. Bradberry: So, in all probability, you're right, a large contractor will take initiative but he'll bring in multiple team members to help fulfill the obligation of the scope of work. I want to make sure I understand, do you have a point system that allows recognition of Louisiana based companies, smaller contractors, disadvantaged businesses to be part of that large group? Is there a point system allocated to that in your rationalization of the RFP?

Mr. Forbes: The inclusion of extra points for being a local contractor is prohibited, but we have a portion of the RFP that is called 'approach and methodology' where they have to tell us how they're going to go about doing this and part of what we are requiring them to tell us is how are you going to maximize the use of local and disadvantaged business enterprises and low to moderate income workers and businesses and then we can hold them to that commitment that they make through the contract if they get selected.

Mr. Bradberry: But there are no points allocated to that?

Mr. Forbes: Approach and methodology has points associated with it.

Mr. Bradberry: Okay. I'll go on record to say that I think the approach is fine. I think you are doing a good job of putting it together. I reviewed it with you and I agree with it.

Mr. Forbes: Thank you.

Mayor Tyler: My question has been answered that I was thinking about, subcontractors and small and disadvantaged businesses having opportunities for Louisiana to participate under the large prime contractors, so to speak, so if that is going to be part of the process then perhaps we will have an opportunity to bring in small contractors, small businesses.

Mr. Forbes: Yes, ma'am. Like I was saying, for one thing, there are many, many businesses in the state of Louisiana who are at the forefront of disaster recovery and that's simply because Katrina and Rita hit us and businesses in Louisiana learned how to do this and that talent has been exported all over the country in the last ten years and now we have the opportunity to give them work here again, so there is no shortage of qualified, talented contractors and workers in Louisiana in the disaster recovery business.

Mayor-President Robideaux: Just real quick, Pat, to be clear, there's still going to be a separate monitoring contract that is going to go out? I mean, we keep talking about the same one, this RFP, this has to do solely with the whoever is going to run the project.

Mr. Forbes: That's correct. We thank you for bringing that up. We also will be issuing shortly another request for proposals for QA/QC services, process integrity, if you will, so that we have another entity that works directly for us to watch this contractor, in essence. We will have performance measures in this contract that we are able to track but we also have to be able to track the quality of the work, the quality of their reporting and analysis, and so we are going to have a separate contractor to do just that.

Mr. Bradberry: When will that contract be led?

Mr. Forbes: We are shooting for within the next few weeks. I'm not positive we are going to make that but it's really important. We would have loved to have got it out before this one but we knew this one was critical to getting the money at work and so we're now working on that one and we will have it within a few weeks.

Mr. Knapp: Could you speak, by the way I agree with what our colleagues have said about the process you laid out, I want to just illustrate as my Chamber of Commerce hat on, the method where a homeowner can choose their own contractor is a really important way that local businesses are going to be able to participate, is by going out, finding homeowners, and helping them do the work and no matter how this contractor goes forward, there is a way for many local businesses to participate and how we, and OCD, drives contractors to be engaged in that process. Hopefully that is much better than the

reimbursement or the homeowner driver process is a priority for this. Can you speak, just briefly, to the mean by which the selection is accomplished in a very impartial and deliberative way to make sure that it is, the judging in methodology is accomplished? There are strict rules on how that is done by the state but I think it's worth it just put on the record that the selection is a very judicious one and independent one. Can you just speak on that for a moment?

Mr. Forbes: Sure, thank you. You are right, there is a state law that compels you to do this in a way that is fair and open, in addition to that there is federal regulatory language that we have been following for ten years now that tells us how we must proceed to ensure of fair and competitive process and that in fact that prohibition on the local preference is part of the federal requirement because, a prohibition rather, because they believe that that limits competition. The process is that we have very specific pieces that each proposer has to describe for us. They include, as I mentioned earlier, the approach and methodology. How are they going to approach this work, get up to speed, get people hired, all the logistics of how you go make this happen and get money building people's houses as quickly as possible. Second, the qualifications of their staff. They've got to tell us the specific people who will be working on this and tell us about those people's life experience in this line of work. Then their firms experience and success in doing this sort of work in the past and we will have a team of folks who will look at each proposal, we have to read each proposal, go through, score each one, come to a consensus score on those three pieces. Going in, separate from this process and unknown to those people on this panel, is the cost scoring portion of the thing. Cost scoring is an absolutely objective math exercise. You can sit down, take the proposals, score them, and you will get exactly the number that I got when I sat down and scored them because there is a mathematical formula in the request for proposals that describes how they will give us their cost and then how we'll put those costs together and then how will compare those costs to all the other proposer's costs. Once both of those pieces are done, and of course the cost thing, you can do immediately upon receipt of the proposals, but this panel, the selection panel, will never see those until after they have provided their final scores. Then the two are combined and the winning firm gets the job. Now, I will say that if that winning firm can't come to terms in a contract in a reasonable amount of time, we are at liberty to move on to the next firm. We still have to negotiate a contract once that process is through and if we can't negotiate a reasonable contract with that contractor, we are at liberty to move to the next highest score.

Ms. Wyatt closed the floor for questions.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

~ Rowdy Gaudet, Chief of Staff, Office of Community Development

Mr. Forbes: I would like to ask Rowdy Gaudet to go through the three different resolutions, but I think we are going to have public comments before the task force actually votes.

Ms. Wyatt: Rowdy, come on up and explain each resolution, and after you are done we will open it up for public comment, then we will vote, or entertain a motion to vote.

Mr. Gaudet: Thank you. Rowdy Gaudet with the Office of Community Development, forgive the way I sound today, I'm a bit under the weather. The first resolution you have under tab six is a program budget for the second allocation from Congress. The one billion, two nineteen million, one seventy-two. If you flip to the second page under Section one, this is the budget that Pat went over in his presentation showing the allocations between each of the programs we are recommending. That is \$935M, a little more than that, to the homeowner program under the second allocation. \$105M for a FEMA PA match program. \$80M towards rental and homeless. \$50M towards business in agriculture. As well as, the 4% for administrative fees. The Section two of the resolution basically directs our office to go start crafting programs for an action plan for this budget. Would you like to do public comment on the resolutions individually or as a group.

Ms. Wyatt: We can do them individually. Wait, let's do all three at one time. So, go to the next one. Tab 7.

Mr. Gaudet: Tab 7 is a resolution specific to the homeowner program and gives the breakdown for the amount, who qualifies, and the dual-tiered approach that Pat recommended today in his presentation. 0-120% of area median income is at 100% of the award, greater than 120% at the area median income is at the 50%. It also speaks to the reimbursement component, for those individuals who qualified under the first allocation, LMI, outside the floodplain, age 62 or older or person living with disabilities, 100% of the pre-award eligible expenses are reimbursable. All other populations, that amount is at 25%. Section two compels our office to go and write an action plan for public comment, and submission to HUD.

Ms. Wyatt: And the third one.

Mr. Gaudet: Tab eight, is a resolution for all of the other programs, the economic development program, the FEMA PA match program, and what am I missing, and the \$100M to rental and homeless. Section one gives a description of each of the programs we would describe within our action plan under each of those. Section two compels our office to go and write an action plan for public comment and submission to HUD, as quickly as possible. Those are the three resolutions.

Ms. Wyatt opened the floor for 'Public Comment' on the resolutions.

**Rick Wentzel, Superintendent
Representing the Livingston Parish Public Schools**

Mr. Wentzel: Thank you for allowing me to speak today. I'm going to be as brief as I can because I know you want to get into what you need to do, I just briefly want to tell you a little bit about the Livingston Parish schools story, and then I would like to make a comment in regards to this. We had 18 sites on August 12th and 13th that flooded or in some capacity took water. We had nine that had major flooding, nine facilities that had major flooding. We went twenty days to try to get those facilities up to par so that we could get ready and get back in school and we rushed to do that with the resilience of these communities of Livingston helped us do that. And obviously, we had to do a lot of platooning and a lot of different things just so we can have school but it's, and I applaud Mr. Forbes because he's a knowledgeable guy and I'm listening to him and the things that he's talking about and he's right on a lot. It's about the communities, it's about people, and it's a three-prong approach. It's a three-prong approach, the homeowners, the businesses, as well as all the little governmental entities, and we all have to be in a part of this and we all have to be together. Working this, as well as receiving the funds and I just want to speak to the funding, then I'm through. We're projected to probably spend about \$122M in recovery and that's over a period of years obviously. \$80M of it we expect FEMA to be able to reimburse us because of the NFIP penalty, which I'm not going to get into because it would cause me to be angry. We're talking about \$28M we would be reduced from what we would normally get from FEMA. So, we're projected to spend about \$42M. We do not have \$42M in the system, we don't have that kind of money just set aside and hold on to, we are in desperate need, and I applaud Mr. Forbes because I've got other superintendents that I've spoken to that are in a similar situation, maybe not as drastic, but I'm drastic, and that's why I'm here today because it's going to impact this system, the employees of this system, which by the way we had 650 employees that flooded out of their homes, many of them are still not in their homes, they are going through all this and they need this help. So, I'm speaking for those employees as well because they are a part of our system and our system is needed in this community, so that we can have those little babies at school, so that those parents know that's a safe haven place for them as they get their lives back together. I heard the same comments and I appreciate the comments, the \$105M, I hope that's enough because I'm projecting just on base that 10% that I'm looking at least \$10M just for my system and there are many other systems, as well as other governmental entities, out there and I'm a little concerned about that \$105M. So, that's why I wanted to speak to this, but I appreciate that there is some type of a plan or a backup plan or something that's in place for that, but I needed to speak about that. That's why I asked to speak right here, even though I wanted to tell the Livingston Parish School story and thank you for that. Mr. Forbes, I want to thank you as well.

Ms. Wyatt: I know your passion, for sure.

**Lawrence E. Callender, Louisiana Emergency Manager
Representing the Village of French Settlement**

Mr. Callender: I'm Lawrence Callender, I'm the Emergency Manager for the Village of French Settlement. We are the little guy at the very end of the Amite River Basin and a little quick geography lesson is that the Amite River Basin, part of it is in Mississippi, most people don't realize that. All the water that flows down that system, if you drop a cup of water in Mississippi, it has to pass through French Settlement before it hits a flood control structure, that was built in the '50s, the Amite Diversion Canal, 10 miles long, 300' wide. Unfortunately, no maintenance has ever been done on its construction but it's functioning, although the weir is a sinking river bed and the Amite River Proper has silted in, we could carry much more water out, that is something I would like you all to know. But, our little village, 1125 people, La Cote-Francaise or the French Coast was basically settled about the time of New Orleans, 300 years ago, and for .43 cents an acre we transferred to the United States, and we are happy to be a part of the United States but I'll tell you this the only national news coverage we got was from a firm, Bobble News, from France, and Channel 9 was the first media that actually came here. So, they tell our story, we count on them to tell our story. Again, we have two blue ribbon schools and we were blessed that they did not flood. We flooded in the March flood, and we do understand what you go through on the Red River. I invented a flood tracking system that is used all over the country now and donated to the United States Geological Survey, who I've worked with for many, many years, we use that, and on Channel 9 you see it and on the other news, all the gauges that track the floods. What do we do with that information? We need a flood plain management plan for every basin, the Red River Basin, the Amite River Basin. That is a charge right now to do. The flood plain management plans have not been done. There's no teeth to enforce them. We've got some great plans within the parishes for neighborhoods, for cities, but we do not have a plan that addresses each bowl or each basin. We need to work with the state of Mississippi. We need to work with all the communities in the Amite River Basin to have such a plan because we're doomed to repeat the sins of the past if we don't. I'm here to plead for our village, 1125 people. I would ask that you not be complicity silent for the people under sixty two years of age that have lost everything, and for us to look after the school children because that is their safe haven but they

are going to school hungry, now for five weeks, the little Village of French Settlement in the St. Joseph Catholic Church fed 5,000 people hot meals they cooked there on site and we are thankful to the Food Bank of New Orleans, the Food Bank of Covington, the Food Bank of Baton Rouge, we had multid denominational religions there to address those needs. Now what are we left with? Well, the government is an aluminum folding table and the Catholic Church under the Virgin Mary, an 800-year-old statute with baby Jesus, that's where we are today and we are proud to be there. We hope to move into our garage shortly. We were denied FEMA trailers for our town on the words of our seated of government. You can put our police department now in one Tahoe, we only have two running Tahoe's at the moment. So, I can tell you we're here and we're going to stand up. We've been here for 300 years, we do not want to fold. We want to stay here. Our Creole culture, which is a total blend of every ethnicity in this state, has been around for 300 years. We don't want to leave. We ask for your help. Please don't be complicity silent when it comes to all the people, regardless of their age. Thank you very much.

Mr. Forbes: I was just going to say that I left out of my presentation, we are already doing modeling on the Amite River Basin as we speak with some other funds that we have available and we want to do that all over the state.

**Perry Theriot, Citizen
Representing Self**

Mr. Theriot: Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee. I'm just here as a citizen. I took time off from work today to come up here and what I've heard, it's been very instructive, but a couple of things I've heard concern me, so I decided to come up here and speak. I listen to the qualifications for the help and it seems this committee was charged with getting people back into their homes as fast as they can. Then I come here and I hear that those who took, who did everything they could to move to get back in their home as fast as they can, are the same people who are not going to be offered any help whatsoever. Those people who filled out their applications for FEMA the day after, got on their computers, did everything that they were supposed to do, put in their applications to the SBA, hired a contractor, and got people coming back to go into their homes, are the people who are not going to be helped by this program. They go and they make an SBA loan, I myself and it's important that you understand the individual nature of this, I and my wife have lived in the same house for over twenty years, we paid the mortgage off just in January, we had prepared for our retirement the way you are supposed to, we were about to wind down into retirement with savings that we had put aside for 25 years and all of a sudden we get the flood. Well, I know what happened to everyone so I don't want this to sound like we're pitting one group against another. I don't believe that should be the case. What I do believe is that loans should not be considered against your qualifications because if they are, guess what, I'm a give them back, sit on my butt, and come get the money. That's what it really means, it means that I shouldn't have made that loan. I should not have hired that contractor. I should have waited till April or May. Now what's going to happen with those who did the right thing is the money that would have gone back into the economy is now going to be sent to Washington DC, into the big black hole. My current amount of payment for the SBA to rebuild my house is going to be right at \$400 a month for 25 years, if I live that long. That's \$425 that will not be spent at any businesses in the East Baton Rouge or Ascension Parish or Livingston Parish. That's money that is gone out of the economy that you're trying to build. Something needs to be set aside for those people who moved to rebuild their house quickly and God, I thank every day that the money was available to get started on this. But, I would have thought this program would have had some kind of arrangement that could have allowed maybe to pay down some of these loans because if not I would have been better waiting and sitting here because then I would have qualified, took my retirement, my income with then be way down. I would qualify 100%, instead of contributing to the economy, I would could have gone into retirement and then had them pay me the \$70,000 like was in his notes, and that's simply not right. Now, I don't know if it's a federal regulation because I did hear him say that, if that's the case then we need our congressman to fix it. And because why should we be sending our money into the DC black hole for 25 years. So that we can get back in our house quickly. I think this committee needs to do something about that. I did submit these comments written, so somewhere in your thing there are some comments on it because I did read the proposal when it came out and immediately sent in some comments on it but I believe something needs to be done for the people who went to the SBA, and there's quite a few, I'm not the only one, I've talked to quite a few people who were told by FEMA because when you went in and got your FEMA, they told you look you need to apply for the SBA loan, you need to get this in by before a certain date, or you're not going to get any help, and so that's exactly what I did. Now I'm being told I'm not going to get anything from, it's just not right and I think people here need to be made aware of it and I think something needs to be done with that. Maybe they can write into the legislation some sort of loan reduction, or allow those grants to take the place of some of the loans, where you get to pay down the loan with that. Otherwise I don't know how many people are going to get thrown out of eligibility by these criteria, because almost everybody I know made an SBA loan if they could get one because they were trying as hard as they could. I had three vehicles that were gone. My house destroyed and everything I've gotten for 25 years, just as the people that have already testified. There is no way, SBA limits you to a certain amount and even with that you're not going to be able to completely redo it. I had to dip into my retirement savings to get the contract. The contract for rebuilding is way more than the amount of the loan and the FEMA grant, but I understand now they're going to reduce the money that's available to me

so I think this committee needs to do whatever work it can do to make sure that people who did SBA loans are eligible to take part in this grant program. I don't really have any more to say except that I know that I want to be able to go on the record and put that there so that people would understand because I think there's a lot of people in the same boat as me.

Mr. Forbes: I would just like to make sure it's clear and I think this is understood that we do because we heard from so many members of the public, people who went out and did the work and got something done and got back in their houses have to get something which is why we have the reimbursement portion in here and I know it's not enough, we don't have enough money but I just want to make sure it's clear that there is a reimbursement portion in this. I also want to make sure that it's clear that rebuilding damages over the SBA and FEMA amounts is absolutely eligible for that reimbursement. You're not ineligible by virtue of having an SBA loan, it's just that that loan, by federal requirement, is a duplication of benefits.

Ms. Payer: I just want to make sure it is very clear to you that the Governor's office does not, it feels exactly the same as this gentleman in terms of duplication of benefits. Duplication of benefits is a problem after a lot of storms. It's a terrible concept and so we are already working with Congress to try to see what we can do. It's an uphill battle but we're already working on that and then just to reiterate what Pat said, there is a portion for people who got ahead and rebuilt their house. There is reimbursement. It's too low. It's like we as we talked about all throughout today. It's 25% for some people, a small group of people we can try to do 100% but that is the whole purpose of meeting, the people and Congress to go back to Washington DC and bring home the additional \$2B. I just want to make sure that was clear.

Mr. Durbin: Since we are talking about the second appropriation that was appropriated by Congress in DC in December and here we are the twentieth of January about to adopt an action plan on that second appropriation of \$1.2B. In the event the congressional delegation for Louisiana and Governor John Bill Edwards are successful in achieving and convincing Congress to appropriate additional funds for the state of Louisiana, can and will there be additional reimbursement eligibility and that would be set aside in some of those future appropriations?

Mr. Forbes: Absolutely. We've got \$1.3B in the budget right now for the homeowner program. What the Governor asked for was \$2.7B, so \$1.4B short, over half, and so obviously that lets us start assisting people who had flood insurance but still have an unmet need, people who only got reimbursed 25% so far, people who only had minor damage but still cost them thousands of dollars to fix their home.

Mr. Durbin: I just think you need to be clear that the door is not going to shut today.

Mr. Forbes: Right.

Mr. Durbin: On any of these people that are thinking they're going to be left out or not receive enough.

Mr. Forbes: Thank you. That's correct.

Representative Pope: I'll say it one more time. I don't know who the gentleman is, I sure want to meet him, I want to put my name on his ballot. You have all heard that before and I've said it before, he said it better than I could ever say it, but you see the frustration that I deal with every day is that that's the kind of person that we represent right there. The people that are out there doing whatever. Number one, I would bet you that he was, I won't say misled but he didn't get the correct information. He said it. I'm going to tell you as a personal person, I didn't get the information because I would have never made an application with SBA, and you all know how I've gone off on SBA. I'm not backing off of that. That is probably the most corrupt group we've got in Washington, maybe. That's the kind of stuff, when you go and you make application to FEMA to get any sort of relief, they tell you that you have to apply for the SBA loan and that is not right. That's the thing I've been fighting for all along and I'll continue to do that. You all are just going to have to get used to me (explicative) and moaning about it because it is not right.

Representative James: To follow that. I want to echo most of what Representative Pope said because I hear the same frustrations with my colleagues and, Julie, I hear you continuously say we're working with members of Congress but I don't hear anything from the members of Congress about them actually working to address these things and I know they are in a bit of a celebratory moment and we are in a bit of a transition but I witnessed them make other changes in the short amount of time they've been there. What have they done concretely to address these things because this issue, the first day I heard that an SBA loan would be treated the same as a grant and considered a duplication of benefits I asked was there a regulation of the rules in the Stafford Act. What are they doing besides listening to you guys? Who, out of the eight, have specifically crafted the legislation to try to change anything to address this? If we get the \$2B with the same regulations and hamstrings it's still result like that gentlemen and many folks like him.

Ms. Payer: This is part of the purpose of our trip to DC. We have talked and had meetings and sent e-mails and talked about language and how we could from any front available address that duplication of benefits and other questions to that are hampering people. So, I know that we are working with each of the offices, we have a new senator, we have a new congressman, and so we're making them aware of all of this and we are really urging folks to spend the efforts that we have in Washington not to criticize the state but to help us to draft that legislation so. sometimes it's changing, and Pat can address

the specifics in HUD, sometimes it's changing HUD regulations. Sometimes it's putting appropriation language which we're working on that in the next appropriation. We're talking about how can we put language in the next appropriation that would also be effective for the first two appropriations, so we're going through all of that right now. The duplication of benefits, it's my understanding for those who've been here longer than I have in GOHSEP and all that, that is something we have to fight very hard because there's a resistance in the agencies, in the federal agencies, to changing that because of a concern about trying to make sure that they don't duplicate federal money for the same purpose but I can let you know that we don't have a resolution yet on the duplication of benefits but any help we can get from the public in terms of just support for we've got to go in this year and do something about the duplications benefits question and we're working on that with all the congressional offices.

Representative James: You know, I don't mind losing a fight, but I do have an issue of us not fighting at all and if there's no resolution that has been drafted since August then that's a problem because I watch my congressional leaders come here and make statements. I've seen the criticism of what's going on in the state but I haven't seen the action in DC so I don't mind losing a fight but I do mind not fighting at all.

Ms. Payer: The fight is underway.

Ms. Wyatt closed the floor for the 'Public Comment' on the resolutions.

Ms. Wyatt: You called for a vote?

Mr. Jetson: Yes, so motioned.

Mr. Durbin: Seconded.

Ms. Wyatt: The first resolution, tab 6, the Budget. Are there any objections to this resolution? Hearing none, this resolution has passed unanimously. Let's go to tab 7, the Homeowner program resolution.

Mr. Darte: Motioned.

Mr. Bradberry: Seconded.

Ms. Wyatt: Is there any opposition? Any objections to the second resolution? Hearing none, this resolution has passed unanimously. Oh my goodness, this is the fastest thing we have ever done. Let's go to tab 8, the Rental, Economic Development, and FEMA PA Match resolution.

Mr. Knapp: Motioned.

Mayor Tyler: Seconded.

Ms. Wyatt: Any objections to the third resolution? Hearing none, this resolution has passed unanimously.

IX. PRESENTATIONS

~ Laura Tuggle, Executive Director, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services

Ms. Wyatt: Laura Tuggle, she's the executive director of Southeast Louisiana Legal Services and this is Tara Richard with Louisiana Appleseed.

Ms. Tuggle: Good afternoon and in the interest of time thank you for letting us come here but we're going to come back and talk to you maybe another meeting or two, you have our information in the materials. Just want to take maybe ninety seconds here and mention that our organization, we are a nonprofit simple legal services law firm and our particular agency covers 22 parishes in south Louisiana. We have a sister agency that covers the rest of the state. One of our highest priorities is serving vulnerable people and that includes people impacted by disasters. Without getting into the whole presentation, on a kind of short circuit, and we've heard a lot today about the barriers to recovery and different obstacles and a lot of regulations people face and anytime that happens there's a lot of legal barriers that homeowners get impeded by when they are trying to recover and so we've worked with our partners at Louisiana Appleseed, a lot of the local law schools in the Baton Rouge area and also some of our volunteer lawyer partners through different bar associations to come up with some resources and I just want to tell you about a program we are calling it Flood Proof because one of the big issues people are running into is proving ownership and trying to resolve title problems and accessing benefits, whether that's their own insurance proceeds, whether that is FEMA, whether that is making a loan from their bank, it could be a variety of things, from having to do a succession from informally passed heir property to all these problems people are running into with trailers and that fight with FEMA about movable and immovable, and we won't get into all that because then I'm going to get angry too. So, we just wanted to let you know there is an event coming up. We left some flyers on the table out there. There is an event coming up that we are doing next Saturday for our Flood Proof Project which focuses on Livingston, East Baton Rouge and Ascension parishes for people who are hitting a barrier like that and accessing recovery funding. There is also the potential that that will be a potential barrier even with some of the programs that we're hearing about today, as it

has been in past disasters. So, there is an event, it's from 9-12 at Southern University Law Clinic. I'm going to let Tara just talk for a second here and then we are going to cut it quick.

Ms. Richard: Thank you again for having us. As Laura mentioned the lack of clear title to inherited property is a big barrier to recovery restoration. Just briefly, we have a booklet, unless you think this is just a problem in this area, we will also be speaking in Shreveport and Monroe in Ouachita Parish, but we have this booklet, this community booklet that tells you what you need to do and the barriers that can arise when you don't take those legal steps to transfer property, the title, into the person's name. So, I asked for assistance in getting that information out, also about the event we are having on next Saturday on the 28th. This is a program that is for Ascension, Livingston and East Baton Rouge parishes made possible by funding through the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and we have other partners we are working with. We are also doing another one in another neighborhood this coming Saturday and then the following one is the next Saturday. We are happy to give any information about this and chat about this issue.

Ms. Tuggle: And we're planning one for Livingston Parish as well.

Ms. Richard: Livingston Parish and other parishes as well.

Ms. Wyatt: This one is for Livingston Parish, isn't it?

Ms. Richard: This one is for all, the Flood Proof Program is free legal help for homeowners with title problems, we have funds to help people go through the process and that is limited to residents of Livingston, Ascension and East Baton Rouge, but we are having an event for all residents of those three parishes next Saturday on January twenty eighth from nine to twelve at the Southern University Law Center.

Mayor Norris: Who does that same service in North Louisiana?

Ms. Tuggle: It would be Acadiana Legal Services, who is now taking over operations in the northern part of the state under the name Legal Aid of North Louisiana. We are separate agencies but they are very similar to what we do.

Mayor Norris: How do you get in touch with them?

Ms. Tuggle: Their number is the presentation in your packet.

Mr. Olivier: Can we get your information?

Ms. Richard: It's in this booklet and they are available for everyone.

Mr. Olivier: I don't need it but I'm worried about the people that need it. How do you interface, how are you allowed to interface, with those individuals who are qualifying for homeowner recovery? Do you give it to them as part of a package when they qualify?

Ms. Tuggle: There are different ways that we are reaching out to people. We are working closely with the disaster case managers through the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, we are sharing information with FEMA, we do a lot of public outreach, public information, and we've been in discussions with FEMA about targeting some mailings to impacted people.

Mr. Olivier: They aren't going to give you the names because it's private, but my point is I was asking how could your information be given to those people who were impacted so they could at least have it, like we have it here.

Ms. Tuggle: Yes, FEMA is cooperating with us in getting that information out to the households that have been denied assistance because of legal issues. That just happened in the last week.

Ms. Richard: We also are working with the boots on the ground, the people who are helping with muck and guts, those other non-profits who are actually touching the folks and can get this information out to the people in Livingston, Ascension and East Baton Rouge. We continue to work with other public officials and other organizations to get this information out from the educational standpoint and from the point that we do have these free legal services available in these parishes. I welcome any assistance in getting that information out to other affected parishes.

Ms. Wyatt: Thank you so much ladies. Wait, Representative Shadoin has a question.

Representative Shadoin: It was told to me that 99% of lawyers give the rest of us a bad name, but being one of us, because I am a country lawyer in North Louisiana, I want to thank you all for reaching out and doing what so many lawyers do that never really gets any advertisement or publicity. Thank you for helping the people.

Ms. Tuggle: It's truly our pleasure.

Ms. Wyatt closed the floor for questions.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Wyatt: Were there any other public comments, besides the ones given earlier? Hearing none, we will move on.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Wyatt: Task force members, a few housekeeping items. Tab 10, when you get a chance, is a GOHSEP update, tab 11 includes tentative meeting dates, tab 12 are letters that we received from the Town of Farmerville, Village of Quitman, and Tyrone Legette. Take a few moments, when you get a chance, to read those. I appreciate your patience today. I appreciate you asking the questions that you asked. I appreciate the fact that you are bold and courageous because this is not for the faint hearted. We thank the office for all of the work that you're doing. We feel your passion, we feel the passion of the people, and we are going to be here to do what's right, and they'll be days that you won't like what we are doing, there are days that we don't like what we are doing, but as my co-chair said, this isn't over. This is not over, this is just a moment in time.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Wyatt: To adjourn is in order.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:04 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jacqui Vines Wyatt
Co-Chair of the Restore Louisiana Task Force

Date Approved: February 24, 2017

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