

**RESTORE LOUISIANA TASK FORCE**  
**October 28, 2016**  
**Louisiana State Capitol, House Committee Room 6**

*Approved*

**MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**Ms. Jacqui Vines Wyatt** called the meeting to order at 9:35 AM. The roll was then called.

**II. ROLL CALL**

**TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Johnny Bradberry  
Mr. Randy Cloutre (ex-officio, non-voting member)  
Mr. Roland Dartez  
Mr. Jimmy Durbin  
Mr. Michael Faulk  
Representative Edward “Ted” James  
Mr. Raymond Jetson  
Mr. Adam Knapp  
Senator Dan “Blade” Morrish  
Mayor Dave Norris  
Mr. Michael Olivier  
Representative J. Rogers Pope  
Mr. Sean Reilly  
Dr. James Richardson  
Mayor-President Joel Robideaux  
Representative Robert Shadoin  
Mayor Ollie Tyler  
Ms. Jacqui Vines Wyatt

**TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. John Gallagher  
Mr. Don Pierson  
Commissioner Mike Strain  
Dr. Shawn Wilson

**SUPPORTING STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Patrick Forbes, Executive Director, Office of Community Development  
Rowdy Gaudet, Office of Community Development  
Lori Dupont, Office of Community Development  
Kayla Westmoreland, Office of Community Development  
Ray Rodriguez, Louisiana Housing Corporation

**Ms. Dupont:** Madam Chair, 17 members are present, we have a quorum.

**III. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 14<sup>TH</sup> MEETING MINUTES**

**Ms. Wyatt:** I would like to entertain a motion to approve the minutes from last week’s meeting.

**Mr. Faulk:** So motioned.

**Mr. Dartez:** Seconded.

**Ms. Wyatt:** All in favor say Aye. Minutes have been adopted.

*All members were in favor of approving the minutes from October 14, 2016 meeting.*

#### **IV. CHAIRPERSON OPENING REMARKS**

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

**Ms. Wyatt:** I would like to start out with some opening remarks. The announcements of appointments made by our Governor. The Governor has appointed Mr. John Gallagher, Interim Executive Director of the Louisiana Municipal Association, as a member of the Restore Louisiana Task Force. John could not attend this meeting today but we are happy to have his involvement and represent the Louisiana Municipal Association. Ms. Elkins has stepped down from the task force but will share her expertise and continue to be an advisor for the task force. The Governor also appointed Mr. Randy Cloutre, Chairman of the Ascension Parish Council, as a non-voting ex-officio member. Ex-officio are non-voting members and do not count towards a quorum. The Governor felt it was important to make these appointments to the task force in order to provide input and expertise from their respective communities and field of business. We welcome them and thank them for serving. Members, please refer to tab 4 of your binders for an update on all programmatic deadlines. I would like to bring the TSA deadline to everyone's attention as it is time sensitive. We may want to think about passing a resolution to request an extension of that deadline. The main focus for this initial allocation of \$437.8 million will be in the area of Housing, with potential for Economic and Infrastructure. Members, you will receive a presentation today to this effect from the Housing working group. The other Recovery Support Functions (RSF) – Community Planning & Capacity Building, Health & Social Services, and Natural & Cultural Resources – continue to meet and will be analyzing data and needs for the longer term, with an eye towards future allocations. Members, we will have reports at today's meeting from the Housing RSF working group, with a recommendation from Mayor-President Robideaux and the Housing RSF group for expenditures from the initial allocation of \$437.8M. Also, we want to assure everyone that floodplain management is being looked at and being given consideration through the Infrastructure RSF. Let's talk about some accomplishments. During our first Restore Louisiana Task Force meeting, we passed a Resolution directing Louisiana's State Coordinating Officer to request an extension of registration deadlines for both FEMA Individual Assistance and the Small Business Administration Loan Program. The result of that resolution was successful and the registration deadlines were extended 30 days, meaning more individuals and families have had a chance to register for these programs and receive assistance. Since our first meeting, all Recovery Support Function working groups have been created, with task force members introduced to their specific recovery support function group and the respective state & federal leads; a staff member from the Office of Community Development has been assigned to assist in getting the recovery support function groups rolling (meetings, conference calls, etc.), and we now have venues to gather the necessary information we need to make informed recovery decisions. Ms. Lauren Nichols, along with the entire team at LA Office of Community Development and the Restore Louisiana Task Force support staff members, have been in contact with numerous other states gaining their perspective on programs, lessons learned and best practices. We heard from two groups at our last meeting from New York and New Jersey, regarding best practices and things to avoid, and we will continue to hear from stakeholders who can contribute lessons learned and worthy suggestions for long-term recovery needs.

#### **V. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE UPDATE**

**Erin Monroe Wesley, Special Counsel, Policy Director/Legislative Affairs**

**Ms. Wesley:** Good morning. Madam Chairwoman thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide a few updates on behalf of the Governor's Office, also I want to thank the members of the task force and the team at the Office of Community Development for mobilizing quickly into action to meet the needs of the people of the state of Louisiana. Our top priority is to bring our communities back as quickly as possible and to deliver help to homeowners, renter's, businesses, and local governments devastated across every pocket of our state. We want the public to know that our office and the members of the task force are listening to the needs you are sharing with us daily and incorporating this feedback into our planning efforts. We are also in continued conversations with our congressional delegation and key stakeholders committed to support us in our recovery efforts. As you know the Governor requested and saw FEMA approve extending Shelter at Home's deadline by one week. We now have more than 5000 families and more than 21,000 in the program receiving much needed assistance. It is also important to remember that FEMA is funding 894 families in manufactured housing units and more than 2200 families in transitional shelter assistance which provides short term lodging assistance for those displaced in local hotels. The Governor and the task force requested that the hotel T.S.A. deadline be extended to families so they could stay in those rooms to Nov. 18th and that request has been accepted since your last meeting. You may also want to recommend today that FEMA consider extending that deadline for another 30 days. The governor and the task force also requested that the deadline for people to register for FEMA individual assistance cash grants and for Small Business Administration loans be extended through November 14<sup>th</sup> and that was also articulated by our Madam Chairwoman that has also been a key win since our last meeting and so as we move forward, we want you to stay focused. Number one on the mission of the task force and secondly what the public can expect from the task force over the next few months. In the

wake of both the March and August floods you are the on the ground eyes and ears and the wise counsel whose job it is to make timely and informed recommendations to the Governor to bring about the most efficient and lasting Louisiana recovery possible. It is your job to make recommendations to the Governor that will help us build back our state better, stronger, and more resilient than before. You will help recommend the best way to attract and secure all available funding to help our Louisiana citizens and communities meet the unmet financial recovery need that follows each and every disaster. You will also help recommend the best plan in for how Louisiana spins that money so that limited funds are distributed in the best interest of Louisiana families, businesses, and local and parish governments recovering from these floods. So where are we in reaching these two immediate goals? Through the work of the Governor and the congressional delegation and also the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Nungesser and Commissioner Strain, Congress has approved a down payment of \$438M for Louisiana's recovery. We will travel back to Washington D.C. after the November 8<sup>th</sup> election to fight for additional monies in an omnibus bill or a minibus bill and hope to join other disaster states such as those impacted by hurricane Matthew to secure a disaster relief package. The Governor has laid the groundwork to requests more than \$3B in additional funding to the state. Governor Edwards sent two additional request letters to the President and HUD Secretary last week. I think those letters were also emailed to you last week, you have copies in your binder as well. And remember the Governor's original request was beyond just that. Yes, we requested Social Service Block Grant funding in the amount of \$92M. Another \$125M for the Comite River Diversion project and then roughly \$40M in Emergency Transportation Backlog funding, all of which are pending requests before the administration and before Congress. In terms of housing recovery, the plan that you will help craft for that funding is what you hear when you hear us talk about as our state's action plan. The state must present an action plan to HUD for all federal funding we receive through the agency. HUD is the agency which makes the rules for how we spend that \$438M in CDBG funds that we were initially set to receive. We cannot present our final action plan until HUD publishes in the federal registry its rules for how we can spend those monies and we expect to publish those rules sometime in the next few weeks but keep in mind that we're not waiting on HUD to publish those rules, we're starting that work today and that work has been underway. And so our plan that we will present a piece of today will detail the structure of the programs that the state will create and roll out to distribute that \$438M in that initial down payment from Congress. So in terms of the housing portion of that plan. It will include pieces like mortgage assistance, rental assistance, and on the rebuilding front a plan that includes pieces where the state has contractors to perform work for homeowners and where homeowners facilitate their own rebuilding and are reimbursed for that work. This housing plan is the most important piece of our overall recovery bringing people back home. That's why this is your immediate goal, all while rebuilding communities and infrastructure. At the last meeting you heard from Pat Forbes, he is with me at the table. He laid out various approaches to housing plans and the challenges and successes around each of those plans. Today we will submit specific options for the building blocks of that plan, a structure of the potential housing plan for recovery from that disaster. Today you will be asked to make specific recommendations to the Governor on how Louisiana will continue to develop the framework for the basic structure of this housing plan as OCD continues to work to craft that plan behind the scenes once HUD publishes its regulations in the federal register. OCD will come back to you with the final details of that plan, again based on your feedback and recommendation to the Governor, and then you will make further recommendation on the final plan submitted to HUD. In the meantime Pat's office will be working under those plan guide lines that you recommend as part of an outline for an initial RFP process. At the Governor's decision that RFP will go out to select a state contractor, a private program manager, and contractors, to implement distributing these monies to help Louisiana homeowners rebuild and renters find housing as soon as possible. That is a general sense of where we are today. We want to remain focused and diligent in our overarching goal, which is to bring our families, our neighborhoods, and our businesses, and our Louisiana communities back stronger and more resilient than ever. I'll be happy to answer any questions.

**Ms. Wyatt:** The floor is opened for questions.

**Rep. Shadoin:** Would you go over the potential funding sources again? You had mentioned two or three other potential funding sources rather than the \$3B from FEMA?

**Ms. Wesley:** So, our initial down payment is \$438M in CDBG funds, but we also had a request beyond that CDBG ask.

**Rep. Shadoin:** That's what I'm interested in.

**Ms. Wesley:** We had \$92M in requests for Social Services Block Grant funds, which helps with mental health in crisis counseling. There was also another \$125M for the Comite River Diversion project and another \$40M for highway transportation dollars. We are asking Congress to clear that backlog and that leaves specifically \$39M for Louisiana for highway projects. Those were a part of those requests that were made to the President and to Congress and the one satisfied was that CDBG down payment.

**Rep. Shadoin:** All right. And these funds are in addition to the \$3B that Governor Edwards has requested?

**Ms. Wesley:** Yes, that's correct.

**Rep. Shadoin:** Are any of these the 405 and 406 funds from FEMA or is that still something different?

**Mr. Forbes:** That would not be in a request from the Governor, though those would be driven by the Stafford Act calculations as to how much we could get for each one.

**Dr. Richardson:** With respect to the regulations being prepared by HUD, are we having any input it all in the preparation of the regulations?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir, while they are not allowed to tell us what they will look like before they come out. We certainly have weighed in with them about what we think should be in there and what would make the funds work the best for the state and for HUD. So, yes sir.

**Dr. Richardson:** Because that is actually very important because once the regulations come out they cannot deviate from them really, unless they change them.

**Mr. Forbes:** That's right. They could go through the process, which is very time consuming. That's why we jumped in and provided them with input as to what we would like to see in the Federal Register.

**Dr. Richardson:** Have they been fairly cooperative and listening to you?

**Mr. Forbes:** They always are. In fact I think I would add, just to segue to something that the governor asked for, he sent a letter to the HUD secretary regarding environmental review record, which can be an expensive and time consuming part of the work that we do. And the governor asked the secretary to do everything possible to help make this fast and a less expensive process than it has been in the past. In fact HUD, we had a call with the HUD team yesterday, and they are sending an environmental team to the State week after next to work through the ERR Process with us and figure out ways within the regulations to do everything we need to do and hope and hopefully reduce dramatically the cost and time that we spend on environmental reviews. So yes I would say that HUD has been very cooperative.

**Dr. Richardson:** OK. Within the regulations, will the funds be focused on single occupied housing, on multi housing, or exactly what?

**Mr. Forbes:** Obviously I can't say what's in there but I can tell you what has been in previous disaster notices and they would not normally be that specific, they would usually include waivers that are applicable to disasters. They will tell us how much of the money has to be spent on low to moderate income benefit. They will likely tell us if our last Isaac allocation is any indication as well as South Carolina and Texas last year they will likely tell us what geographic regions we have to spend most of the money in. They do an analysis called most impacted and distressed communities and that looks at the demographics in economics of a region as well as how densely impacted a region was and so they will likely, again I'm just guessing and based on previous allocations, but in Isaac for example they came out and told us that 80% of our funds had to be spent in St. John & Plaquemines Parish because they viewed those as the most impacted and distressed. So that's the sort of, that's the level of detail, they will not tell us, in all likelihood, spend this much on the homeowner.

**Dr. Richardson:** Do they go down to like smaller than parishes, like census tracts?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir. They very often will because the impacts and the distressed populations can be very much smaller pockets than a parish.

**Dr. Richardson:** Will we have input into that; because they're going to be sharing the data with us, or not?

**Mr. Forbes:** They are essentially using the same data that we're using to get to the place where they're going in. That's the FEMA individual assistance data and also census data. They have probably some data analysis tools available to them that we may not have but, essentially, we're all working from the same data.

**Mayor-President Robideaux:** Erin, I know you talked about some deadlines that were extended and may, I don't know if I didn't hear it or if it wasn't addressed, but can you let us know where the Shelter at Home program is because I have a suspicion that once the task force starts to make its recommendations, which are going to be limited obviously, the universe of affected individuals that we can we can address with this initial part of money, then it may be a situation where a lot of folks that were waiting to see what recommendations were being made before they did, the Shelter at Home may in fact decide to use it. So, I'd like to know when that deadline is so we can either ask for an extension if we think that needs to happen or not.

**Mr. Forbes:** I will weigh in while they're talking about the date and say that the Shelter at Home program will have absolutely no impact on community development block grant funds availability to household, they will not be considered duplications of benefits. The Shelter at Home is just a shelter program and it's designed that way by Stafford Act Law. FEMA helped us design it and it is designed in such a way that it will absolutely not be a DOB for CDBG funds.

**Mayor-President Robideaux:** I certainly understand that.

**Ms. Wesley:** There was an original deadline for the Shelter at Home program in October and we extended that deadline by one week, and so that deadline & the program concluded October 21<sup>st</sup> in terms of new applicants to the program.

**Mayor-President Robideaux:** OK. Is there the possibility of an opportunity to reopen that program if the task force decides that that's important? Do we do we know?

**Mark Riley, Deputy Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness** approached the witness table to answer.

**Mr. Riley:** The short answer is no. To be clear, the deadline was just the deadline for registration and I think we had over 21,000 people, so there are going to be a lot of people that we assist. If you think about it, the process that we go through in terms of the mucking and gutting, that's going to be pretty much done by those people that haven't registered already, so I think it will be a good program, it will produce some good results, but it was highly negotiated with FEMA and these deadlines were pretty strict. We had a hard time getting the one week extension.

**Mayor-President Robideaux:** Well I'm glad to hear you highlight the 21,000 registrants because what my suspicions are is that as we make these recommendations to say 'Alright, here's the universe that we're going to be able to help with this first tranche of money.' I think some folks that are living with relatives and friends may, that were avoiding acting on that registration, may say, 'Oh wait, I'm not going to be part of this. I need to go ahead and get back in my house so I'm going to utilize that.' So, I'm glad to hear of the 21,000 that have registered. That's a significant number that I think will be looked into that program in the near future.

**Mr. Reilly:** Thank you guys for your hard work. Jim touched on it. Pat you touched on it but the environmental review, it's not only time, it's also a lot of money and I'm looking at your projections and when you add up administrative and project delivery and environmental review, you've eaten through almost 30% of the available funds and I think a lot of people would view that as unacceptable. If we could get HUD to have us allocated some sort of work around on the environmental review that would be huge. Absolutely huge.

**Mr. Forbes:** It would and the governor very eloquently conveyed that message to the secretary that it was in all our best interests to make sure that we not spend \$100M on a process that essentially would not have any benefit, because history tells us it has resulted in zero or almost zero benefit.

**Audio power was lost in House Committee Room 6 for approximately 10-15 minutes, dialogue is missing in this time slot. During the audio power outage the below Resolution was discussed, motioned and passed:**

**RESOLUTION:**

**A resolution by the Restore Louisiana Task Force requesting the State Coordinating Officer for Louisiana's August Flood event (DR-4277) submit an immediate request to the Federal Coordinating Office for extension of disaster application deadlines.**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE RESTORE LOUISIANA TASK FORCE:**

**WHEREAS, the application deadline for the Individual Assistance Grant Program and the Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Loan Program is presently November 14, 2016, and the Temporary Shelter Assistance deadline is presently November 18, 2016.**

**WHEREAS, an extension of said deadlines will give impacted citizens more time to plan and prepare for their recovery needs, as this is the fourth largest disaster this nation has documented.**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE RESTORE LOUISIANA TASK FORCE:**

**(A) that the Task Force hereby requests that the State Coordinating Officer at the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness immediately request that the Federal Coordinating Officer extend the application deadlines for the Individual Assistance Grant Program and the SBA Disaster Loan Program for 30 days beyond the current November 14, 2016 deadline, and extend the deadline for the Temporary Shelter Assistance for 30 days beyond the current November 18, 2016 deadline.**

**Rep. Pope:** Motioned for the above Resolution be voted on and passed.

**Mr. Durbin:** Secended the motion.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Any comments or questions about the motion on the table? Okay. Let's do a roll call vote on the motion on the table.

**Ms. Dupont:**

Mr. Bradberry	<b>Support</b>	Mr. Gallagher	<b>Absent</b>
Mr. Dartez	<b>Support</b>	Representative James	<b>Absent</b>
Mr. Durbin	<b>Support</b>	Mr. Pierson	<b>Absent</b>
Mr. Faulk	<b>Support</b>	Representative Shadoin	<b>Absent</b>
Mr. Jetson	<b>Support</b>	Commissioner Strain	<b>Absent</b>
Mr. Knapp	<b>Support</b>	Dr. Wilson	<b>Absent</b>
Senator Morrish	<b>Support</b>		
Mayor Norris	<b>Support</b>		
Mr. Olivier	<b>Support</b>		
Representative Pope	<b>Support</b>		
Mr. Reilly	<b>Support</b>		
Dr. Richardson	<b>Support</b>		
Mayor-President Robideaux	<b>Support</b>		
Mayor Tyler	<b>Support</b>		
Ms. Wyatt	<b>Support</b>		

*15 members in support, no objections*

**Mr. Riley:** It was just a question of how we did that in the most effective manner. There's a whole menu of options. This was a new option on the menu and if it works out, and we'll review data and that sort of thing, we would work with FEMA to make this program permanent and be more effective next time because we will pre-load this program so that in the next disaster we're ready to execute a lot faster than we were in this disaster.

**Mayor Norris:** I like the program and I applaud you guys for coming up with it.

**Mr. Bradberry:** Pat, the environmental review costs assumes, looks like here, 5,000 homes require environmental review that seems kind of low. Can you expand on that because it's really important because that takes away from the bottom line in terms of what monies can go to homeowners and businesses and renters, right?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, but this is just for the first \$438M and we will likely not serve more than 5,000 homes with that amount of money.

**Mr. Bradberry:** OK, so that's how you got it. What would you say if we had more money, would be the number of homes that would require an environmental review?

**Mr. Forbes:** We actually have an estimate of 105 million, something like that.

**Mr. Bradberry:** OK, so from 17 million to 105 million.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir.

**Representative Shadoin:** Follow up on a couple of questions. Mr. Reilly was mentioning that when you add the administrative cost, the project delivery and the environmental review, we've cut \$437M down to \$310M. Is there any way in which we can be more efficient in these other three categories so it can go the people on the ground that are hurt?

**Mr. Forbes:** That is always our objective. I mean the ERR is the first one that obviously the Governor had the same concern and said we need to do something about this and that we are working on that. We have been working with HUD from the very beginning to try to make that. In fact, what we also are going to try to figure out is how to get language in the next appropriation that could allow us even further assistance in making that number go down. Administration. I can tell you that we are at 1.7% for Katrina/Rita, so there are ways to make that number lower. We are at 5% on Isaac. We will likely spend the whole 5% on Isaac. There are some economies of scale. So, I think that we can do better than the 5% on the administration piece because it's getting to be bigger. There's a caveat to that, it depends a lot on what programs we choose to run, some programs are just by definition more administration and program delivery heavy than others are. So some of the decisions, and we will, as we lay programs out for you to consider, we will definitely include in those recommendations information about those impacts in program delivery and admin costs.

**Representative Shadoin:** As I'm listening to the testimony I realize that we're working with Uncle Sam and dollars flowing down in the air all kinds of handcuffs and regulations. You know most of my life as a country lawyer spent trying to find the right pair of scissors to cut through the red tape and that's kind of what we need from you all because I don't know any details about TSA and CDBG and HUD and ERR. I'm just SOL up here. So, I'm going to have to rely on y'all to give us some direction and guidance and specifics on how we can cut these programs to help people because that's why we're here.

**Mr. Forbes:** Absolutely.

**Representative Shadoin:** So, whatever we can do to be more efficient because people when they come in they don't want to know if I can cite the civil code. They want to know if what you learned in your experience can help me with the facts today get an answer fairly quickly. Thank you all for your work but we need guidance and help.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir.

**Mayor Tyler:** Good morning and want to just ask one or two questions. Ms. Wesley, Mr. Forbes and maybe Mr. Riley from the March floods. It doesn't sound like we have an opportunity to access any funding from the \$438M and I'm just wondering have we thought about that? How does that work for us in Northwest Louisiana?

**Mr. Forbes:** I would never say that that's the case. These funds are for both disasters and what we're going to propose today is irrespective of geography. It's going to look at are HUDs most impacted and distressed calculations are going to look at where the most intense damage occurred and where the most vulnerable populations were before the damage occurred and will provide us with guidance on where we have to spend the money, but the program we're going to propose today would not consider geography at all, or disaster number.

**Mayor Tyler:** Thank you so much. I am really, you know we have families that are still trying to recover and some have given up because they have not gotten any relief. I just want to make sure that, and I don't know what data you're looking at, are you looking at the data that was collected back in from the March flood to assist?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes and that's actually in your packet and I'll be glad to walk through that with you.

**Ms. Wyatt:** You really have done a yeoman's job and we know you have the experience to do that. I think you've heard that time is of the essence. If there is nothing else that is coming out from the Task Force, time is that the essence and we need you to be Superman and Super Woman.

**Mr. Forbes:** Absolutely. I guess I would just like to make sure to say that we are in fact doing everything that we can. Unfortunately, Representative, we have a huge amount of experience in this now and so we sort of know how to go run the traps of reducing red tape to the extent possible. With all that said, there's still obstacles and hard stops at the federal level, those hoops

we have to go through and so my other message is just in terms of managing people's expectations around how long this will take no matter what we do, we've all got to remember that as we go forward, but please know that we're doing everything we can to make sure it goes as fast as humanly possible.

**Mr. Olivier:** Superman and Superwoman. My experience with this since Katrina Rita - we've got to give the people hope. So if we come up with anything today, we've got to give them some sort of a timeline. The segue from the mayor's questioning and all the questioning here, Sean's, everybody's. We got to tell them it is coming and when, because the businesses are going away. The people may be going away. So, we are going to lose folks, we're going to lose businesses. We're losing businesses right now and that's what we learned from that experience. I know you're doing everything you possibly can but out of this meeting today we've got to propose a timeline of when that money is coming. I know there's still a lot of unknowns but we've got to start producing something so we give them hope.

**Mr. Forbes:** To that point, I have a presentation cued up here.

**Ms. Wyatt:** I was about to say, is there anything you haven't updated?

## **VI. LA OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

### **Patrick Forbes, Executive Director, Office of Community Development**

**Mr. Forbes:** First I want to draw your attention to the numbers associated with the total ask that the Governor has made of the President. This is inclusive of the \$437.8M that is already allocated to us. The governor requested an additional \$3.3B. What I cannot stress enough is it the numbers up there are almost, I would say almost meaningless, that is not accurate, certainly we put a lot of work into making sure we understand the data as we have them now, but the data around infrastructure, business losses, those pieces are really going to be coming in for months now and so I just want to make sure that everybody knows these numbers are completely amendable. As we get better information, share that information with you, help you understand the analysis that we get and go from there in terms of prioritizing the funding. These are our best bets right now.

**Ms. Wyatt:** This is in section 3, behind the letters, in case you want to take some notes. I'm sorry, Pat.

**Mr. Forbes:** No, that's good. FEMA PA match that comes from our estimate of a \$1B in the August floods and \$120 M in the March floods, in this recognizes a 25% match for March and a 10% match for August. \$600M in resilient infrastructure projects is money that HUD recommended that would be special in Louisiana for us to do some innovative floodplain management infrastructure programs and projects so that we can start to demonstrate some better ways to reduce flood levels and in river basins, and not just river basins, we've got basins that are flat, just between levees. Mortgage and rental assistance. This is to address some of the things that we've already discussed this morning. Rental assistance, we hope to come primarily from FEMA Individual Assistance but we also recognize there are gaps there sometimes and so that's a potential for us to look at rental programs. This is focused primarily on increasing rental housing stock. Increasing and replacing rental housing stock. Most of the areas in the state even before the floods hit had shortage of rental housing stock, especially affordable rental housing stock and the storms just exacerbated that. So we clearly recognize that that's going to be a very big need in this process. How big? We don't know. We put a number in there that we think represents the right amount at this point but we'll adapt as we get better data. Then homeowner programs. That's a number that we have pretty good data from individual assistance data set and had to make some assumptions and put a number out there. I will go next to what earlier timeline was requested, to help people start to understand how long this will take. We've got the first appropriation. We're already working on the RFP process. Obviously we can't do too much until we hear from you this afternoon, I mean this morning, but once we get a recommendation on approach we can really start to flesh out the RFP, request for proposals. We will be writing policies and procedures for the program as defined by today's recommendation. We hope to see a release of the Federal Register notice from HUD in mid-November. We obviously have no control over that. We hope they'll get it out soon. The sooner they get it out, the sooner we can start to finalize the action plan. So then you see the publication of an action plan and then submittal of the action plan. We probably can shorten that up a little bit if we understand the last allocation that HUD did last year they only required 14 days public notice, we think we could squeeze our public comment period down to 14 days, we will be doing everything we can to shorten the time between the Federal Register notice and publication of that action plan but there will be specific requirements in the Federal Register notice that tell us how we have to define the impacts, the distressed communities, the unmet needs, and so until we can see that Federal Register notice we really don't even know how to start crunching the data to respond to them, and without a specific response to the way they write the Federal Register Notice we won't get the action plan approved. But again we will we will be doing everything we can to reduce that. We have been writing the action plan to the extent possible with the boilerplate language for a month now. So we will, once we hear from you today and then hear from HUD in the next few weeks, hopefully we'll be able to start finalizing that action plan; and then again we can't know but in the last Federal Register notice they did for disaster funds they allowed themselves 45 days to respond. So we'd expect approval within 45 days, if not shorter. I think, I even hope, that we can make that shorter because HUD knows us, they know the programs we're talking about already, because we talk with them on a regular basis about what we're thinking about. And so by the time they see our action plan they're going to pretty much know what's in it

and that should hopefully shorten their approval time too. These are, for the most part, worst case scenarios but we have to help everybody understand that these are what we're looking at right now.

**Ms. Wyatt:** The floor is opened for questions.

**Mr. Reilly:** Let's give the folks a Christmas present, get this action plan out before the holidays. Specifically on public comment, I think you can really truncate that time significantly given our experiences in the past and it's my understanding that us actually being here counts as public input and I think if we make that case then we ought to just blow and go.

**Mr. Forbes:** We absolutely plan to. My only reservation there is that we don't know what the Federal Register notice is going to be and we don't know what data analysis is going to be required of us for a submittal. That's the only reason that I have some reservations about guaranteeing that we can shorten that time until we see that but when we see it we will have a good idea.

**Mr. Reilly:** You probably can get credit for this meeting.

**Mr. Forbes:** We can but they will still say that once you publish an action plan you have a minimum amount of time that you have to go take comments from the public and in fact what we are considering doing and would look to you for recommendation for this is doing a roadshow around the state to over those 14 days to share the action plan with folks if we're going to have a 14 day gap we might as well be out there telling folks what it does.

**Mr. Reilly:** I'm sure everybody on this task force would be happy to do that.

**Rep. Shadoin:** Mr. Forbes, we had the floods of August primarily in south Louisiana, but in north Louisiana it was March. Now that we're lumping all this together, did we take any steps that can speed up what Mayor Tyler was talking about? Because the ones up at home, some still haven't been able to move back in their houses. Have we done anything to expedite those claims in north Louisiana?

**Mr. Forbes:** We have not done anything about it. Do you mean insurance claims? All we have to work with is the CDBG allocation and it is for both disasters, which you will see in our housing presentation later that one of the prioritizations that we're going to ask you to consider is the March floods first because they've been the longest without a home for those folks who have not been able to rebuild.

**Rep. Shadoin:** I'll wait till we get to that presentation, you have answered my question.

**Mayor Norris:** It sounded like you said the matches are different. That doesn't sound quite – why are the matches different? 25% in the north and 10% in the south.

**Mr. Forbes:** I'm going to take a shot at this and if I get it wrong Mr. Riley will come correct me I'm sure. There's a threshold in the Stafford Act for dollars per capita in a parish and in dollars per capita for the state that you have to meet before you break from the 25% threshold to the 10% threshold and the disaster size for August was big enough to break that threshold. In the disaster size for March floods, which FEMA considers them different disasters so they have different disaster numbers, did not meet that threshold. Consequently what we're proposing is setting aside the entire 25% match for the March floods and the entire 10% match for the August floods.

**Mayor Norris:** What do you mean, set aside?

**Mr. Forbes:** From the Community Development Block Grant funds. We understand that in some cases used community, they are absolutely eligible as use for match. That could be changed in this Federal Register notice but generally they are usable as match for other federal programs and so part of what we're proposing is to ease the burden on local and state governments and private non-profits is that some of the infrastructure funds be used for that match.

**Mayor Norris:** There are a lot of political entities who won't have the 25% match so the money has to go somewhere else.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir.

**Dr. Richardson:** Just one question Pat on the timeline, does that mean that none of the money can be really actually spent until that timeline is complete?

**Mr. Forbes:** That's correct, with a little bit of a disclaimer there. We can go start doing activities that are going to cost us money, if we have that money or if our contractor can do the work without getting paid until we get that line of credit opened up and the line of credit will go backwards in time so that we can cover those costs. The difficulty is finding sources of funds up front. Sometimes you can do that through your contractor doing work knowing that they're not going to get paid for a month or two. We also have been looking at some other sources of funds we can get out there earlier. There have been some proposals of private companies fronting money. We're looking at Loan Loss Reserve using banks. We are looking at several ways to try to leverage some other money out there earlier.

**Dr. Richardson:** So you can incur cost, if you have the ability to incur.

**Mr. Forbes:** Correct, we just can't pay until that line of credit is opened.

**Dr. Richardson:** OK and then the question of how much you can incur depends on your builders, credit ratings and things of that nature.

**Mr. Forbes:** Correct.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Pat, so is it fair to say that I think I've heard that this may be a conservative time line and you can go back and maybe squeeze some days in and out.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes ma'am and I wouldn't even say go back, I would say that we every single day we think about ways to shorten the time line and that's the critical work of this whole process is making that be as soon as possible but also be right.

**Senator Morrish:** Pat, the Mayor and I are having a conversation here on the side. On the 10% to 25% issue, is that state match or local match or is it both?

**Mr. Forbes:** It's whoever the project worksheet recipient is. It could be a school board, it could be a parish government, it could be a sewer district, and it could be the state's office.

**Senator Morrish:** I understand that you talked about putting aside the 10% and putting aside the 25%, I'm assuming that is state set asides.

**Mr. Forbes:** That's for all the public assistance regardless of who the – I'm sorry, I'm missing the question.

**Senator Morrish:** Well I think maybe the Mayor could address it better than I can but if the local police jury has a project, is it a 25% match in the August event, I'm sorry in the March event, and a 10% match in the August event?

**Mr. Forbes:** That's correct.

**Senator Morrish:** By the local entity.

**Mr. Forbes:** But, the \$130M that are put up there includes that match for them. It's a 100% of the FEMA public assistance that is our best estimate right now.

**Senator Morrish:** I think you answered the question. So the money is put aside for the locals to make their match whether it's 25% or 10%?

**Mr. Forbes:** Correct.

**Ms. Wyatt:** The floor is closed for questions.

## **VII. RESTORE LOUISIANA TASK FORCE WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

### **Housing Recovery Support Function**

**Lafayette Mayor-President Joel Robideaux**

**Patrick Forbes, Executive Director, LA Office of Community Development**

**Mayor-President Robideaux:** I'm a little too familiar with this room and I know that the people at this table, in these chairs, are normally expected to have all the answers, and I want you to know that I heard a lot of questions today and I have a lot of the same questions. Madam Chairwoman, if I can reserve the right to ask questions from here, I'll stay in this chair. If I need to go back to my seat to ask questions, I'll do that. Either way. Let me start by saying there's a regularly scheduled Thursday meeting with the Restore Louisiana Task Force Housing working session, which is a large group of folks from all the different agencies, to share information and to start to craft what we're going to present here today to provide the information to Pat and his group to provide the data and to have the discussions to start the process. What we have before us today is kind of a summary of those conversations and it is far from a perfect document. I'm not sure that it will leave this task force as a perfect document but it is a starting point that we need to have the discussion when we talk about the timelines and the need for speed. We have to have the discussion, we have to start somewhere. I think it was mentioned earlier that the building blocks are what is going to be presented to you. There's already been quite a few questions that have been asked as it relates to the package that's going to be presented to you. So let's ask all the hard questions. Let's try to get this right, and quickly. With that I'll turn it over to Pat and I would also like to take the opportunity to thank you and Rowdy and Erin and the entire team that worked on putting this together. I know a lot of effort went into it. I know there's still going to be a lot of questions about the final version in recommendation but. Thank you for all the hard work and thank you for making the presentation today.

**Mr. Forbes:** Thank you, sir. First I will say this is a recommendation. There are pieces that are not recommended. We will focus today on a homeowner program that should not be construed as a recommendation from us that 100% of the funds go to a homeowner program, in fact we're quite certain that funds need to go to a rental housing program and that funds need to go to help small businesses who are in danger of going out of business if they don't get some assistance fairly quickly.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Pat, can you share what tab this us?

**Mr. Forbes:** Five. Although from some of the questions I got earlier I suspect some of you were looking ahead. What we have are good data about homeowners and individual assistance and the impacts there. What we are still trying to put together are better data about business impacts, risks of bankruptcies of businesses, renters needs, and we just want to make sure everybody understands that as we talk through a homeowner program today that is only because we're not ready to talk to you about the other two for lack of data and that three weeks from now I'm committing to you that we will be able to, I hope, come present to you on those other pieces and in fact make recommendations about allocations among all the pieces, but we're not doing that today. Our objective today is to get your recommendation on a format, a form, for the homeowner program so that we can start writing the RFP and the action plan around that piece at least.

See PowerPoint presentation, available on the Restore Louisiana Task Force website.

*Madam Chair allowed one question during the presentation.*

**Mr. Reilly:** So understanding we're only talking about this allocation, the problem with the definitional chart that spells out the definition of moderate income by parish is that we're in the uncomfortable position of treating people differently based on where they live. I'd like to explore a way to make it more aggregate data. You mentioned you could take, for example, the whole NSA, wouldn't that smooth it out so that people in the hull?

**Mr. Forbes:** That is in here if you look at East Baton Rouge, Ascension, Livingston, and West Baton Rouge. Those are all the same number.

**Mr. Reilly:** So I'm not reading that correctly. Perfect. All right, thanks.

**Ms. Wyatt:** I think what we're going to do is just let Pat finish his presentation and then take questions.

**Mr. Forbes:** I am open to your questions and comments at this point.

**Ms. Wyatt:** The floor is now open for questions.

**Mayor-President Robideaux:** Madam Chairman, since I suffered through some of the meetings to get to this proposal I would like to just address the point, as a member of the committee not as the lead of the RSF. On the slide that has the \$70,000 average cost, if Pat could give us a little bit of background on that number and one of the things that I think as a task force we need to consider is do we want to use that number or would we prefer a lower number which would allow us to maybe increase the number of homes that are affected, the 9600 to get that which represents 9%, get that number higher. I think we all understand that regardless of what we do there's going to be significant levels of disappointment from a lot of the affected families and I would argue that I would prefer to have a large number of people disappointed that they didn't get quite enough, than an even larger number disappointed that they didn't get anything. So as we as we have these discussions, Pat if you could talk to us about the \$70,000 and how you came up with that number and then maybe even if we know the math, meaning if I lowered that by X number, this is not what I'm suggesting but if we lowered that to \$35,000, does that double the 9600? So, if I lowered by 10 how many more people can we serve and how does that formula work?

**Mr. Forbes:** Just to be clear, the \$70,000 is not proposed as a cap, but as an average based on our best estimate. We have used some software that helps us to make costs of construction. We've gone back to previous disasters average costs of repairs for flooding and \$70,000 is just our best guess. A cap would likely be higher than that. You could set this as a cap, the danger with setting \$70,000 as a cap is if you address a population that doesn't have other resources, you are, in all likelihood, going to eliminate them from getting any benefit because we can't go halfway build a house, in HUD's world that would represent not having met the national objective, and we wouldn't have an eligible expense there so we wouldn't be able to give them any money if they didn't get fully rebuilt. So the danger of setting the cap too low is that you exclude some of the neediest people in your population. Driving the average down, absolutely drives the number of people that we can help up. One way to drive the average down is to set a cap. You can have a cap for reconstruction, you can have a lower cap. Obviously the other thing we will be doing and what we hope is the case, but we didn't want to be overly optimistic, is that the way we write the RFP using line item costs proposals from the proposers we expect to try to drive the construction costs down through that state driven construction contract. If we're successful in that we could very well make this number go down and we have seen other programs where that was not the case. In New York their costs were \$600,000 to \$1M for a house. Shelter at Home, on the other hand, when we went out with the request for proposals we had people bid against line items for construction and I really think that that was successful in driving the cost down and we hope to do the same thing here and get that seventy number down.

**Mayor-President Robideaux:** I'll let the rest of the task force ask questions but I do know that Chip and Joanna Gaines (sp?) do a lot for \$70,000 with people's houses so it just seems like a really big number especially with the universe that we're talking about. There is not a lot of roofing requirements, not a lot of slab requirements, so \$70,000 seems like it would go a long ways to repair and in making the house. I think the Governor pointed out that I don't think we're expecting to ever get the amount of money we need to make everyone whole, and we need to keep that in mind to try to affect as many folks as possible.

**Mr. Forbes:** And so one thing I might say is you can have caps for some of your population and not caps for others. You can have an overall cap and all those things if you like. We can come back with recommendations for that at the next meeting.

**Dr. Richardson:** Of the current numbers right now, is \$70,000 a cap or is it really an average?

**Mr. Forbes:** That is our best guess at an average cost.

**Dr. Richardson:** So someone could go over that?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir. We fully expect people's damage to be higher than that.

**Dr. Richardson:** We don't have any cap in there at all, correct?

**Mr. Forbes:** Correct.

**Dr. Richardson:** Have we had any experience with the state managed construction project before?

**Mr. Forbes:** The Shelter at Home program is one example, obviously very different objectives of those programs but it is still a model that is very similar to this. We have done a similar approach on one small rental program after Katrina/Rita with some success. High program delivery costs. It has its challenges but I think that its biggest benefit is it has the opportunity to save homeowners from having to go through that process and risk being defrauded and all the headaches that go with doing the work. I think that it can also because of the reasons I talked about earlier drive the cost of the program down.

**Dr. Richardson:** Have you surveyed the people? Would they be interested in that at all, or do you know?

**Mr. Forbes:** We don't know. No sir, we have not surveyed folks. So, that's why we're leaving the option open for people to do either state driven construction or homeowner driven construction. That's what we're proposing here.

**Dr. Richardson:** They lose all their flexibility they have? All their ability to interact with the contractor?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir.

**Dr. Richardson:** So the state becomes the controlling force? I would find that very interesting if a lot of people chose that route.

**Mr. Forbes:** It may wind up that they will be able to get more work done on their house because our contractor is cheaper than contractors that they can get, but we really don't know that yet, that's a hope.

**Dr. Richardson:** We will see. On the averages you have on the moderate income using metropolitan area versus the other. You know, in the metropolitan area there's a lot of variation. Like in East Baton Rouge, do you use the \$51,000? In a certain sense you are including a few more people maybe, but you want to maybe really truly lower income market may not have the same chances that mean you're putting that in next bigger pool. So the question is, what is the definition of low to moderate?

**Mr. Forbes:** According to HUD what you're looking at on that sheet and that that's largely what we're driven by is HUD's definition of low to moderate income at 80% of area median. I should point out these numbers are for a household family of four with one earner. How many earners are in your family, how many people live in your house, all those things impact these numbers. So, these numbers can go up and down based on those variables.

**Dr. Richardson:** But only for one very set group of people? One type of household. One type of characteristics.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir.

**Mr. Jetson:** Pat and Mayor-President, thank you so much for your work in this area. Would one way to characterize the recommendations that you make around the universe of people to serve is that with this initial limited amount of dollars you put it to work to touch those people who are very likely the most in need of assistance? Is that one way to characterize it?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir. It is the people most likely to be in need and most likely not to have other resources available to them.

**Mr. Jetson:** Under the scenario that you outlined where there is some appraisal that is made as to the degree of damage and thus the award that is made, what is a process that you anticipate if there is a disagreement on the part of the homeowner with the number that is arrived at day?

**Mr. Forbes:** That is something that would just have to be worked out. We have a process we go out and do an inspection and if the homeowner didn't agree with that number we'd have to arrive at a number that we all agreed on and sign on a piece of paper before we could get started. So, we just have to have a process in place for working through those sorts of disagreements.

**Mr. Jetson:** Based upon the limited experiences that I have had with the small universe of people that I come in contact with on a regular basis who are in the challenging situation of trying to recover and based upon their experiences with the Shelter in Place and other aspects of the recovery process thus far, my advice and counsel would be that that process needs to be in place on the front end and that it needs to be terribly transparent and that the homeowner needs to be advised of it on the front end.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir.

**Mr. Jetson:** If we were to take screaming aloud off the table as a possible response, what would be your immediate reaction to a scenario where in there taking your multiple prime contractor model and eliminating the construction firm and the state managed contracts and simply having a process where there was a program manager and people were able to select their own contractors? Based on the question that Dr. Richardson asked, where we are uncertain as to how many people would want that program, Mr. Knapp, in our commenting, stand the potential of being a relatively expensive unknown if you go through the trouble of creating this infrastructure and its utilization is low, then we have utilized resources that could potentially be used by homeowners to set up a structure that's not being used.

**Mr. Forbes:** I think that the risk of spending much money on that model if nobody chose it is very low because the first thing that has to happen is the intake at the program manager firm and so if we start figuring out that nobody wants that option, we would never pull the trigger on starting the other people up. I think in other words, we'll know the answers to these questions before we would ever spend a substantial amount of money on the other side.

**Mr. Jetson:** And I hate to be unfair in using really simplistic examples to make a case in but even if you spent \$70,000 in setting it up and recognize that nobody wants to use it, that \$70,000 could have gone to somebody's home.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir, that is correct. I would offer an alternative view which is that if 100 people chose it and we saved \$10,000 per house by having that available, that we'd have another \$100,000 we could spend on somebody's home too. It's really going to be a matter of whether we're able to drive the cost down by having a state driven program and whether there are enough people who are interested in having it.

**Mr. Jetson:** You have given great attention to the 70% threshold and how under the recommendations that are positive before us today, it is likely, well not likely but 100% of the dollars would go to that target population and so for those who would rightfully

so that, say that, utilizing this threshold universally would deprive a lot of people of an opportunity that does not mean that that threshold would be in existence as we go forward and broaden the work?

**Mr. Forbes:** That's correct.

**Mr. Jetson:** As I was saying, you've made great emphasis on the 70% as it relates here or there, aren't there other elements? We had a brief conversation about some of the Section 3 expectations around people who are living in residents of the communities having an opportunity to participate in the economics of their recovery and that aspect of it. How is that envisioned in this program?

**Mr. Forbes:** First the Governor from the very beginning has made it clear that it's a top priority for him that the money we spend go to the people who live in the impacted communities. Also broadly recognized by HUD and by our office certainly that the way to compound recovery investments is to make sure as much of the money that gets spent stays in the area that is recovering because that just throws off more money. The better for the businesses, the local businesses and everything. So, there are regulations in place but there are also priorities on our part to make sure that when we put out a request for proposals, for example, that we have an emphasis on the Section three requirements, that we have disadvantaged business enterprises, that we require people to hire locals, local low to moderate income people. Those are in regulation but they will also be in our policy and priority for us.

**Mr. Jetson:** Those who would submit their proposals would need to be able to demonstrate that those expectations are present in their proposal?

**Mr. Forbes:** That's correct. It would be a part of their proposal and the contract, if we signed a contract.

**Mr. Jetson:** If you sign the contract with them, is there some process on the back end to validate that it actually happened?

**Mr. Forbes:** It would be ongoing through the through the life of the contract that validation.

**Mr. Jetson:** Thank you. Could someone please tell them that the beef is frozen?

**Mayor-President Robideaux:** That's just to keep everybody awake Mr. Jetson. If I could comment on the contractor. The thing is that a couple of considerations as it relates to the contractors is, I think, there's some concern that there may be a shortage, certainly in some areas, of contractors that are available to do the work and so there may be some need for the state to have their contractors available. You could argue that they were taking those contractors away from being able to do work but oftentimes that may be filled from outside contractors that are coming in to help up speed up the process and by having them vetted through the state, I think, there's less risk of some of the homeowners being taken advantage of from some of these outside contractors coming in. So there's just a lot to consider about whether or not we go that route or not, but I wanted to just make those two points that there is some other merit for the state having a piece of that contractor puzzle.

**Senator Morrish:** I'm assuming this is for Pat, Pat is there any provision in here, we talk a lot about contractors and I do see your reimbursement program, what about those who do the work themselves? Many of these areas are very rural areas where people are very capable of doing their own work or is there any type of provision in here, or does FEMA or HUD offer any provisions for those people that do the work themselves and what is that process?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, for the materials. They cannot be reimbursed for their work or the work of charitable groups that have come, family members that have come and done work for them, which is not an eligible expense.

**Senator Morrish:** I understand. But there is a provision that if I'm going to do the work, I can't pay myself but I can be reimbursed for the material and there is a process by which I'm not using a contractor, but I'm doing it myself?

**Mr. Forbes:** Correct.

**Senator Morrish:** There is a provision in there that they can be reimbursed for those and do they have an inspection process?

**Mr. Forbes:** We verify the receipt, hopefully that they produce from the work they've done. HUD has not liked this idea very much but we still continue to push it that we can go in and say we know they had four feet of water in here but we know that damage would have come to this much, we know that would have taken this much materials and we're going to use this backend inspection process to create a number for materials for instance.

**Senator Morrish;** OK, that's the other thing I have is not necessarily a question but more of a comment I think from this whole taskforce, as we look at this process and we look at the proposals that you've given us, and many of us were here for Rita and Katrina, and some of the things that we didn't do right. I want to be very careful that as we move forward we get this right, or at least get it as fair as possible. I know that setting a cap may not seem fair or but what would Mr. Jetson has suggested seems to be, what I want to say is that for both affected homeowners and for, and I don't want to be callous, but for affected homeowners, and citizens of this state, and for contractors, this is not the lottery. This is an opportunity for us to make people whole again. It's not an opportunity for contractors or people who meet an RFP to come in here and reap huge benefits on the backs of the people of this state and I think this task force realizes that and knows that and we all, although Sean I hear what you are saying, we need to move forward as quickly as we can. Let's just make sure we get this right. Let's be sure that we do it as fair as we can to get people back in their homes as quickly as they can.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir. If I could reiterate something that Senator Morrish brought up about the materials. We've said this before and I have heard you guys say it, but if people are doing work on their house right now, it's so important that they keep their receipts, that they keep the signed contracts, that they continue to document the expenses they incur as they are rebuilding their homes and going through and if they have any doubt, keep the receipt. They can sort out later whether it was helpful or meaningful or not.

**Mayor-President Robideaux:** If I could, I kind of like this chair because the mike stays hot. Just to expand on what Senator Morrish said is we need to identify upfront what's going to be allowed, both on whatever form of contract is used, but it's specifically on self-contractors that feel like that they are saving the state significant dollars by doing it themselves and they may decide I don't want quarter round, I want a more expensive shoe molding and since I'm doing it myself I should be allowed to and put it back to the way it was, so we need to have ironed out those details that as it relates to what receipts are going to be accepted or not accepted.

**Mr. Forbes:** So just to wander into the weeds a little bit. This is a good example but if somebody put shoe molding that was \$2.00 a linear foot and the HUD standard was a \$1.00 a linear foot, for a cost reasonableness, we would likely take that receipt, see that they spent \$2.00 a foot, look at the HUD requirements number for that, make the multiplication and give them \$1.00 per foot. That is, in all likelihood, what that process will look like that. You're absolutely right, that has to be in our procedures, people have to know that going in and it will be but that's likely what that would look like.

**Rep. Shadoin:** So would it make sense, if they're doing the self-help, to follow up on your answer, to give them the benefit of the doubt of that shoe molding, rather than the quarter round?

**Mr. Forbes:** It may make sense but it may not be allowable under our regulations with HUD. We have on costs reasonableness requirements where frankly we're not allowed to pay for things above a certain standard and people are more than welcome to do that if they want to pay for it themselves.

**Rep. Shadoin:** But if they're saving the state, and money, by not using a contractor and doing the self-help, aren't we?

**Mr. Forbes:** Makes all the sense in the world to me Representative.

**Rep. Shadoin:** So therefore it doesn't have a chance of passing. Thank you Mr. Forbes. Look, that's not what I wanted to ask, in your earlier testimony, what ran through my mind when you were talking about, and I will point you toward the homeowner programs budgeting challenge, where we have the additional prioritization considerations.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir.

**Rep. Shadoin:** While you were testifying I couldn't help but think of the words, that what you do to the least of my brother you do unto me. So on these priorities, what is the pecking order and who sets them? Because I'm concerned about those that have special needs, the elderly, the disabled, the ones that are having extreme difficulty getting around in their homes. How do we give them, and put them kind of, if there is such a thing as an express lane, to meet their special needs?

**Mr. Forbes:** Sure. What I am recommending today is that we set the, out of the flood plain, no flood insurance, low to moderate income, major and severe damage, as a set of priorities, knowing that we have these other priorities at the bottom of that page in our pocket, whenever we find out that we are \$200M short we have to make additional cuts, we can prioritize people in from March flooding, we can prioritize elderly and disabled, we could prioritize families with children. We will still have the ability to draw additional lines and reduce the amounts and then to prioritize those folks to the front of the line.

**Rep. Shadoin:** In terms of the paperwork, are there places on there for the special circumstances, so that the people looking at this could take that into consideration?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir. We have a decent idea from FEMA Individual Assistance right now but certainly our application process would have a much more detailed information requirements on it and we would understand those aspects of their household, those needs of their household.

**Rep. Shadoin:** I made two good friends down here, Connor and John Paul, and both of them have special needs. I picture them in my mind when we're going through these priorities. They have to have special access to the place where they live. They are on trach tubes, so I just want you all to be aware that there are people within these pockets that have special needs on top of the special needs we are already recognizing.

**Mr. Forbes:** That will be a decision that would not be made by us, it would be made by you as a recommendation to the Governor and those additional prioritizations.

**Rep. Shadoin:** Sounds good.

**Mr. Reilly:** So Pat, we've been through this war before and obviously what we've learned is simple is better than complicated, fast is good, efficient is good, but fairness really is essential and I had my Baton Rouge hat on earlier and now I'm going to put on my Louisiana hat. I'm still troubled by the notion that we're going to have different rules for different homeowners based on parish lines. Based on our definition of low to moderate income and I don't know if this is possible as you approach HUD but I have a recommendation that you seek an average or median or even take the high end or the low end but have one single threshold of income apply to everybody because I do think we're in an uncomfortable place, you're divvying up limited amounts of dollars and some people will be eligible just based upon where they live so I'd throw that out. I don't know if it's possible.

**Mr. Forbes:** It's possible. Let me describe the scenario. We could set a number of say \$37,000 for a family of four and let that be the number and in some parishes, well \$37,000 is a bad number, so let's use \$41,000 as the cut off somewhere near the average, and in parishes where that is below the LMI threshold HUD will let us count that towards our LMI benefit and in parishes where it's above the threshold we wouldn't be able to count it. That doesn't mean we can't put it in as a program line. That's certainly possible.

**Mr. Reilly:** This isn't a waiver you can go ask for in terms of, I understand the 5700, you can't ask for a slight nuanced change in the definition because this event affected 53 parishes?

**Mr. Forbes:** We can ask for anything but this definition of low to moderate income is baked in at HUD, it is part of their DNA.

**Mr. Reilly:** Fair is essential. It really is. And so I would hope maybe we can do something on that. Bigger picture, we are early in the game and we can make some decisions that might change the trajectory of this thing. During Katrina there were some thoughts of administering parts of the homeowner program through community banks because there's an infrastructure there, there's a way to hold contractors accountable. You could set this thing up as quite simply a draw down construction loan rather than a grant. Any thought to doing it that way.

**Mr. Forbes:** Sure.

**Mr. Reilly:** It strikes me, at least for maybe one of them, maybe the third option, maybe that's the best way to go. Maybe the second option, that's the best way to go.

**Mr. Forbes:** It's exactly the model for the homeowner driven construction is that we get the money, all the money, in a place whether it's in the program or in a bank and the money goes out on draws and you're absolutely right that infrastructure exists at banks now because they do construction loans all the time.

**Mr. Reilly:** I didn't see that in here but you're thinking?

**Mr. Forbes:** That's just a level of detail that we don't have in here but it's certainly a possibility for it.

**Mr. Reilly:** I would really encourage that because I'm also highly skeptical of a state picked contractor that just runs out and does everybody houses. I think that's a recipe for, number one, quite frankly, I think a waste but also a disappointed homeowner. Anyway that's my bias and I'll express it a little later on. Also, 50,000 feet. The formula for determining the eligible amount. Again we learned the hard way that simple is better than complicated. Can you give us that in 30 seconds for determining the eligible amount? How does a homeowner figure out what they're eligible for? What's the 'Oh it's going to work'.

**Mr. Forbes:** We use something like Exactamate (sp?) or some software that lets us go in and say you've got to rip out 1,000 sq. ft. of sheet rock –

**Mr. Reilly:** So it starts with estimated cost of construction and subtracts your otherwise aid and there you have it.

**Mr. Forbes:** Correct.

**Mr. Reilly:** So it's not like Katrina where it was pre-storm value?

**Mr. Forbes:** No consideration of pre-storm value is envisioned here. It's how much does it cost to get somebody back home.

**Mr. Reilly:** Alright so I would just recommend to the task force that we take a good hard look at that state run contractor option. I like door number two, door number three, more than door number one.

**Mr. Bradberry:** Pat, what I really want to flush out a little bit more the \$70,000 number. I mean that number was based on data, is rationalized, it's not a gut feel number, right? It was based on experiences and information that you have in hand.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes.

**Mr. Bradberry:** It's just hard for me to understand, and believe, that if we cut that number in half that you would serve more people.

**Mr. Forbes:** Correct.

**Mr. Bradberry:** But it seems to me that you would have two now upset groups because it's just not enough. \$35,000 is just, may not, be enough. So if we have a good number at \$70,000, why do we want to fluctuate very much from that if you feel good about your numbers?

**Mr. Forbes:** I want to be clear that that number is our best estimate, it is not proposed as a cap, which would be completely different if you set a cap of a certain amount and said we're going to help twice as many people because we set the cap at \$70,000 instead of at \$150,000, which would probably be our recommendation. What you're going to have the result is the folks who can't, don't have other resources, are not going to get any resources from us because in all likelihood we won't be able to produce a livable home for them for \$70,000 and consequently they will get no benefit, so that that's the real danger. I mean if in fact we could do Shelter at Home Plus, just for lack of a better term, and get the place, get to sheetrock in, maybe do everything that Shelter at Home does but not get up to the quality requirements that HUD has, we wouldn't be able to draw the money from HUD. So, that's the danger.

**Mr. Bradberry:** So Mr. Robideaux you were not suggesting that the \$35,000 be the cap?

**Mayor-President Robideaux:** No, that was simply to ask about the mathematical calculation of how many homes are affected if it was \$35,000 average how many would that mean. That there's 18, 19,000 homes that we could do. I just wanted to understand if the \$70,000 is the average, that if the average comes in at \$50,000, how many homes will that mean we were able to. I wanted to know that math, because at the end of the day there's 112,000 affected out there and we are helping 9,000 of them and we need to, piggybacking on what Mr. Olivier said earlier, we need to give hope to the remaining hundred some odd thousand that there is help coming or that there isn't help coming but we need to be transparent and open and honest about what path forward we're taking and what limitations we're going to put in place and that was the point of the \$35,000 was simply to get a mathematical analysis of what that would mean as how many folks we could help.

**Mr. Bradberry:** OK, I understand. My other question, Pat, has to do with your turnkey model versus your multiple prime contractor model, again state simply for me what the fundamental advantage you see over the multiple prime contractor model over your turnkey model. That's what you're recommending, right?

**Mr. Forbes:** What's the advantage of the split?

**Mr. Bradberry:** You are recommending the split model. It seems to me like it's a bit more complicated to get two RFPs out, you've got a QA/QC contractor looking at a program manager, program manager looking, and it gets complicated. Why do you think that is more simple, or better, than your turnkey contractor model?

**Mr. Forbes:** I think better than because we have less opportunity that the contractor can manipulate results on the construction end and then hide that from us, because we'll have both our QA/QC person and the Program Manager confirming the work.

**Mr. Bradberry:** That your primary reason?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes but I agree with you.

**Mr. Bradberry:** It's harder to manage, more people to look at?

**Mr. Forbes:** Potentially. We've got one suggestion from your former member Suzie that we put out a single RFP that asks firms to bid for one, the other or both, and hold our decision in abeyance until we see all those proposals and see what sort of efficiency they can describe for us about doing both, which is entirely possible and I think an excellent idea.

**Mr. Bradberry:** That's not a bad idea.

**Mr. Forbes:** No, I think it's a great idea. It really is. So that is one option we have.

**Mr. Knapp:** I'm probably going to abuse my time so let me ask a few questions and I'll try to be the rapid fire about it and not be redundant to other questions that have been raised. I will comment, just sharing a lot of sentiments I think have been raised in questions of a preference for simplicity and not having a construction firm or a state managed construction or at least considering that it may be at least simpler the advantage that is also sought of preventing fraud is attractive and I really would suggest if there's a possibility in a homeowner managed construction program of having some means of pre-approving contractors that they are properly licensed and bonded to do the work or in some manner pre-approved, you allow that helps with that potential risk of those. Now some of those that have already started, you couldn't potentially do that, but may provide somebody who's one of the select from a list of potential contractors. My sense is and this is more of the Chamber of Commerce guy coming out that it also would be more likely to benefit the area economy than a state managed contractor is likely to have a national scale to be able to operate at that level and that's potentially an advantage as well. The other thing that I would say on that is just as a suggestion is if there is a way to take some cue from what modern and internet life has taught us with the Yelp is that we can review a restaurant and tell a restaurant that we don't think they're performing very well, there may be a means also to allow that the homeowner can rate the performance of their contractor in that future construction can take advantage of the knowledge of what the experience has been like by those that have had that contractor in some way to see some independent reviews, if there's a way to do that. I wanted to get to the question of the 70% LMI and the status of where we are today without a waiver on a disaster program. With your comments earlier I took the message that we would intend, that we would hope that we would have the argument to reduce that to 50% to give ourselves a program that more matches the damage in the income of the damage that has hit our state, has hit a damage area, that is not 70/30, it is more likely I guess lower than that, more likely in balance what would a 50/50 program look like and the expectation with if that's the case you would be seeking to have a program that is able to extend to all income levels or a way to have a broader income strata. So one thought here is that we begin as the program is designed in the beginning with a 70/30 breakdown to try to find some way to get the program going in that direction as well and having potentially some part of what we're putting out set aside to make sure that it is going to non-LMI households that have been impacted to demonstrate both the intent but also to start a queue of applications in that direction with the absolute intent from the Governor and this board that the expectation is to serve non-LMI households at some point and to begin the organization of this program heading in that direction. If I was doing the math on your slides, you would have it looks like somewhere around \$346M on homeowner programs, on the earlier slides that we had \$276M was set aside for housing of the first tranche was \$69M set aside for admin and project delivery. The sense would be that you would be setting aside potentially \$100M for non-LMI household's under the full authorization that HUD has provided 30% to go in that direction. So could you just offer some clarity?

**Mr. Forbes:** Sure. First I would say no, that number is just a pulled number to give you an illustration of how much it costs to run the program and how woefully short we are. The thought was that that those other funds would be spent on rental housing, on small business assistance, mortgage assistance, and those kind of things. It wasn't an intent to slice some of that money out for non-LMI. What I would say is that what we have been talking about in terms of administration and starting the program up is that we absolutely would ask everybody who was impacted and interested in accessing additional assistance from CDBG funds, not necessarily from this, just in some way if they have a need, express that interest to us so we can start to figure out who the population is and so that would be the start of an application process. It's important that we not have them apply at that point because some of this reimbursement and environmental review HUD requirements and things like that, but the idea would be we would say if you were impacted by the floods and you have an unmet need, you didn't get fully covered by insurance, what have you, please send us an expression of interest, tell us these pieces of information about yourself and then we would isolate the group that you guys decide on as priorities for this, we'd reach back out to them with this first tranche of money, and then when more money comes in we've got the pool of interested people and we can start reaching out to everybody. We can expand the program priorities to the funds that we have available. Does that answer your question?

**Mr. Knapp:** Little bit. Just still wondering why there isn't an advantage however to having some means but which also

**Mr. Forbes:** I'm not saying that there is not an advantage to including some non-LMI people in the first round. I'm not saying that there's not an advantage to that I'm just I would ask you what we would use for prioritizing who those folks might be. I mean

certainly you could take some of those other categories that we listed out down there and say if you were elderly, disabled, families with children, that kind of thing

**Mr. Knapp:** And then presumably there's a potential of just a first in, first out prioritization on the non-LMI applicants as well, those that apply, or starting into the program as well. The other question I was going to ask on the on the math of that earlier slide was your comment about the major low beneficiaries that if you start to exclude some amount of those, do you have the numbers on if you had 9600 some odd total in this pool but you took out the major low, how many are left?

**Mr. Forbes:** We can know that, I'm not sure if that's a slice we did on the data, that 11x17 that you have in your package, we added some extra sort of detailed data to your booklet, but we can get that, we absolutely can get the slice of what change that would make to eliminate the low major.

**Mayor Norris:** Just three real quick yes or no deals. Do you consider family wealth when you are evaluating applicants? A lot of people can invest in tax exempt bonds or just live off the interest of \$5 or \$6M.

**Mr. Forbes:** You can, you certainly can require that people demonstrate they don't have money in bank accounts or something like that is part of the criteria.

**Mayor Norris:** I think that would be an appropriate thing to do.

**Mr. Forbes:** So even if somebody is low to moderate income but they have a certain amount of wealth that we would take that into consideration and further. OK.

**Mayor Norris:** I would think a lot of people would invest in tax exempt bonds and may generate a huge income but all they getting and paying taxes on is social security.

**Mr. Forbes:** That income would still be part of what they'd have to report to us in terms of low to moderate income.

**Mayor Norris:** What about other forms of wealth?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yeah they could own a 100 acre farm.

**Mayor Norris:** They may have a big stock portfolio. I think that would be important to make sure that the neediest, the most deserving people get the help first.

**Mr. Forbes:** It's possible. Identifying some of those things are easier than others. Bank accounts, clearly, are much easier to handle than real estate as a measure but it's possible.

**Mayor Norris:** Second question. After the flood occurred in our community, just days after that, there were little signs in every neighborhood that says I buy damaged houses and a lot of people saw no hope for getting their house fixed so they sold for pennies on the dollar. Do the buyers of those houses, are they eligible to apply for funds?

**Mr. Forbes:** I would recommend that our program is for people who are homeowners as of the date.

**Mayor Norris:** Absolutely, I agree with that. The faster people know about what might be available in the less likely they are to sell their house for pennies on the dollar, so that would be an important thing to get that information out, even if maybe they hang on for a few more months until the money becomes available, at least don't let them make that big decision. I assume what we're talking about here today and what you're presenting today is sort of a template for how the same types of funds would be used assuming that the billions of dollars, so we don't have to do all of this stuff over again, maybe just adjust the 50% or the 70% down to 50% or something like that, correct?

**Mr. Forbes:** That's correct.

**Mayor Norris:** The last thing, when you talk about people doing repairs to their own homes and that you need to keep receipts and all that, that's fine, but we really need to emphasize every type repair like this major has to go through the city's building inspectors, there are people that are redoing their houses, putting sheet rock up over damage wiring or wiring that got under water. Everybody needs to know whether they get this money or they don't, local building regulations have to be complied with so that needs to be maybe just a point of information.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir.

**Rep. Pope:** I'll try to be brief. I want to compliment my colleague up here Mr. Adam Knapp for asking what I thought was very appropriate questions and I appreciate that. So I won't have to go through and struggle through the questions he asked so appropriately. Let's talk about the rental assistance. Help me out a little bit on the rental assistance. Who's eligible for that? How's it going to be handled?

**Mr. Forbes:** There are a couple of different pieces to this. The rental investments that I have been talking about mostly are not assistance to pay people's rent as much as assistance to ensure that the rental housing stock is rebuilt. It would be in the form of loans or grants, low interest loans no interest loans, loan loss reserve backed loans for landlords and for nonprofits to go either rebuild apartments that they can't afford to rebuild right now because they flooded and didn't have flood insurance or properties that were out of commission when the floods came and you help people get those back online so that they can rent them at affordable rates to folks who frankly don't have anywhere to live right now, because there aren't enough available rental spaces.

**Rep. Pope:** I agree, there is not enough of that but then if I got 100 rental homes out and a 100 properties I might stand to gain substantially too, is that possible?

**Mr. Forbes:** If what now?

**Rep. Pope:** If I had 100 homes and I applied for 100 homes for rental assistance, I might alright as a property owner.

**Mr. Forbes:** But what we would extract from people is force their rent rates down. We wouldn't give people money for free without requiring them to reduce below market and rent to low to moderate income people so they would have a cost associated with getting a grant.

**Rep. Pope:** So we're taking away free market value, right?

**Mr. Forbes:** Not if they took a loan and stuck with a free market.

**Rep. Pope:** Well I try to be a very optimistic person and listening today I'm somewhat pessimistic on what I've heard and I would go back to something that has been said about some communities being treated differently than other communities and I still have that and you and I had his conversations a bit yesterday so I don't think it's a surprise that I'm going to make this statement and obviously I'll be probably run out of the building when I do it but I want to make a statement that this flood that we had in March and August didn't have anything to do with the race, it didn't have anything to do with gender, it didn't have anything to do with economic status, it had nothing to do with social status. It touched all peoples and I think what we're being presented today is something that's not going to help all people. I think we're being asked to support something in a recommendation, and I appreciate all the work, I understand that and we certainly got to help all people so I'm not going in that direction by any means but there are people out there in some communities that are actually hurting that really need the help, that work every day, they do everything that they can to provide what they're doing and they don't think they're going to get any help from what we're doing here is a committee. I hear it every day and I represent 50,000 constituents and I can tell you 40,000 of them have the same opinion that I do. And I say that because I just have really major concerns about it. Mr. Riley said it best I think we're treating some people unfairly and I don't know how we do that, that's why I brought up the 50% thing earlier on in the conversation and I think that's an area that we need to look at.

**Mr. Forbes:** This is always the hardest challenge is making those priority decisions when we have such limited funds and if this is all the money we will ever have, we will not help. As you saw, 9% of the folks who were impacted. Part of the rationale is that if you help the folks who are least likely to be able to help themselves, you're going to have the biggest impact in terms of return of communities because those communities that have folks in them that can't help themselves you are going to have checkerboard neighborhoods where people just fall away, there's still the danger for that, it's just a recommendation for priority with woefully inadequate amount of money.

**Rep. Pope:** I understand that but if we lose the people that are paying the freight, we're going to lose it anyway.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir. I would comment that the folks at low to moderate income folks are also

**Rep. Pope:** I'm not putting down on those but understand we've got to help, those people, and I'm certainly not in opposition to that, I want that on a record, that's not where I'm going with it. I also want the record to say we've got to help the other people too alright. We've talked about additional funds coming along and I said that I like to be optimistic but those are not a sure thing.

**Mr. Forbes:** That's correct.

**Rep. Pope:** I mean we need to all understand that's not a given. I'm going with the national politics the way that it is right now we don't know what's going to happen. We hope at least for and I applaud the administration for going and doing what they can and I applaud you all for helping the administration do that but until it happens, it hadn't happened. So we're dealing with \$438M that only a small percentage of people are going to help and I didn't mean to preach, Madam Chairperson, but that's where I am.

**Ms. Wyatt:** I'm going to a point of personal privilege and suggest that we have had a lot of information thrown at us and given to us today and I know Pat that you've made some recommendations but I'm going to recommend that we give some time to digest it and then vote on it at the next meeting just to give us some time to maybe make some phone calls, look at some other opportunities and the like. Is everybody is OK with that?

**Mr. Forbes:** Certainly, and I will commit that we will have additional data gathered by then and we'll be able to answer some of the questions about what happens if we take a slice of the low major damage out and other slices like that and also have additional details with respect to policies that we might talk through as you come forward with a recommendation.

**Ms. Wyatt:** OK, perfect.

**Mr. Faulk:** Might I request that if we do this, as soon as possible can the committee members get a transcript of all the discussion that went on so that we could analyze it and then formulate some questions.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Yes, you got that Pat?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes ma'am.

**Ms. Wyatt:** I'm going to add that we need a communication plan to let our people know what we're doing or how we're doing it. That something's being done already and it kind of speaks to the hope.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, absolutely.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Mayor-President Robideaux, you can come sit back in your chair.

**Ms. Wyatt:** The floor is closed for questions.

## VIII. LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMPACTS

~ Livingston Parish Assessor Jeff Taylor

~ East Baton Rouge Parish Assessor Brian Wilson

~ Rick Webre, Director of the Ascension Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness  
~ H. "Butch" Browning, EFO, CFO, Louisiana State Fire Marshal

**Ms. Wyatt:** We have Livingston Parish Assessor Jeff Taylor, East Baton Rouge Parish Assessor Brian Wilson, and Rick Weber for Ascension Parish and Butch Browning EFO CFO Louisiana State Fire Marshal. That's quite a few folks there so I'm going to ask you to limit your conversations to two minutes apiece.

**Mr. Wilson:** My name is Brian Wilson, East Baton Rouge Parish Assessor, it is certainly my pleasure to be here with you today and give you an update on the flooding impact that's going on in East Baton Rouge Parish that happened in August. We all know the devastation that's happened to the people of south Louisiana and we as assessors obviously are required by law to go in and reassess properties that have been damaged to a disaster that's been declared by the Governor. We have undertaken a process of trying to finalize it. It's a tremendous challenge and I think the biggest thing that we had to deal with, even to start with, was trying to determine which homes flooded or which properties flooded and which ones did not. That's something that we try to gather as much data as possible from city parish officials and other folks that we could touch base with so that is what we're trying to accomplish. So we're doing that now, we're finalizing our tax roll which is going to be run a little bit late and what we tried to do to provide relief to property owners in EBR is to give them a 35% across the board cut on the improvement value of their property, based on the information that we have and I felt that was the best way to go to be fair to the property owners and also to taxing agencies who receive property tax revenue. So that's where we're kind of at with that. What is the impact of that for those taxing agencies? You know in EBR Parish we're very fortunate to have a large tax base. Some to some agencies will not see a loss in revenue at all, and then there are some that are going to see significant, it could be anywhere from 10% to 30% from the previous year. So, that's kind of where we're at right now in East Baton Rouge and I'll be happy to answer any questions you might have after Jeff is finished.

**Mr. Taylor:** I'm Jeff Taylor, the Assessor for Livingston Parish. As Brian said a few minutes ago, we experienced a catastrophe out in Livingston. We are slowly looking at all of the information that we have coming in through FEMA, through the permitting department, through our own records of driving around and trying to look at the houses of flooded and we are looking and about a 20% drop in our assessments in Livingston Parish because we are a rural parish and we don't have a lot industry there but to give you an idea on what that's going to do to just drop 20%, my sheriff's office is going to lose about \$2M. And so when parishes are talking about they're not going to have an effect on their budget, it is going to be critical for Livingston Parish. So we have to be diligent, and as I've told all of my districts, I'm the guy in the middle of this trying to make sure it's fair for our constituents while also making sure that our governments and our districts stay afloat, because what I've told them many times is in about six months we're not going to completely forget about the flood ever, but in six months we're going to wonder why the services are not there and when the revenue is not there. If we cut it too much and we don't have a sheriff's office that can respond, a school board that can provide education to our children, our fire department, then they're going to start asking questions about why. So we had to come down and cut it is close as we possibly could, but even at 20%, when you look at it and it's going to have that kind of effect on our districts, that's a huge amount and so it's looking like we have heard as much as 80% of Denham Springs flooded. If you decide to drive down, the best way I have described it to people is imagine in the north when the snows come and the snowmobiles and snow machines go down through there and through the snow up on the sides of the streets, well imagine that being debris. Imagine that being moms china cabinet and furniture and sheet rock. So that's what we are faced with and as you drive down Range Avenue now in Denham Springs, which is our biggest city in the parish, as you drive down through there you still can't stop at the McDonald's up by the interstate, to Burger King, and the Home Depot just opened up last week. Wal-Mart's not going to open up until March. So you starting to see that we are going to not just only suffer property taxes but our sales tax revenues are going to be down. Juban Crossing is supposed to be opening up pretty soon. We've got some in there but this was one of our biggest vehicles for sales taxes and we lost that also. So out in Livingston Parish we are working together and what we have found is that we're resilient people and we've got two people from our parish on the committee here, and they can vouch for that. We're very resilient people who are working close together and we're going to come back stronger than ever.

**Mr. Weber:** I'm Rick Weber from Ascension Parish and I was listening to the briefings throughout the day and you covered most of what I wanted to cover in my briefing. Some really quick things that I want to take a look at is long term impact to Ascension Parish Hazard Mitigation Program and how we link it together between other parishes to approach the flooding situation that we have regionally and just a little bit on CDBG-DR. Our long term impact to Ascension Parish, it's going to take it's going to be an entire paradigm shift for Ascension Parish. Prior to this disaster we were looking at telling people that we can protect you to, but record inundation post incident we can no longer do that. Now we can only say we can protect you to a certain point because this incident overwhelmed all of the flood control infrastructure that we had throughout the parish, so it was 3-4 foot higher than record inundation for this one particular incident itself. So the key thing with the paradigm shift is we're going to look at floodplain management, we can look at planning, zoning, development, code enforcement within the flood zone and how do we look at that and how do we become more resilient. That is long term impact to the parish but what I want to look at is had a hazard mitigation. I've been a big proponent of linking the hazard mitigation plans of parishes throughout the region together and link them in such a way that we have one project that looks at flood control operations that impact all parishes. That was a record inundation of flooding but it wasn't worst case scenario. It would have been worst case scenario if we had a slow moving tropical storm sitting over pass Manchac between Lake Maurepas and Lake Ponchartrain. During the incident we would have seen floodwaters 3 foot higher than that would have probably been worse case scenario. What I've been a proponent for the last 5 years is that we take

out a hazard mitigation plans as mandated by FEMA and it's approved by FEMA through FEMA region six in Denton, TX and write these programs that look at how do we do flood control operations through the Amite River Basin that impacts multiple parishes throughout the parish. So just not only how does it impact your parish, but how does that dovetail in the other parishes and we can have a coalition of folks that can go to the federal government and say this is the way that we like to approach this issue so that this one plan is a federally approved plan by FEMA and I've always been a proponent to link those together to make sure that we can take a look at it. CDBG-DR, I'd really like to recommend and just say that everything you talked about today is critically important especially when we're dealing with the housing to help our residents out, but please don't lose sight of the infrastructure because this is what we're seeing now in Ascension Parish that we were 10 weeks post incident and we just had 3 bridges fail. 2 of them that we had to close the roadways on for repair/replacement, and another one that we're looking at. We've got 47 other bridges that were in a high risk area for flooding that we know are losing aggregate behind the bulkhead between the bulkhead and the on ramp. These are the things that we are focused on right now. I know CDBG-DR has an element in it for infrastructure. Critically important for housing, but please let's take a look at it for transportation infrastructure because it relevant to the income index. Everybody uses transportation infrastructure to get to and from, or to get to their homes point. So if we can take a look at it from that perspective, if we can possibly use some future funding that I know can be ear marked for transportation infrastructure, and I highly recommend that. Debris removal, some part of CDBG can be earmarked for debris removal. What's happening now is that we've got some folks that are just now getting insurance claims. This debris problem is not going to go away. So the issue that you have with debris is that early in an incident the unit cost per cubic yard for construction demolition debris is very high. Fixed cost for monitoring is here and as the two prices converge the total cost for a cubic yard becomes pretty astronomical so you need an exit strategy before you get to that point to stop contract debris removal. CDBG has the capability to do additional debris removal, so they can kind of take a look at that. Take a look at the critical infrastructure piece which is going to be important as we begin to see some of the infrastructure fail because of the high risk flooding area that we had throughout the region. If I could, just in summary, the long term management of the flood point is going to be critical. How do we do code enforcement? How do we manage the flood plain? That's going to be critical. Then, how do we link our HMGP plans, or hazard mitigation plans, together to take a look at flood control operations on a regional concept, not just by parish, and CDBG looking at critical transportation issues and then the debris removal that we know we're going to need moving forward over the next 6-8 months. I think you know, other than being subject to your questions that concludes my briefing.

**Mr. Browning:** It's an honor to be here and first off I appreciate what you all are doing. You know in times like this, when you're talking about recovery, that's a pretty important word but what it really drills down to is everybody being involved and having any input and as I look at this panel I see a lot of respected officials. I see a lot of local officials. I think that's important too and so the people the state should be very proud of your work and to know that they are being represented and so I'm just going to briefly, in the scope of the state fire marshal's office, tell you I guess where we are and from our periscope what we're working on. Certainly our role in emergency response in this incident was tremendous. Working with our local partners, local fire departments, and local law enforcement and emergency responders was vital. Our role took a very quick turn because the other thing we do in the fire marshal's office every day is we ensure safety and we ensure economic development, the codes and standards. So we really quickly reached out to the parishes and offered them assistance and advice and just a sympathetic ear and worked a lot in those arenas and helping people not only get buildings back and commerce's, as you heard is a very serious issue, but getting people back in their homes, getting people out of sleeping in cars and tents and with family members. But the other issue that I bring about today, I think it's important that you know and it was spoken today about the drop in property taxes. Certainly all the parishes are going to see some decrease in property taxes. Now when you talk about ad valorem taxes, in the fire department world that's pretty much the way that fire departments are funded. Some departments do receive sales tax, some departments do receive general fund revenues and cities, I know when I was Fire Chief in Gonzales that's how we were funded, was to the city general fund but most or all departments, most fire districts, rely heavily on ad valorem taxes so we quickly started talking with our fire chiefs and affected areas because we knew that here we are ending a year and it's time for tax rolls to come in and we start receiving our checks at the first of the year and it was real, they were going to see a reduction so we really quickly reached out to the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and in partnership with the Governor's office and discovered the community disaster loan program and the Governor made that request real quickly and FEMA approved that and we went into action. Not only to learn about the program but to have meetings. We've had several meetings with fire chiefs and effected areas and FEMA actually put on a webinar to help them understand. As you heard some of the numbers that are going to be out there, some fire departments are going to see anywhere from a 15% to a 20% decrease in their budget and we're talking now because much of the money they have left in a budget right now is carry over for them started a year off next year. We're talking about having to lay firefighters off. We're talking about not being able to maintain the operating cost of keeping fire stations open. Especially as you know in the rural districts whether they are career or volunteer. I mean those loans are vital. I mean a dollar to them means they have to stop doing something. They don't have fund balances and things of this nature. So right now we're working with seven fire departments in affected areas with the FEMA folks to get them on the right path. Two of which have already started the application process. I'm very appreciative that there is a life net that out there but it's a temporary life net. Because my other concern is these departments are going to have to borrow this money to make their budget and they've got to pay it back over a period of time. I'm just going to say it has it was said to me when it happened in Hurricane Katrina the departments in the greater New Orleans area had to go through the same type of scenarios to the tune of millions of dollars that they would have to pay back, sometime during that process FEMA forgave those loans, so I'm going to bring to the table is that I

don't know how that was done, I don't know what request, what process, to the federal system but I hope we're also looking down the road because many departments are not going to have the funds to pay this back. Again, they don't have reserves and property taxes and in my experience when I worked in local government in many cases was a kind of regressive, it wasn't progress if it didn't bring in the additional monies each year to keep up with operating cost increase each year so I'm very concerned about that and I hope that I can keep that on your radar. Certainly I'm a fire guy and I'm a believer in public safety, and that is one of the most important things that government does but I don't understand all the other things that you all understand and I just want to be a partner with you to stand up for our fire chiefs and the great job our fire service is doing. As a footnote, this same paradigm is going to affect sheriffs, school boards, it's going to affect anybody who is reliant on ad valorem taxes that the people have committed to pay to have their local services.

**Ms. Wyatt:** The floor is now opened for questions.

**Mr. Durbin:** Two questions. One for our Fire Marshal. Being a former fire chief in Gonzales and moving up to state fire marshal, you're familiar with the every five year review for fire rating. Do you have any knowledge that this event is going to promote another fire rating review faster than a five year rotation, which usually is the rotation period?

**Mr. Browning:** At this point, I've asked that question, at this point there's no indication that that could happen unless these departments don't maintain their level of service. So let's take the scenario, let's take fire district four, that's a pretty diverse department in Livingston that has paid employees and volunteers, many stations, if they don't maintain that level of service, it could allow property insurance association, could require them in some cases, to come in and regrade them. So if they don't open a station because of money, if they have to lay-off a workforce, or they lose volunteers because people can't get back in their homes, those adverse actions could very well cause property insurance to regrade them. The city of Denham Springs is probably a great example because they are heavily reliant upon career firefighters, if they don't maintain that staff, it could immediately revoke a rating on them.

**Mr. Durbin:** My other question is directed to Livingston Parish Assessor Taylor. Like I said Mr. Taylor, thank you for your presentation. One of the things that, as a former mayor, I always look forward to is a big check from the sheriff's office for ad valorem taxes that was collected for the city of Denham Springs. That timeline now is upset. Could you give me, or give us all, your best estimate of when your tax roll will be ready to get sent to the sheriff for collection, since he is the tax collector, and when can the local authorities possibly see a check coming in from the sheriff?

**Mr. Taylor:** Sometime in 2017. Nah, I'm just joking with you, we're a little better than that. Worst case scenario, we're looking at right now is sending out our notices around February 1<sup>st</sup>. That's what we're hoping is the worst case scenario. We're working diligently to try to get it quicker. We still have got lines that we have to follow as far as an open book period in our publications and then having our board review and an appeals and all that, so we still have to follow all that. So, that's going to be a large part of our weight, but we should be finished with the work that we need to do in the next month or so and then we'll start the process but worst case scenario February 1<sup>st</sup> we are hoping to get them out, closer to early to mid-part of January. And if we can do that that will you know it's not it's not perfect, obviously perfect would have been that we could have went ahead and did everything, you got to realize that our books in Livingston Parish were going to open August 15<sup>th</sup>. And then things turned upside down on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of August. When people ask me 'How do you know what we're going to lose in revenue and what bases it?', well we were going to open up that Monday, my office actually opened that Monday, with all of the work that we had done over the last 4 years and now we're trying to cram everything into 2-3 month period. About 2-3 month period would have been time to come back in and reassess the properties, and like Brian said earlier, the biggest problem that we're having is not so much pulling it out and telling you there's a 20% or 35% or whatever percent you're going to give them, it's finding out the ones that flooded. So we're sending out as much information as we possibly can. We're going to be putting on our website this is the list of people that we have that flooded or the buildings or the assessments that flooded. If you're not on this list please contact our office. We're going to try to get into the media, the papers, T.V. We're doing everything we can, but we still know that there are people out there that are not watching T.V. because when they come home in the evening times, first of all they don't have TV set up because they haven't got electricity yet, they're working on their homes and they're not reading the papers because the papers are not being delivered and they are not going to the coffee shops because the coffee shops not there anymore, so we know that we are going to miss some people, we're going to have some change orders but we are going to do our dead level best to make sure that everybody gets the information.

**Mr. Durbin:** Mr. Weber, do you have a timeline when you might be getting your notices out? I mean Brian.

**Mr. Weber:** I'm not the Assessor.

**Mr. Wilson:** We're looking at the 1<sup>st</sup> of January. Hopefully we can get the tax roll to the sheriff in December and we were trying to do something in January as quickly as possible. We were actually looking at February but we try to combat that and try to get it done a little bit sooner and get the, as Jeff said, we have to jump through the hoops to do the open book period and do the appeals process and go through those avenues to do so but we're going to try to get it done in January.

**Mr. Faulk:** A couple of things. First of all, people don't understand that for those school systems, such as Ascension, Livingston and four in EBR, there are bonds that we are obligated to pay to fund projects and most of those bond payments are due around the first of February, so the late collections are going to cause a problem in some of the districts meeting their bond payments and

I know in Livingston there are several taxing districts so that problem is going to be compounded. Now, Brian, you mentioned about 35% across the board, and the difficulty there is there are 4 districts within EBR, Zachary, Baker, Central and EBR, so the assessed evaluation in some districts is more than in others and their reliance on property taxes is more in some than in others. In the assessment reevaluation are businesses going to be impacted?

**Mr. Wilson:** Yes. Commercial properties, yes.

**Mr. Faulk:** They are?

**Mr. Wilson:** Yes. It's across the board. We are doing 35% whether it's commercial or residential. It's important to understand that's on the improvements, not the land.

**Mr. Faulk:** But that's still if you've included the magnitude of the impact to the local budget is more significant than if it were just the homeowners. So, I just, if we have to go for revenue anticipation loans to ensure cash flow until such time as we receive the receipts, then we have to go to the bond commissioner, we have to get on their agenda, we have to get approval, then we have to advertise for the money, so we are looking at almost the end of a school year before we get those revenues that we were anticipating getting in January. The other magnitude that is not being considered in this is that I know I have lost 108 student since February 1 to October 1, which the impact on the state funding is over \$600,000 because it is based on a per pupil amount. That's number one. Number two, we will not be able to recoup any dramatic shifts in our relative wealth for 2 years because the fiscal information based on the net assessed evaluation stuff is always in two years in arrears. According to how the state department runs the MFP and all. There were supplemental appropriations done for Katrina. And there was a supplemental appropriation done I think for either Rita or Isaac. I think Pat mentioned that St John the Baptist and Plaquemines Parish to offset the loss of potential local revenues and it had to go through a supplemental appropriation. So all we're going to have to look at the governor's office to do something to help those districts in that one year that we do it now. People will say well your sales tax is going to increase, or I know the motor vehicle taxes increases because people have bought cars. But you sales tax if a business is not operating they're not collecting sales taxes and we have five zip codes in Central and it's hard enough to track to make sure that just in regular circumstances we're getting to sales tax revenues that we're due. Now this is going to exaggerate the situation.

**Mr. Taylor:** When you were talking about your sales taxes, a lot of people that lost their vehicles and everything, lost them in August, they bought them in September or October so we've already seen a good hit of the sales taxes coming back and when you're seeing these areas like Denham Springs is still short, Livingston parishes still short, a little bit of their projections of what their sales taxes are going to do with all of that happening. You got to realize Home Depot is closed. Juban Crossing is closed. Wal-Mart is closed. All of those sales tax dollars are going somewhere else. When Home Depot is closed, people were running over to Millerville helping Baton Rouge sales tax. We had stands and homes in Livingston Parish but they were just overwhelmed so people were going to Lowe's, they were going to Tangipahoa, so we lost some of those tax dollars, but let me bore you with numbers. My wife always gets on to me about boring with numbers but I think it's important that you know how different a parish that has industry and a parish that has very rural. Every home that is around \$100,000, when we remove the 20% from them, you don't lose 20% revenue, you lose 100% revenue because what happens when you lower that amount about 20%, it goes under the homestead exemption. So, I think when you start putting the math to it, you will see. 20% off of business is 100% because it is straight, no homestead exemption, nothing is affected. 20% 20% But when you remove 20% from a \$100,000 home and say you drop it to say, if it was \$90,000, you drop it to \$75,000 you lose 100% of that revenue. It's gone. So there's no, it's not a 20/20. Then when you start thinking about it at \$125,000 you're losing 50% of revenue and then when you do, it adds up pretty quick and you see that it is not just a straight deal. So, in our parish we have a lot of things to work on and that's why our loss is going to be pretty significant.

**Mr. Faulk:** And one of the things people don't realize is the issue we are going to have with school systems is a cash flow issue. Because even though some of us may have had fund balances, we've had to expend a large amount of money doing cleanup, replacement of equipment, a lot of things and we still haven't gotten the first reimbursement. If you had a fund balance it's good and can only hold you up for a little while. You also have to get your reimbursement on federal funds, you have to expend the money first, and then you request the reimbursement. So we have federal programs that are being operated off a general fund revenue and we are always in arrears in getting the reimbursement, so it's a cash flow issue. It's a budget issue for a lot of people, not only school systems, but your police departments, your fire districts, and all that rely on, not only property tax, but also the regular sales taxes.

**Ms. Wyatt:** The floor is closed for questions.

## **IX. DISASTER CASE MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION**

~ **Katie Underwood, Disaster Case Management Director, LA Department of Health**

~ **Angele Rogers, FEMA VAL Group Supervisor – DR4263LA & DR4277LA**

**Ms. Wyatt:** Next we have the disaster case management presentation by Katie Underwood, Case Management Director for Louisiana Department of Health, and Angele Rogers, FEMA VAL Group Supervisor. Welcome ladies.

**Ms. Underwood:** Hi, I'm Katie Underwood. I work for the Louisiana Department of Health and I'm the Program Manager for the disaster case management program for the state. I'll just give a really quick overview of the program, who we are, what we do, kind of how it's rolled out all over, the history. So let's start with some history. For 4263 we were awarded \$19.5M mid-July. For 4277 we were awarded \$40M in late September. These funds are 100% FEMA funded and it's funded as a cost reimbursement not a block grant this money actually goes through O.C.D. they're the administrators they were the great recipients. The Louisiana Department of Health is the program management. The period of performance for this grant is two years and our current parameters start when the first Grant was awarded which is mid-July. So it'll go through currently July of 2018. There is an option for a no cost extension for that. Actually through O.C.D. they selected six provider agencies which are non-profits to do the work on the ground. Quickly some statistics on the work that we're doing, we have 63 case managers budgeted currently for 4263, the March flooding. Currently 46 of those are hired and working across 36 parishes and through that we're anticipating to serve a minimum of 2200 households. And then for the August floods. We have 186 case managers budgeted, currently 166 of those are hired and working across the 22 IA declared parishes for the August floods and we're anticipating serving a minimum of 6,450 households with that grant. So a little bit about what we do and who we are and who we serve. We work with the households, the individuals that have disaster unmet needs who cannot successfully orchestrate or manage their own recovery. We are a long-term recovery program. We have case managers on the ground that work hand in hand with survivors. They help them by doing at their own needs assessment identifying those unmet disaster related needs. They help them in developing a recovery plan. They educate their clients and connect them with resources that are available to help with recovery and other community resources that are just already in transit to the community when they exist. We also work with clients to address their recovery needs but often address other needs so we leave them, hopefully, more stable and more resilient than they were to begin with. So we really want to shore him up and make them better prepared for future disasters. A couple things that were not as disaster case management. We're not a direct resource or direct service provider. So we provide the case management, the coordinating component, but we don't provide direct assistance dollars or direct services to clients. We're not housing, we're not transportation, and we're not food. We helped facilitate that for them. We're not an Emergency Response Program, we are a long term program, and although with 4277 coming on the heels of 4263 we did a little bit of hybrid work. We did some immediate response work outside the scope of our traditional long term recovery case management program. Quickly a bit about our process. We start with outreach, we get referrals from FEMA, from state, from community partners, we do a lot of grassroots out in the community work, and we do that intake and assessment component that I talked about. When we're assessing folks, we really look to their vulnerabilities. If they have special vulnerabilities, elderly access, and functionally, the low income population, we prioritize those and they get more contact and get priority for services. We again, as I mentioned, develop those recovery plans and then we help them set goals. We identify the resources, refer them for services, and the other thing we do often is identify unmet needs. We know that there's unmet needs. We certainly can't house everybody today, things we've been talking about today. So we serve as an advocacy arm for that, we have a cape for our clients. One thing to know is that we are still in the ramp up phase of our program and prior disasters often disaster case management doesn't fall until later in the process. So we're effectively building our plane as we're flying it. We often do that in DCM, disaster case management, because really we're working with 1,134 households from the March flood and 2,618 households from the August flood. Some trends that we're seeing with these needs, we are identifying, shouldn't come as a surprise to you all, is housing related needs for both homeowners and renters. There's a tremendous need for repair and rebuild assistance and rental stock that's affordable for folks. Other things we are seeing is people's household goods, people lost appliances, furniture, everything that they own and they're trying to figure out ways to get to recover all of these things, transportation included, many people lost their access to public transit that they use or to their own personal transportation. One way we work as we work with people and working to identify resources we work very closely with FEMA and their Voluntary Agency Liaison Department and there's a process Sequence of Delivery and we have long term recovery committees.

**Ms. Rogers:** Good afternoon. My name is Angele Rogers, I'm the FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison Group Supervisor. That doesn't mean I'm a volunteer with FEMA, we work with the nonprofit and faith based organizations in response and recovery work. We also move over and work closely with the National Disaster Recovery framework as recovery moves forward. Long term recovery organizations I know at the last meeting there were two ladies that approached you guys and spoke about the New Jersey and New York and the work that they were doing up there. Well that's exactly what we're doing as well. Long term recovery organizations are those community organizations that we help in creating and facilitating so that they can meet the needs within their own community. Many times the churches, nonprofit organizations that are already there, civic groups, local pastors, and community leaders, but then we also include our national nonprofit organizations, so you may see Red Cross, Salvation Army, Mennonite Disaster Services, it becomes like a one stop shop if you will where disaster case management can come and bring cases of those survivors that need assistance. Each case is looked at clearly to determine that they have gone through the entire individual assistance sequence of delivery process which means that they've received all of the possible assistance through the federal family and that this is pretty much the catch net of who's going to help them at the very end that is truly an unmet need. So we work closely with disaster case management. Oftentimes what we do is go back and review a lot of the FEMA cases. So there may be times that someone forgot to submit a particular document that made them eligible for a federal program. So we work closely with disaster case management to be that advocate for the survivor in order to make sure that the proper paperwork and document is submitted to FEMA and appeals process as well we do this with SBA should that be a need or a criteria that's in their recovery efforts. Just so that you know, currently we have 13 of these long term recovery committees, 6 of them are serving for 4263. So there is one in the Shreveport area, one in northwest Louisiana and Northeast Louisiana. There's 4 currently serving

for 4277 which was the August floods and we have 3 that are currently serving in the Florida parish areas so they're covering both 4263 and 4277 March and August floods. The ones that have been created from the March floods and also the ones in the Florida parish areas are already seeing cases so disaster case management is already active there, already advocating for those survivors, and bringing cases to this consortium which is called a long term recovery committee. As I mentioned this is the catch net so we need to make sure that the survivors have gone through all of the processes and have claimed all of the resources that are available for them and exhausted before we bring them to our nonprofit organizations. Most of the people that sit around the table either bring money, materials, or volunteer labor, but oftentimes it's the local pastor who just has the knowledge of the community and is able to guide that person into the right direction to get some assistance. I'll give you a quick example of how this has worked in the past. So you may have an applicant who is elderly and received just limited amount of dollars from FEMA for that particular disaster. The disaster case management will then work with them. We determine that yes they did indeed all that they could possibly receive with FEMA so our last resort is to go to the long term recovery committee, the case manager goes on behalf of the applicant, presents the case and talks up the needs that are there. So in this particular situation if the person needed help with rebuild or repairs and didn't have enough money to complete that particular case, those funders and those volunteer laborers sit around the table and discuss how they can help. So you may have an organization like Catholic Charities or Salvation Army who may say I have some additional funds to put towards that case and then an organization like Mennonite Disaster Services can provide the volunteer labor to help with that particular situation. So in closing, just to let you know, this model's been in existence for a long time. I was actually a local hire for Hurricane Katrina and from Plaquemines Parish and so this is my 8<sup>th</sup> disaster in the state of Louisiana. It's a very successful model that's used nationwide using both disaster case management and long term recovery committees and the reason why I bring that up is at the time of Hurricane Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike, there was actually 26 long term recovery committees throughout the state of Louisiana. Some of them to this day are still responding to multiple disasters like we see in the Florida parish areas. So there's a lot of lessons learned. The only thing that I'm really going to state that I think needs to be taken into consideration is that volunteer labor can cut the cost a lot of times when it comes to construction and so it's something to think about even when you're looking at other programs through community development block grant and things of that nature. A lot of are nonprofit organizations that do rebuild or a national nonprofit organization, so when you're talking about an organization like the Mennonite's, construction is something that they do even in their own backyard. So just something to consider. I know we've worked closely with Office Community Development in the past and have implemented some of this but it's just something to consider for this disaster as well.

**Ms. Wyatt:** The floor is open for questions.

**Rep. Shadoin:** Ms. Rogers.

**Ms. Rogers:** Yes ma'am. I'm sorry. Sir. It's been a long day.

**Rep. Shadoin:** The mind can only absorb what the fanny can endure. Did I understand you to say that there is one FEMA office in northwest Louisiana but it serves all of North Louisiana, is that correct?

**Ms. Rogers:** Well I wasn't referring to the FEMA office, I was referring to the long term recovery committee which is a community based organization that is made up of not only local pastors and those local community nonprofit organizations but national nonprofit organizations as well correct. We work closely with the Community Foundation in your area.

**Rep. Shadoin:** And does that include people from all across North Louisiana?

**Ms. Rogers:** Yes. Now that organization just started. They were probably the one that we had a little hard time, they were just ramping up as 4277 was happening. So there is one of me so I have 22 employees if you will and they work in the community. So I do have a voluntary agency liaison with FEMA who was up in north Louisiana working with disaster case management and the long term recovery groups.

**Rep. Shadoin:** And how do people know how to contact these folks?

**Ms. Rogers:** So this is what's interesting, the long term recovery organizations don't interact directly with the survivors. The disaster case manager works with the survivors and here's a good reason why of how this happens when it comes to funding and providing labor and because most of our areas are very small rural communities and everybody knows everybody. The last thing that we want is for a church or an organization who may have money to know who the survivor is so cases are actually assigned numbers. When the disaster case manager presents it they don't know who they're funding, they don't know who their helping and it just keeps that process moving and it doesn't cross any lines. So they would reach out to the disaster case manager versus the community. So in your particular area you have St. Vincent de Paul that's working up there and Volunteers of America.

**Rep. Shadoin:** I'm sitting next to the Mayor of Shreveport so I'll get some local knowledge over here before she leaves.

**Ms. Wyatt:** The floor is closed for questions.

## **X. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Ms. Wyatt:** The floor is open for public comments.

**Ms. Angela G. Lorio, Trach Mommas of Louisiana**  
**Ms. Jeanne Abadie, Advocacy Center**  
**Ms. Yavoaka Archaga, Resources for Independent Living**  
**Mr. Jeff McKneely, Tangipahoa Parish Government**

**Ms. Lorio:** Thank you Madam Chairwoman. May I ask someone else to go first? This is Jeanne Abadie, she didn't get her card up.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Okay Ms. Abadie, Advocacy Center.

**Ms. Abadie:** Thank you madam chair and members of the task force. I appreciate that you give your time to this because it is so important to so many people who have been affected. The Advocacy Center is an agency that serves people with disabilities throughout Louisiana. We have been facilitating a group of advocates and actually even state agencies to discuss the how this is affecting people with disabilities and I think you all know it is, and I appreciate Representative Shadoin, bringing up the people with disabilities and their needs during this disaster and I thank you for that. The big issue I wanted to, I don't know if it was brought up when the Office of Community Development was speaking Mr. Forbes, but I wanted to make sure that permanent supportive housing is a part of what's being proposed in as housing moves forward, as rental properties are looked at being renovated, permanent supportive housing is one way to be able to help people with disabilities gain housing. So I just wanted to offer that up and hope that it can become part of the plan.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Ms. Lorio.

**Ms. Lorio:** Thank you Chairwoman Wyatt. I want to echo a thank you to Representative Shadoin for bringing in some light on that. As some of you may know I'm with Trach Mommas of Louisiana represents the subset of the disabled population that is those who are medically fragile, technology dependent, or immune compromised, in disaster recovery that has expanded to include everyone, not just people with tracheotomy, all the way to geriatric. That is cancer patients, people waiting on transplants, veterans who may be amputees, any type of wound care, foreign object, stone is in their body, all the way to someone with hearing aids is technology dependent. Not too long ago we were all here because of the budget crisis. So we know all too well that the economics and infrastructure and services to this population were shaky at best. After that budget crisis, here comes the flood and things are crumbling. Things are really crumbling. The mindset of seeing those who are elderly and disabled at the bottom of a list that may or may not be taken care of if there's money later. You know we all experienced that type of kicking the can down the road if you will. So we just, I'm just here as a voice to remind you to please keep the most vulnerable in the forefront, instead of on the backend and the national objectives, you know that number three, urgent need. We just want to shed a light and put a face on this population and how it is an urgent need. And I want to thank you for your work because I can't imagine this overwhelming daunting task. So if you imagine all the issues that have come up in the several hours we've been here in a person's life. Add to that to losing everything including your car possibly a job to still having a child that requires 24/7 care to keep either airways clear, wounds not infected, keep them breathing, and keep their trach clear. So we're talking parents having the take turns overseeing the work at the house. They may or may not have had nurses or care attendants who have flooded so they may or may not have any help that they had before the flood. So it's already an intense stressful existence. So it's a shaky you know existence and you add the flood and the rug is pulled from under them. In fact one of our trach moms is a volunteer firefighter in Livingston Parish and they're actually one of our families also that they're considering moving out of state because it's a lot for anyone to manage the system. Even with a disaster case manager you know with everything in place. It's a lot to balance that and your medically fragile child or mom or grandmother or whoever it may be so it's just some unique angles you're going to have to look at as far as this population is concerned because we're talking you know of the population who flooded approximately 20% is a good number as far as those with special needs. OK And that's at the time of the flood that includes people who are temporarily disabled and it's across the board. One mom, her child has cancer. They were actually at St Jude for treatment when they lost everything. We had a lady, you know we've been doing deliveries, just to show you know we've got total skin in the game because my husband who is just here, in all of our volunteers, we deliver we go to if somebody is in a hotel needed an breathing machine you know, nebulizer we have about two and a half tons of medical supplies. So that's an example, this population cannot come out to events, they can't go out to where meals are being served. They're homebound in the biggest sense. I cannot leave my home. Today I have a nurse. That's the only way I can leave my home because my son has a trach and needs that care. So to think of the added challenges of disaster recovery with this population. So if you take the 20%. If you were recall in the budget crisis for those of you who this was your second home this small part of that 20% requires more funding. You know, there was questions like will you know why is this amount you know going to be cut in that amount. It's a smaller number of people that requires more funding to take care of and it is some of the most vulnerable. A lot of them. You know our veterans because we're working hand in hand with the whole Cajun Nation, Cajun Army Cajun Navy, I even met Cajun Gravy last night who cooks. So I'm a voice here too. When you're looking at the prioritization to have the disabled, medically fragile at the bottom of the spreadsheet, have them at the top even more so than your LMI considerations. For those families, and this includes the aging population as well, there's a lot of variables and when you talk about application processes. Ok sometimes it may be as simple as training for those who are in the field who are assessing a situation. There's no box to check you know for a special need. There is no box. So it's not objective. Its subject if there needs to be some objective measurable way that people out in the field. Some may have the training, they may have had a special needs relative, some may not, so we're coming across that if someone does go out from FEMA, well

whatever service it might be, if there was an objective way to check a box and that's easy. I mean if you receive disability you've already been vetted. If you have a discharge summary, I mean there's ways you can you can make it a little more objective because that's not taken into consideration when special provisions are being considered for what might be available and I would ask you to please consider things like the air quality. You know we're talking there are some people over there that work for Red Cross. They do mapping and I said can you map the air quality and the reason I'm saying this is to keep our population alive and healthy. We have been getting funding and delivering air purifiers and AC center unit filters. The Centers for Disease Control has a lot of data out there for air quality after a flood. OK Imagine having a trach hole in your neck that goes straight to your lungs, how much more so that that's going to affect the population. So there's just a lot in there and I sat here before you at the first meeting requesting someone be on this task force who specialized in disabilities and I'm happy to say there's some headway, not as far as on the committee, but on some of your work groups and to plead with you not to be swayed by lobbyists or contracts or politics or geographical regions because as was mentioned by Representative Pope, this affected everyone. And the least vulnerable like I said it's like having the rug pulled out from under them and just to give you a snapshot. You know we are however many weeks out and the stress of this lifestyle while evacuated. I had a call a mom you know because you're sleep deprived. You're not at your home. You're having to, you're an emergency trach, your supplies, like my son's room looks like a mini ICU. You have everything at the ready, your ambu-bag, everything right there while you're sleep deprived. You're in family's homes, wherever you are, hotel, she tripped over her child's food line and it came right out of a hole in her stomach. And she calls at eight o'clock at night and what did we do, thank God we had it and we went and delivered it. So it's taking its toll. And the severity of this is not just going to be oh we're not back in our house, it's going to be Oh my God we're going to the hospital our child may not make it so that the severity of something an error or a sleep deprived mom not having services. So just please keep the special needs population in the forefront in all of your decisions and thank you so much for your work.

**Ms. Archaga:** Thank you so much for your time, each of you. I appreciate you. I am the Executive Director for Resources for Independent Living. I have two other counterparts that cover the entire state of Louisiana. New Horizons Independent Living Center and Southwest Independent Living Center. As federally mandated title 7.C center (sp?) we serve persons with disabilities, all disabilities, of all ages, also the elderly. I like to say seniors. We're the first ones that's called most of the time at the federal and state level. I have a lot of experience. I cover southeast region. My two major metropolitan cities are New Orleans and Baton Rouge. So you can understand that I have a lot of experience with Katrina and Rita as well so much so that I was to testify in the US Ways and Means Committee in regards to all of the issues that we had with Katrina. So unfortunately I have a lot of experience with this storm because it doesn't have a name and I just want to provide some information to give some insight of what it looks like for us. Jeanne Abadie through the Advocacy Center does a daily call of partners that includes not only Trach Mommas, includes Independent Living Centers, includes LATAN, it includes state agencies, it includes FEMA's Disability Integration Department, as well as the American Red Cross department the disability integration as well, and what we've done in terms of responding to immediate needs of your constituents is on the ground pulling from every aspect that we can without any funding to ensure that individuals lives are as someone said make people whole again, put them in a livable situation as best as they can. Our organization worked within the shelters every day on transition plans for people with disabilities to transition out of the community. The disaster case management component is a great component we worked with Catholic Charities but I want to add something to you they come to us for those specialized cases. Angela knows that we've been working on something very serious very recently where Senator Barrows actually got involved with us to give us money for a hotel night stay, all of us were pulling money from everywhere, but I'm telling you as we're the ones that's really taking care of your constituents and we need you to continue to consider us because I know you do but also have us at the table with you to consult you, use us as some guidance, use us as individuals that you can call in to say how should that be handled. I appreciate what you say Representative about individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs. Where is that all the time and where is that priority? Shelter at Home is a great program but we were able to bring that to them immediately through our calls to say there's no way, this person has a disability and so we have to do some specialized things to make sure that those things are being done and being done properly. Another thing we talk about, who are we? What do we do? So when individuals with disability get denied with FEMA, we're working on the appeals. The Val, they're calling us. They're calling us to say what can you do to help us? We're being inundated with lots of requests from FEMA as well as American Red Cross and so we need some assistance out there. We need to be a part of getting that funding that can help us and do some great things as well as what Trach Mommas is doing and I'm sure that we can do a whole lot more. So please consider us and I'm not going to take any more of your time rate we appreciate you.

**Ms. Wyatt:** We appreciate your passion. We hear you. Loudly and clearly. Thank you ladies.

**Mr. McKneely:** I'll be very brief. Congratulations on the pronunciation of Tangipahoa parish. I'm here representing the Parish President Robbie Miller he could not be here today because he's on the Commerce and Industry Board and they were meeting today. You have before you a letter from our parish president just asking for your review of that the things we are asking for are regional in nature. Tangipahoa Parish has been impacted by every storm that has hit Louisiana since 2005. We were part of Katrina, Gustav, we flooded 3 times in the last 5 years and we have served as sheltering for St. James, St. Charles, St. John, Orleans, Jefferson, we are also the gateway from the east to the west and from the north to the south. So we appreciate your consideration of these and he also sent a letter yesterday to your co-chairs to offer a hospitality to host a road show should like to come to either Amite or Hammond. Thank you very much and thank you for all that you're doing.

**Ms. Wyatt:** The public comment period is closed.

## **XI. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Ms. Wyatt:** We're getting there. There's a lot to do but we are working on it. Let's see, other business. Next meeting date and in honor of Veterans Day we will adjust our bi-weekly meeting schedule and will not hold a meeting November 11<sup>th</sup>. The next meeting will be November 18<sup>th</sup>. I'd like to ask the task force members for some feedback, send it to myself or my co-chair, where we can have these meetings. We don't always have to have them here.

**Rep. Shadoin:** We can have them to Ruston

**Ms. Wyatt:** We'll certainly take that into consideration. Lastly to encourage those working groups that are meeting in the middle. We had a lot of data today and we've got to study that information and be able to speak to it intelligently, not that we don't, but intelligently when we come back together. Gentleman and lady, don't forget to leave your binders take all the information out and leave your binder so they can be filled.

## **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Wyatt:** To adjourn is in order.

**Meeting was adjourned at 1:05 PM.**

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

Date Approved: *November 18, 2016*  
*LL*