

RESTORE LOUISIANA TASK FORCE

March 31, 2017

Shreveport Government Plaza

City Council Chambers

505 Travis Street

Shreveport, Louisiana 71101

Approved

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jimmy Durbin called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Mr. Durbin: Welcome to the March 31, 2017 gathering of the Restore Louisiana Task Force meeting. So very happy to be here in the great city of Shreveport. My name is Jimmy Durbin, I'm one of the co-chairs of this task force. We will begin with a roll call.

II. ROLL CALL

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Roland Dartez
Mr. Jimmy Durbin
Mr. John Gallagher
Mayor Dave Norris
Mr. Michael Olivier
Mr. Sean Reilly
Commissioner Mike Strain
Mayor Ollie Tyler

TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Johnny Bradberry
Mr. Randy Cloutre (non-voting, ex-officio)
Mr. Michael Faulk
Representative Edward "Ted" James
Mr. Raymond Jetson
Mr. Adam Knapp
Senator Dan "Blade" Morrish
Mr. Don Pierson
Representative J. Rogers Pope
Mayor-President Joel Robideaux
Dr. James Richardson
Representative Rob Shadoin
Dr. Shawn Wilson
Ms. Jacqui Vines Wyatt

Ms. Dupont: 8 members are present. Sir Chair, we do not have a quorum.

SUPPORTING STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patrick Forbes, Executive Director, Office of Community Development
Lori Dupont, Office of Community Development
Pat Witty, Louisiana Economic Development

III. CHAIRPERSON OPENING REMARKS

~ Jimmy Durbin, Restore Louisiana Task Force Co-Chair

Mr. Durbin: Thank you, members, for attending the meeting today. Without a quorum there will be no official action and therefore we will not bring up minutes of the past meetings. I will begin on tab one with the agenda and with my opening remarks. Mayor Tyler, we want to say thank you for being our host in this great city of yours for this meeting.

Mayor Tyler: Thank you.

Mr. Durbin: I drove up yesterday and I've enjoyed every minute. I started from the Hilton and began wandering around and trying to figure out how to get to City Hall and I finally found it. That felt so good. You can't miss it. Anyway, yes ma'am, we thank you so much. Members on the mics, I'm not used to these type of mics but they are all hot, they are in front of you, at your right and your left, so be careful what you're going to say about someone. I have a few reminders I would like to go over as my opening remarks. Governor Edwards, his administration, and this task force are doing everything possible to bring to Louisiana from Washington DC, the federal funding rebuilding assistance dollars as quickly as possible. I think you will hear this many times today, the money that has been appropriated, the first appropriation for \$438 million, the second appropriation of \$1.218 billion, both of those appropriations are still in Washington DC, not in Louisiana. Yet some people have this misstated, but we are trying our best as the, and I know Governor Edwards is working hard and the Office of Community Development Disaster Recovery, Mr. Pat Forbes and his group are working very hard as well as this task force, and we thank you all task force for your participation. Louisiana does not have any of those monies available, at this time, there is no money in the bank as I have said, and we are awaiting a line of credit to be set up in the Federal Treasury for Louisiana OCD's use. We can expect updates on the Restore Louisiana program Solicitation for Offers and the QA/QC RFQ, Request for Proposals, from Mr. Forbes, later on in this meeting, when he addresses the task force. Most importantly, there has not and will not be any delays by the state getting assistance to our homeowners, Mr. Forbes will report on that also. This task force knows that time is of the essence. The state has been ahead of the federal schedule for disaster recovery at every deadline given to the state in this federal process required to bring federal recovery money back to the state. Please know that Governor Edwards, his administration and, this task force have not stopped acting. Governor Edwards has traveled to Washington DC seven times since the flooding and will be returning to Washington DC next week to seek additional money over and above what has already been appropriated. HUD has actually commended the State of Louisiana for increasing the speed of recovery and for the historically fast pace in this state's submission of the required action plan. There have been two adopted to date. Thank you again, Mayor Tyler, for hosting us.

Mayor Tyler: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Durbin: I would now like to ask Ms. Julie Baxter Payer to come to the mic to present remarks from the Governor's Office. If you do not know who this lady is, she works on the fourth floor of the state capitol directly under Governor Edwards, thank you ma'am, always good to hear from you.

IV. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE UPDATE

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

Ms. Payer: My name is Julie Baxter Payer, I'm Deputy Chief of Staff for the Governor of Louisiana, Governor John Bel Edwards. I want to thank you on behalf of the Governor and all of our staff for hosting us here today in Shreveport, particularly thanks to Shreveport Mayor Ollie Tyler, who is one of our dedicated task force members. I don't think you have missed one meeting since we started meeting and I'm just so impressed with your dedication and the hard work that you give our task force. We are so thrilled to be able to come to you this time and be here in your city and to celebrate what we think is good news coming up very shortly for the survivors of both the March and the August floods. I also want to thank Bossier City Mayor Lo Walker, Sheriff Steve Prator, Bossier Parish President Bob Brotherton and all the other local officials that are here, and state officials that are here for this task force meeting, we're thrilled to be in Shreveport today. We know that since March 8, 2016 when the rains began to fall in the March flood event, that this region has suffered greatly. We don't stop thinking about that in Baton Rouge, our office works daily for all 193,000 families who were impacted by both the March and the August 2016 floods. Together they're the fourth most costly flood event in U.S. History, 112,000 families with FEMA verified loss. More than 26,000 families were hit here in North Louisiana and the areas that were hit by the March flood, more parishes were actually hit in the March event than in the August flooding. And so, the Governor, although he was told by some federal standards, that these population numbers were not enough in order to merit some of the federal disaster responses that sometimes comes with community development block grant dollars. You will hear us talk today about CDBG dollars, that is Community Development Block Grant dollars, it's the way the Federal Government responds typically to disasters. The governor never the less pressed and worked tirelessly until these two events were combined, so that we can respond to both of them with Federal Disaster Dollars. Today, after months and months of working, you just

mentioned that the Governor has been to DC seven times, we will be going again next week. A total of \$1.6 billion has been appropriated by Congress and those dollars will be available to eligible homeowners whether they were hit in the March or the August floods. And we have to follow HUD guidelines, because CDBG dollars come through HUD, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. But there will be no discrimination from the state in funding against March flood survivors. I want to make sure that's very clear here today, because we know that in Bossier Parish, for example Haughton and particularly the Tall Timbers neighborhood and other neighborhoods in Haughton were hit very hard. And South Bossier Parish flooded. Flooding that was made worse by the Red River conditions that we know that you're working with now. We know in Caddo Parish areas like Caddo Lake, Crosslake, Wallis Lake were flooded. In Webster Parish flooding happened in areas like Lake Bistineau. We really are aware of this, we think about this every day. We want you to know that this is a key part of our flood recovery focus. We think about those flood survivors every single day. We know that you have waited even longer than the August flood survivors. The federal process is extremely frustrating and much too lengthy. But I want to press home to you some facts in light of some recent statements by some who have gone to Washington that are simply not correct. There are yet no flood CDBG dollars sitting in a bank here in Louisiana that somehow we are simply choosing not to distribute. Louisiana has not been granted access to any of the \$1.6 billion yet, and yes we agree that is not a good process. It's why Governor Edwards is returning next week to go testify before the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Governmental Reform, to talk about specific reforms needed to the way that the federal government responds to disasters. Not just Louisiana's 2016 flooding disaster, but all disasters. The good news is that due to our state working historically fast, that is the phrase that HUD has used around the country as it talked about when it looked at our Office of Community Development under Governor Edwards, and how we responded historically fast to complete the steps that are ours to complete in this process. We expect to open the initial survey for the homeowners program, the first step for every homeowner who wants to apply for assistance from either the March or the August floods, within the next couple of weeks. So I'm urging everyone to stay tuned to your local news, and restore.la.gov go to that website, sign up for email updates, and I'm going to be talking about that in just a moment. There will be no delay for homeowners. We are selecting a contractor to manage the homeowner program. We are focusing on bringing costs down as low as we can. That's part of the reason for the solicitation for offers that is out right now for the program manager construction manager. When we will receive those offers on April 7th, we expect to announce who has been selected by April 13th. We are budgeting for some of the lowest administrative costs in the country. We are following all of our state procurement processes, abiding by those, as always, with the governor's single minded continuous focus in mind, the flooded homeowners and communities of Louisiana. The minimal delays for homeowners, the best cost to homeowners and taxpayers, and the best quality program that we can possibly run to get homeowners back home, and their homes rebuilt, and communities back together again. As we've been updating you here in the task force, we will have the homeowners program open by mid-April, now it's just within a couple of weeks, very excited to tell you that today you all have been working hard. I know that those watching online, and those who are in the audience want to hear that. You've heard, I want to just stop for a second, you've heard a few elected officials, one in particular use the word stooges talking about the task force. I want to just tell you that that's offensive to us. We appreciate the work that you've done. We know that you have worked tirelessly volunteering your time month after month, week after week to make some very wise recommendations for how we move forward in this recovery. It's not appropriate to cast stones at the state or at your work or at local parish officials that are working every day. And so, I just want to say thank you for your work. I want to say that it is the federal process that frustrates all of us here in Louisiana. And we are working the best that we can to work with each one of those and speed it up every way that we can from the state side to do that. We thank you for your wise recommendations to move this recovery forward as best as we can in a federal process where the path can sometimes seem slow. The space between when we close shelters after an immediate response to receiving federal disaster dollars to put into the construction of people's homes, can sometimes take eight to 12 months and longer, that is too long. That is not a process that we would choose. But the good news for us today is that the time is just about here when we would receive, we believe in this coming month in April, the grant agreement and the federal line of credit to open up. So, we will finally be able to turn on the access to that money so that we can begin to directly help homeowners with their construction. We expect that perhaps within the next several days even, we may receive approval of the action plan for the \$1.2 billion. You know we've already received the approval for the \$438 million action plan. Probably because the state has been so fast. We hope to be able to put those two together, get one grant agreement and hopefully one line of credit and smooth that forward. And so we thank you for your patience and I wanted to give a few practical quick updates for you before I let the local officials come in and speak. One note, particularly here in North Louisiana, HUD did grant the Governor's request for an extension of a reimbursement deadline for homeowners to do work on their home, after the flood. The federal government was going to tell us that they were going to have to disallow reimbursement for homeowners for work done on their home more than one year after the event. Obviously a big concern for us and for all the folks hit in the March flood, particularly for this area. So the governor pressed on that, we have received an extension that will cover all work done through September 8th of 2017, for both floods. We do think that if the time comes, and all the work has not been completed for some homeowners, we will continue to request an extension if that's not long enough. But

we know that for now we do have an extension to September 8th of 2017. Now as you know the Homeowner's Program will offer eligible homeowners three options for types of assistance. A state managed, contractor construction option, a homeowner managed and selected contractor construction option, and in some cases, limited more for those with higher income, but in some cases some reimbursement for work done on homes by the home owners themselves earlier than when we opened up this program. So that deadline extension that I just talked about will be very important in that case for some of the folks that have been hit in the March floods. Also on TSA transitional sheltering assistance, we've talked a lot about that to the task force that's the FEMA funded hotels, I know in March we had some TSA, that program was able to help families and ended I believe in sometime around June. There were a lot more families in the August flooding that were hit and some intractable problems in terms of finding long-term housing solutions for some folks. We do have an extension currently through April 10th with check out on April 11th for TSA. We're continuing to request 30 day extensions. FEMA is looking more and more closely at us about where we are with our plans to end that. And so, we are working with a very tight state and FEMA team, family by family working to help find those long term solutions. Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, I know that for the everyday person that's not a word they use every day, for local governments their eyes always light up when you talk about HMGP. More than \$26 million in HMGP money has been allocated for North Louisiana. \$23 million has actually been able to be allocated and sent out to the parishes. I know that GOHSEP, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security Emergency Preparedness, is working through that with each of the parishes. In line with that, in terms of the assistance HMGP money, we do have in our action plan when we receive the line of credit for the FEMA money that locals received in the immediate response to the events, the match is always a concern, the 25% match. I know we've talked about this at the task force. The governor has repeatedly asked and appealed, trying to get that 25% match for locals down to 10%, which was granted for the August flooding. That has continually been rejected by the federal government. But \$105 million of the total \$1.6 billion that we've received so far is allocated to provide 100% of the local match from those CDBG dollars to the local governments who need those dollars, or the match required for FEMA funding that was given to local government. So, I know that's a relief to local governments here and around the state, and I just wanted to make sure that we pointed that out and assured you of that. Finally, the homeowner program. We have a brand new detailed flyer that we have, and I've put these on the back table. It's a front and back page. It's a good, short summary of what the home owner program will look like. You have one in your binders. I would urge everyone who's here to pick this up. I would urge everyone who's watching online to go to restore.la.gov and to go at the top button, there at the top of the page, there's a button that says, how do I apply for flood assistance? You will see this information. We have a lot more information going up over the next week as the policies have been finalized in the Office of Community Development about the homeowners program. As you can imagine its complex. One of the main reasons its complex is because we don't have enough funds. We have asked, the governor has asked and pressed for \$3.7 billion from the federal government. We know that we expect the economic impact of this storm to be more than \$8 billion. We've asked for 3.7 from the federal government, so far we have 1.6 billion. So we cannot help as many homeowners, nor every homeowner, to the extent that we want to help them with the money that we have. And so we have to make certain choices and we also have to abide by HUD's guidelines. And begin to expand out the program as we receive more money. So, we are continuing to work on that. Please take one of these. At the last task force meeting we had some folks from neighborhood associations asking us can we have a flyer or is there something we can download and print, and give to our neighbors, this is it. I know not everybody loves computers so this is something that those who do can print and we can distribute these. If there's any other easier way to distribute information, we're going to be blanketing the news and all with the information when the homeowner's survey comes out. It's a two-step process, survey and application, but if there is anything else we can do to help you get the information out, please let the Governor's office know. So, we have all of this information and I get a lot of questions saying, how can I fill out the survey? Where is the survey on the website? That's the first step to the application. The survey is not yet up on the website because it's the next couple of weeks when it will open. We hope it will be very, very soon. Again, you'll hear from Pat. We're hoping to get some very good news from HUD. That will be the next step, not the last step, but the next step to opening that line of credit to be able to open the homeowner assistance program. So please, everyone go to restore.la.gov. It's R-E-ST-O-R-E.la.gov. And most of all, I want to thank Shreveport and Bossier and all the surrounding parishes. I know that local officials here are working in a prudent direction. You're looking at legislation from minimum building elevations. You're looking at a regional approach, and this is the approach that the governor is encouraging. We remain \$2 billion short in our ask of Washington. We don't have enough money to help all the home owners that we want to help, but we continue to work to bring home more funding. We are ready to distribute that line of credit, that money available to us soon as it is made available, and work alongside home owners as soon as that \$1.6 billion appropriation begins to come in to Louisiana. So, we want to continue to support all 56 parishes that were impacted by the March and the August floods, as together we build back smarter and stronger in Louisiana. I know we can do it, I thank you for your strength in this recovery and I'm happy to take any questions.

Mr. Durbin: Ms. Payer, would you please hold this up and turn around and show it to the audience. I'm looking around to see where any members of the audience can pick one of these up. Where do we have this?

Ms. Payer: In this hall, it's in the back in the reception area there is a table. I brought about 150 copies. I'm happy to print more if I can steal someone's printer while I'm here, but here is what it looks like.

Mr. Durbin: Thank you. Everyone, the task force members, this is in the left corner of your packet. A very good document. Julie, would you come back up for a question.

Mr. Durbin opened the floor for questions.

Mr. Dartez: I just want to thank her and Pat for all of their hard work. But thanks in the opening statements for clarifying that stooges comment because I'm tired of taking calls from my friends calling me Curly. I know I look like that but.

Ms. Payer: Thank you for your work. I know that you and these associations and all of the parishes have worked hard.

Commissioner Strain: Ms. Payer, Mr. Forbes, and also the Governor, I do want to thank you for all of your hard work. We were involved in previous administrations, and Gustav and Ike, and dealing with OCD. And we administered more than \$100 million dollars through our agency. And I will tell you that the procedures, they are complex, they do take time. But the other part of that is that we, we collectively are directly responsible for these dollars. And when this is all said and done there will be auditors from Washington looking at everything that we have done, and we have to make sure that it's done correctly. Because if not they will ask us to pay the federal government back, or they could ask homeowners and recipients to pay it back. And as we ask for more and more additional dollars, we have to make absolutely sure it is done in the right way. And again, I want to thank you for your bipartisan efforts. And I know it is a yeoman's task, and it is a huge undertaking. And I want to thank you for that. But also, on a second comment, as we look at some of the information today, and specifically looking at the Red River flow rate, talking about lower flow, higher water. And this is one of the things that we have been talking about. We really have been talking about it for years. The political careers of our grandfathers were focused on drainage, water flow, and jobs. And when you're looking across this state, I think we need to do more to re-dredge these rivers, and redirect the water flow, and it's got to be from south to north, every bit of that because we're going to have to prepare, I think, for more events in the future.

Ms. Payer: Absolutely.

Commissioner Strain: And when you're looking clearly at the data, where you have less cubic feet per second and higher levels of water, it's pretty obvious. And I think one of the things maybe we need to do in the state and working collectively is that this needs to be a priority in our capital outlay discussions on what we need to do. It does cost a lot of money to dredge and clear and do. But we've got to do that, and that's a universal problem across the state. And I think that's one thing we can talk about is how we can rebuild better. And I think a great deal of attention to our total drainage systems has to be addressed. Thank you.

Mayor Norris: Julie, you may rather Pat answer this question, not that you couldn't, but I'm not entirely clear. This is a difficult letter to read. The letter we got from HUD, I'm not sure exactly what the September 8th deadline extends the time for. What is it that we have to have done by September 8th?

Mr. Forbes: Yes, sir, it's not that we have to have anything specifically done, the rule says that before we got this extension, that HUD would only allow us to reimburse people for their work done up to a year after the event. Which means any work that the folks from the March floods up here did between March 8th and when we got the program running, we would not be able to include that in our reimbursement calculation. So now we're able to go out to September 8th as works done out to September, which gives us time to get the program in place, get the intake done and understand who's still working on their place. And eventually even prioritize those folks who are getting work done between March 8th and September 8th so that we can get them reimbursed for that work.

Mayor Norris: Okay, what is our message then, on a local level? What is our message to people in our parish based on this?

Mr. Forbes: Keep working on your home. If you're working on your home, keep working on it. And as of the extension of this one year deadline, we now will be able to include the work and costs that you incur after March 8th in our reimbursement calculation.

Mayor Norris: Up to September?

Mr. Forbes: Correct.

Mayor Norris: Thank you.

Mayor Tyler: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I too want to say that you to Pat Forbes and to the Governor's office for actually getting that extension. We've spoken about it quite a bit because we knew with the state having to push from the august flooding that we here in the North would kind of be behind the eight ball, so to speak, with that extension. So, we had spoken to Mr. Forbes about trying to get that extension so that the people with the March flooding would be able to

continue building their homes, and businesses could continue trying to improve and still be able to get reimbursed. So I wanted to say thank you so much for the hard work.

Mr. Forbes: Thank you, and I have to say that in talking with HUD about the extension as we got up to the request, the March floods were a compelling reason for them to provide the extension, because the appropriation was so long after the disaster.

Mayor Tyler: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Durbin: Pat, I do have a question. This is an important letter dated March 15th from HUD. Will that letter be posted on the Restore.LA.gov website?

Mr. Forbes: Yes, sir, we can do that.

Mr. Durbin: So anyone that would like to see it and read it for themselves, they can see it's official.

Mr. Forbes: Yes, sir.

Mr. Durbin closed the flood for questions.

V. LOCAL OFFICIALS

~ **Mayor Ollie Tyler, City of Shreveport**

~ **Mayor Lorenz "Lo" Walker, Bossier City**

~ **Sheriff Steve Prator, Homeland Security Director, Caddo Parish**

~ **President Bob Brotherton, Bossier Parish Police Jury**

Mr. Durbin: At this time, I will look to my right and turn the meeting over to our host, Mayor Tyler.

Mayor Tyler: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and members of the task force. Good morning, everyone. I just want to say that we are excited to actually be meeting here in our community, and I want to thank Mr. Durbin and members of the task force for agreeing to meet here above I-10 today. Before I finish, I just have a few more comments. I wanted to recognize some of our local and elected officials, public officials who work very hard every single day to improve the lives of the people that we are elected to improve. And so at this time, I'm going to ask some of them if they would stand please. One or two of them will be making presentations, but I'd like to recognize them at this time. My good friend, from my sister city, Bossier City, Mayor Walker, can you please stand for me, Lo? Good morning and thank you for being here.

Mayor Walker: I said I wasn't going to say anything but I lied about that. I just want thank you all for coming up and I appreciate it. I have a very important call I have to be back in my office to take at 10:30. President Trump calls me every day at 10:30 to get advice. He hasn't been taking it lately, but if you all would excuse me I yield my time to Mayor Tyler and Sheriff. Thank you Sheriff and Mayor.

Mayor Tyler: Thank you, Mayor Walker. Okay, some others, of course our Sheriff from Caddo Parish, Sheriff Prator, is going to, in a few minutes, do his presentation. We'll recognize him at this time, but also we'd like to recognize from some of our parish commissioners. I think I saw the president of our parish commission from Caddo come in. Commissioner Stephen Jackson, can you please stand for me, Commissioner Jackson?

Unknown: I think I saw him on the 4th Floor.

Mayor Tyler: Okay then, we see Commissioner Matthew Lynne, if you don't mind standing. Commissioner Mike Middleton, thank you so much for being here this morning. Also from Bossier Parish, we have our good friends and neighbors there. We have the President of the Bossier Parish Police Jury, Mr. Bob Brotherton, if you'll stand. Thank you, sir, for being here. We also have some administrators from our district here in Caddo Parish. I see Dr. Woody Wilson, will you please stand, sir. Thank you for all that you do. We have also Mr. Bill Altimus the parish administrator for Bossier. Thank you for being here. So if we have other elected or public officials, please stand. And we want to say thank you all for being here this morning to be a part of this meeting. I also want to say thank you to Mr. Forbes from the state Office of Community Development and with all of the things that you do every single day, I know that it's tough. Even Julie from the Governor's office, but thank you all for the hard work that you do every single day. You all came up to our region a few weeks ago. And you actually met with a lot of our citizens just to learn about some of the ongoing recovery needs. Thank you so much for doing that. Our folks really did appreciate the fact that you took time out to come and see about us. I want to say welcome to our special guests from all over the state. Welcome from Northwest Louisiana. It is our hope that today's discussion will help illuminate actually some of the issues and some of the conditions and problems facing Northwest Louisiana from the 2016 flooding. We are excited about this process and excited, Mr. Chairman, by the opportunity, really, to help out constituents who live in this part to be able to pass and be able to get help from the devastation of the March 2016 flooding. We've had flooding since 2015, and probably the March 2016 flooding was the third time our area flooded. And so we've really had some severe type issues with disasters here in our area. Again, I want to say that we're glad to have

you up here in this part of the state. Please come back on other occasions just to have fun. Thank you so much and whenever you're ready we'll bring up some of the presentations.

Mr. Durbin: We are ready when you are.

Mayor Tyler: Thank you so much. We are going to ask first, Sheriff of Caddo Parish, Sheriff Prator, if you would come. He also serves as a Director of Homeland Security for Caddo Parish and we are going to ask him to come and then we'll get Mr. Furlong from Shreveport, Mr. Brotherton from Bossier. That will be the people that will come, in that order.

Sheriff Prator: Thank you, Mayor. In a way of introduction, I'd just like to say my name is Steve Prator. I'm the sheriff of Caddo Parish, but I'm also the Homeland Security Director appointed by the Caddo Parish Commission, which is kind of unique for not many parishes are like that. And I regret that they did that. It's been a lot of work and a lot of expense on the Sheriff's office, but it just simply made sense in our particular area. I'd also like to say thank you mayor for the things that you say about me and have said. And I've always respected you. And Mike Strain is a close friend of mine also, and that's a couple of folks I really look up to and I appreciate you all being here along with anybody else. And all of you for making the trip up to North Louisiana. And not many times do we get an audience like this. And I thank you for that. I've got a very short presentation, but before I even get into it, I'd like to mention my assistant, Robert Jonp, who does a lot of the work, while I'll actually have the head title. Also Tim Weaver with the Caddo Parish Commission, Ali Mustafa with the Caddo Parish Levy Board, and Rich Brontoli with the Red River Waterway Commission, they were instrumental in all of the things. We've been meeting since, probably 20 to 24 months we've been meeting on a monthly basis, what we call a Flood Technical Committee. And we have determined a number of things, and this is Caddo and Bossier parishes, hydrologists, engineers and me. Which I'm neither, and we determined a lot of things. So in my short presentation, I will be surmising what's going on in our area. Our numbers are not anything like what you've seen in other areas. They're not nearly so bad, but they will be. I promise you, they will be. Commissioner Strain alluded to it a moment ago. We're on the precipice of some real major disaster here, and I'll explain as I go through this exactly what I mean by that.

Sheriff Prator began his PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint can be found on restore.la.gov website.

Mr. Durbin opened the floor for questions.

Commissioner Strain: Traditionally, has dredging been done on the Red? And if it has, when do you remember the last time?

Sheriff Prator: There's a slight amount of dredging that's done, Reg Frontoli is here and he could tell you more about that. But the majority of the dredging that's done by the Corps of Engineers each year we have to beg for the money is between the port and the locking dam just so we can't keep barges there. Then our problem is north of there, all the way up to where it begins. And there's estimated by the Corps of Engineers before they built the locking dam they figured how many tons of sand per day would be deposited. And with our calculations, we have determined that right now to get it back to where it was before the lock and dam, it would take over two million large size tandem dump trucks to get it back like it was. There's that much deposited every year. Something like 56,000 tandem dump trucks deposited every year. I don't have to tell you, that's an extreme amount of sand. Where are we going to put it? The expense of getting it out? And I'm not a hydrologist or an engineer or that clever but I'm telling you that's a lot of work to do. I don't know if that's the answer or not. We have done many things. We have gotten \$1.5 million grant, or not grant, \$1.5 million has been appropriated by the Corps of Engineers to do a study. We fought like banshees to get the rest of that. We got \$250,000 just to tell us how bad the river is. It's been over 40 years since the basic flood elevation points have been revised. They have been updated every ten years as the law says but they were updated to the same figures as the ten years before. So yes they were looked at every ten years but yes they were not changed every ten years and that's why the bad predictions. We have no data that tells us how bad the Red is. So we're hoping by 2019 to have some kind of data about how bad the red is. We can't keep ignoring this. By 2019, I don't know what's going to have happened. We just need some help up here.

Commissioner Strain: Yes and Sheriff, I'm sure we'll have to get a permit from the Corps to do the dredging based on that study, right?

Sheriff Prator: Yes, sir.

Commissioner Strain: And we'll probably have to pay the Corps to get the permit?

Sheriff Prator: Yes, sir, I'm sure we'll have to pay them to get the permit to do this unrealistic work to dump, I don't know where we'd put this unrealistic sand.

Commissioner Strain: You'd have to put it over the levee, if you have a levee, just like when we dredged the Mississippi River, in some areas we just deepen the channel and put it against the banks. In other areas, we put it over the bank but those dredges are very, very expensive to utilize.

Sheriff Prator: Yes sir, fighting mother nature like this, it isn't easy and it isn't sure, as you all know from the flood river, the control structure, where the Red comes in, it's a crap shoot, whatever you do, but you have to do something, but you have to do the best thing you can. You have to get wise and we can't get wise, because we don't know how bad the problem is. And we don't have the money to get wise.

Mr. Reilly: Sheriff, we had this conversation when we were discussing this when we were in Livingston Parish, I think we were. I believe you can get a waiver to use hazard mitigation dollars to study. I think we had this conversation back then. And I think, Pat, who has disappeared, came up and said he believes we can do that. So in the back of our heads when we're thinking about how we're going to use the hazard mitigation dollars that come from this event.

Sheriff Prator: Yes.

Mr. Reilly: I think you can get a waiver to use them to do the study, so we can get wise about making the water go somewhere else.

Sheriff Prator: Yeah, sure, and we are, as a community, we are doing some proactive things. Tim Weaver with the Parish and the City Engineer, and we have developed a list of projects that we could do, no matter what the jurisdiction, or whatever that will cause less people to be flooded, less demands for service for first responders, and we're going to check those off as we can afford them. So, there's a lot that we are doing, but we need some hazard mitigation money to finish this study, or to do more studying.

Mr. Gallagher: It kind of sounds like the 2017 version of the great wrath.

Sheriff Prator: Exactly. Yes, sir, in the 12 Mile Bayou, it was the structure basically that the steamboats went to avoid the great wrath to get up to Jefferson, Texas, and that's what is flooding now because the Red has come up. But yes sir, it is the same, good analogy, good analogy.

Commissioner Strain: There are federal dollars for dredging in the waterways. Every time that that tug pushes a barge, they pay a diesel tax. That goes into a trust fund of the federal government for dredging and maintaining inland waterways. And that is now supposed to be reallocated back to what it's supposed to be used for. And so we need to ask the Congress for funding to dredge these rivers. And I think that's something we need to ask for very emphatically.

Sheriff Prator: Yes, sir, indeed.

Mr. Casey Tingle with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness approached the witness table.

Mr. Tingle: I just wanted to touch on the use of the hazard mitigation dollars just real quick. Currently they're not eligible for studies that are unrelated to a project. And so the difficulty is being able to, you can't define the project until you know what the problem is and that's a big part of the issue here. What we have been doing is working with FEMA in conjunction with the Corps of Engineers, and one of the other complicated piece of this here is they're not just dealing with one part of the Corps of Engineers, they're dealing with multiple districts that have different areas of jurisdiction over the river. So you've got some Tulsa work, some Fort Worth work, and some Vicksburg work all trying to coalesce. And so what we're doing is trying to get all of those people together in the same place on the same wavelength to get the Corps the studies that have been authorized, funded to a degree that they can actually be completed in a time frame that gives the region the information that they need. I think the majority of those studies are in place. It's the funding piece, to make them go and to make them go in a time frame that actually gets the information in the right people's hands in a timeframe that is helpful.

Sheriff Prator: Well, that right there tells you, and with all due respect, if you could follow that, we'll never get anything done, and so I don't mean that disrespectful, I just mean having worked for FEMA for a long time, ever since the hurricanes, and having to fight them about getting identification for the evacuees up here, long story. I get so damn frustrated with government as you all do, that I'm sometimes embarrassed to be part of it. And it seems to be that between FEMA and the Corps, they don't even get along. Let's tell the truth, at least that's what our determination has been from about 30 people in a room for 20 months, we couldn't get them to even agree. So you have to get the Corps of Engineers, so that FEMA can study it, to give the maps. And it's so much bureaucracy and all the time, our folks are flooding, and we don't know how that's going to get, like Johnny Cash said. So anyway, it's just frustrating. So, pardon me for saying a bad word, I know I'll have somebody say something, but I get aggravated.

Mr. Durbin closed the floor for questions.

Mr. Durbin: Mayor Tyler?

Mayor Tyler: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Up next, we have Mr. Patrick Furlong from the City of Shreveport. He's going to do a small presentation about some of the flooding and some of the damage and what our citizens have been experiencing here in our city.

Mr. Furlong: Thank you Mayor Tyler. Like she said, my name's Patrick Furlong. Mr. Chairman, members of the task force, thank you for coming to our community, we really appreciate it. I'm going to speak to you a little bit about what our city experienced in the March 2016 event.

Mr. Furlong began his PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint can be found on restore.la.gov website.

Mr. Durbin allowed questions during the presentation.

Mayor Norris: Why the delay in receiving the rest of your reimbursement?

Mayor Tyler: We don't know. We are still trying to get it.

Mayor Norris: Have they said you didn't give them enough information, or?

Mayor Tyler: We have.

Mayor Norris: Is there a problem at the bank, or what?

Mayor Tyler: No, we've provided all the reports that's been required in ours. And like some of the other citizens have said, oftentimes, it's just a process, it's slow. And we're still waiting to get some of the funding. But I want to thank Mr. Tingle for his work trying to help us work through the red tape. But it is a lot of red tape, and so we're still waiting, trying to get reimbursed. And then this is just many of the expenses we incurred for city infrastructure and equipment and so forth, not to speak of anything residential. But yeah, it's been a long process.

Mr. Casey Tingle with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness approached the witness table.

Mr. Tingle: Just on the process real quick, I can't speak to exact timelines, exact projects, but the process itself is the documentation to support those costs goes to FEMA. FEMA actually writes the series of projects corresponding with those costs, and depending on the nature of the work and the nature of the project, sometimes that takes FEMA some amount of time in asking for additional documentation. And I know that this is probably the same experience, generally, in most of the communities. Things like emergency, time and effort and those emergency protective measures generally are somewhat easier than when you actually get to repair, rebuild of roads, or facilities, schools. That kind of thing takes longer because they're looking for maintenance records and all of those things. And, unfortunately that is a process that's time consuming. And everybody on this side of it says well, if I had known that that's what was going to be the case, I would have maintained these records, and done it in that sort of way. And that's a hurdle that we continue to face. Once the projects are obligated by FEMA, and those invoices and expenses are submitted to GOHSEP. GOHSEP actually cuts the check back to the applicant or to the community in those cases. And so I'm happy to assist in any way that I can in trying to figure out where maybe some of the slowdowns are.

Mayor Norris: My experience has been people like you, who are here, are very helpful. And I think things just go into a black hole when they get to Washington. But one of the things that I've learned is documenting your inspections and all of that stuff, typically if somebody goes out and makes sure a lift station's running or does some routine maintenance on it, they don't write up a report about that. And you can't create them after the fact so, and we always assume this will be our last disaster, so we don't have to learn from the previous ones. But that's part of the delay. For us is, it's hard to maintain all those records to prove that you did go out and look at a lift station or at a well or something like that, even though you're doing it all the time.

Mr. Tingle: And then occasionally the staff turns over on the FEMA side that's dealing with it, and you felt like you got to a certain point with the previous staff member that was assigned. And then a new staff member comes on board, and a lot of times the complaint is, well, why are we having to start over? We've already gone through this.

Mayor Norris: That really is a problem, just in our experience. Have a good conversation, somebody comes to City Hall, we all get together, and we talk about it. And the next time we ask a question they say, well, he's gone to California. Or he's not home, and you start over with somebody else and recreate a lot of stuff. So that's kind of the nature of, when you have a disaster you got to have a certain size force to deal with it. But when there's not an active disaster going on, you don't want to have that many people idle with nothing to do. So it's a difficult, I understand the difficulty in manning under those circumstances.

Mayor Norris: Did you have any resistance to raising the base flood elevation?

Mr. Furlong: People spoke up. Some people weren't happy about it, but everybody realized the gravity of the situation, and I think, realized that that was the right thing to do. So there's very few people that spoke up about it. Now, the Department of Water and Sewerage, you saw they're raising one of their roads to protect it. And they also have plans to build some permanent levees around some of their structures. The City of Shreveport, the Port of Caddo, Bossier, Caddo Parish, and

Caddo Levee District all contributed to purchase the sandbag machine, and it's very advanced. Its state of the art, it's trailer-mounted, it's self-powered, and it has its own generator and puts them out on a conveyor belt. We don't want to use it any time soon, but during the next event, we'll be that much more prepared. And that concludes my presentation, Mr. Chairman and members of the task force. I really appreciate you all coming up to listen to what we experienced and our road to recovery.

Mr. Durbin closed the floor for questions.

Mr. Durbin: Mayor Tyler?

Mayor Tyler: Thank you so much. At this time, Mr. Brotherton from the Bossier Parish Police Jury, will you please come?

President Brotherton: Thank you, Mayor. Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Bob Brotherton, and I am the current President of the Bossier Parish Police Jury. I am pleased to be here to introduce our next speaker. I'm going to put my glasses on because I can't see my notes. The next speaker is a person that I have worked with on a daily basis. He has a tremendous wealth of knowledge, and I consider him an expert on the flood event of 2016. Without further ado, please join me in welcoming Bossier Parish Engineer, Mr. Butch Ford.

Mr. Ford: Well, good morning. Thank you, Bob, for those kind words. I appreciate that. Mayor, thank you for hosting this event for the task force and for being here. I see a few familiar faces. I see Mr. Dartez over here. Don't believe anything he says about me, okay. We go way back. He's our Executive Director so we know each other well. And I see Mr. Gallagher here, you grew up in Shreveport. His dad was a judge, and if you went to Bird High School you know some Gallagher's because they were there going to school. It's good to see you, John.

Mr. Gallagher: Good seeing you.

Mr. Ford: We wanted to just give you a little quick update on what's happening in Bossier Parish.

Mr. Ford began his PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint can be found on restore.la.gov website.

Mr. Durbin immediately opened the floor for questions at the end of the presentation.

Mayor Norris: In looking at the damage or in that study, was there anything that about how any time a road's under water, you also have surges in your storm sewer system underground? And also your sanitary sewer, and all the manholes go underwater, and then that water runs through, that also undermines the roads but it may be a year before they start caving in. Was that?

Mr. Ford: We're having the same problem mayor. In that study, this study, I did not see that target addressed in this study. But it has been, because typically when you have flood waters all the storm sewers and all fill up with sand, and it washes them out, just like it does above the ground. But you can't see it, and that's the problem you have trying to convince FEMA that it's damaged. We're seeing effects of the flood from '16 as late as this week.

Mayor Norris: Yeah.

Mr. Ford: There are problems occurring, bridge problems that we didn't see and didn't know anything about until now. And they've got a one year window. I just heard where they're trying to extend it out four or five months. These are lingering effects that are going to take years to find.

Mayor Norris: I want to ask you another question about acquisitions. Did you survey people, repetitive loss people, and ask them if they wanted to participate?

Mr. Ford: Yes, sir.

Mayor Norris: Is that how you got people that were willing to participate?

Mr. Ford: So what happened was, is immediately when the flood occurred, FEMA showed up with a team of volunteers. And they went to every home flooded in our area, measured the amount of water and all that. We put a substantial damage group together and went out to every home, too. And we did a substantive damage report on every one. And then we notified, if you're repetitive loss structure, and you're substantially damaged over 50% of the value of the home, you can't rebuild. And we wrote them letters.

Mayor Norris: Those were the ones that, over 50% of the damage, were the ones that you contacted?

Mr. Ford: No, we contacted everybody that had flooded. We had to look to see if they were over 50% damage or not. The ones that weren't 50% damaged were able to rebuild and get a building permit. But some of those folks have decided they wanted to get bought out. They don't want to deal with this flooding in the future. The ones that were substantially damaged, which was about half of the group, they were told by a letter from my office that you can't rebuild. They immediately came in. Casey's staff came in in May, and we signed everybody up that was wanting to participate in this acquisition or elevation. So we were on the gun quick, and then we started making our applications. Our problem was finding the funds, to have the mitigation grant funds. And Casey found them for us.

Mayor Norris: Do we know where Casey will be when this meeting is over? Okay, my house is 50% and I want to participate. FEMA determines what they are going to pay, how much the buy up price is.

Mr. Ford: Well, FEMA doesn't do that. What we had to do is, Casey shows up and goes, Butch, I need 30 homes appraised. So I go to my boss, and I need \$20,000. And we hire an appraiser. We got to have the appraisals done in two weeks. I get all the appraisals done, they pay 75, in this program that we're in, it's 75% of the pre-disaster appraise value. We get 75% of that \$550 back if it gets approved, but we had to have those to make the applications.

Mayor Norris: All right, here's my question. If I come back to my friend here and say, we're going to pay you 75% of your pre-storm damage, and he says, I don't want to do it, I'm out. What happens to their flood insurance rate?

Mr. Ford: I'm going to let the expert tell you.

Mr. Casey Tingle with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness approached the witness table.

Mr. Tingle: So the law says that if someone refuses a valid mitigation offer, so there's some nuance built in to what those terms mean and what actually constitutes an offer and what doesn't, that FEMA can take certain actions relative to flood insurance. Historically they have not. That changes to rates are based upon repetitive flood histories or updated maps, and then, just the updated law that says that FEMA must get to actuarial rates over time. So there are some triggers built into the process. Typically, they've not been because someone has declined an offer, but FEMA could.

Mr. Pat Forbes with the Office of Community Development approached the witness table.

Mr. Reilly: It's an idea around helping FEMA come to grips with paved roads. If I recall, and Pat correct me if I'm wrong, when the City of New Orleans was haggling over this issue of paved roads, they wrapped other disputes they were having with FEMA and came up with an englobe settlement. Some of it was around water and sewage board issues and other things that were happening underground, is that kind of what happened?

Mr. Forbes: That's my memory, too.

Mr. Reilly: And the process, while it was excruciatingly painful and took way too long, ultimately was one where they didn't dive into each and every road. They just kind of said, look, here's a bunch of money, you all figure it out.

Mr. Forbes: They did, but I think the city had to document how many miles of road they had. In the end FEMA's grants were not, as you said, fixed to the specific stretch of road, but the grant amount was based on a global documentation of this.

Mr. Reilly: Here's where I'm going with this. It could be a stupid idea. Maybe what we should do, instead of having each and every affected jurisdiction fight their own fight over this paved road issue, go to FEMA with a sort of an englobe basket of every affected jurisdiction. And not get all tied up in exactly how much this 100 feet of road cost. But just say, hey, look, we know what the problem is. Send it to us in sort of a block englobe grant, and we'll figure out how to put it out to the jurisdictions.

Mr. Forbes: So I think that's a great idea. I think Mr. Tingle is probably the office that will be doing that. I would suggest though, based on my memory of what happened in New Orleans, is that FEMA is likely not going to be very receptive to that idea, unless we do document every single stretch of road that was damaged and all that, get it all together, and then as you suggested, go ask for that englobe-

Mr. Reilly: No, we have to dot our I's and cross our T's and get all the estimates in. But again, just process wise, instead of having every single jurisdiction rip their hair out over this.

Mr. Tingle: Yeah, it certainly is an ongoing issue and a widespread issue from the eligibility standpoint. The initial hurdle is that FEMA's not paying for it at all and not recognizing, and I don't want to speak for Butch, but not recognizing the eligibility of any damage that they can't physically see and measure in some way. The benefit that New Orleans had following Hurricane Katrina is the additional flexibilities built into post Katrina that allowed them to have some additional leverage that doesn't currently exist within the program. That, I think, gets to some of the things that, in terms of changes to the Stafford Act need to be included in, hopefully, for what has just happened. But also, moving forward, to recognize the need for some of these things, the eligibility of some of this things. And the fact that, whether that damage occurs the day after, or a week, or a month, or five years after, that road condition is degraded. And it needs to be recognized in some sort of way. How will we then capture those damages, and how we apply for this damages? I think it's to get to what your point is, which is there may be some additional leverage that comes from us dealing with them in a consistent way across the board. Once we get across the, hey, we don't even want to talk about them being eligible bridge, which I think is kind of where we currently are stuck.

Mr. Ford: I had a comment, too. I have been through three floods as an engineer. First one was in 2009, and we submitted road damages. We went out and marked where all the roads were damaged, and a Corps of Engineers team came in from

FEMA and they didn't even ask for any. They paid us to reconstruct those. So in 2015, we went out, and marked the areas that had flooded, with the same idea that we would show them the damage and they said, nope, policy has changed. And they said, we looked at Goggle maps, and your roads were, damaged before the flood and we're not going to reimburse it for those. And I went, and so we've made two appeals for the 2015 flood. I just sent the second one off a month ago. And we're going to go through this same process. Now we are doing some coring, because Mr. Harrell and I spoke about it. He likes the idea of, it's flooded, and it's damaged. But we have started coring our roads to show, similar to what this study did, to show that there is damage and that's where we are today.

Mr. Dartez: I want the task force to know when we were in the first few days of the August floods Butch and Bill Altimus called and said don't forget about this issue. Forget about it? I didn't even know about it. And so we set up a call and they walked our southern friends' parishes just down to what they're fixing to do, or fixing to face. And it scares me from the sense that you have 80% of the parishes have been declared disaster areas. And local government, John's group included, we are in charge of 33,000 miles of road. So I like Sean's idea, and I like hearing someone's accompany the governor. Is there anything, I know it's quick, but is there anything we could add with the governor to support this for the simple reason, you're right. If you can't see it, it must not be damaged, so wash away versus eat away of the land and the infrastructure of the roads.

Mr. Ford: I like the idea of globally us all pitching in together to fight this issue. I think that's where we're probably headed. Because as a group, we have more clout. And rather than Bossier Parish or Livingston Parish trying to fight that, some of the parishes don't have the resources to fight this. They don't have the qualified people and they didn't. It's going to be complicated for them and expensive. So I think we need to do it together. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mayor Tyler: I just want it to be said, I think during the presentation for Shreveport, you saw many of the roads and roadways that were completely underwater. We are going to have the same problem. We know that FEMA is not going to look at these if they look okay once the water recedes, but with all of the heavy traffic and we're already having some of those issues, the roads are not built to be saturated with water. So, I just want to make sure I say that for Caddo Parish and for Shreveport so that will be on the record. Thank you so much Mr. Chairman, and that, those are all of the presentations from my area.

Mr. Durbin: Thank you, Madam Mayor, I guess now we will proceed with the next presenter.

Mr. Durbin closed the floor for questions.

VI. LOUISIANA OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE **~ Patrick Forbes, Executive Director**

Mr. Forbes: I, too, want to thank Mayor Tyler for hosting us here in the beautiful city, beautiful facility. And you've hardly ever missed a meeting down there. And it's such a pleasure to be up here and spend the day with you all here.

Mayor Tyler: Thank you so much, Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: I'm going to apologize to you ahead of time for telling you some things that you have already heard today, but only because things that are contrary to these facts have been said so many times that these actual facts bear repeating over and over again.

Mr. Forbes began his PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint can be found on restore.la.gov website.

Mr. Durbin allowed questions during the presentation.

Mayor Norris: This Licensing board, you just said, if I understand you right, this is a board that's been established. The governor didn't appoint them. And they weren't appointed for this particular process.

Mr. Forbes: No, that's absolutely correct, thank you for asking the question. The Contractor's Licensing Board is a board that was established years and years and years and years ago. And they oversee the work of contractors in the state, the licensing of those contractors. Management of contractors who do bad things and need to get their licenses pulled. That's their work, and it has been forever and, again, the Board members on that Board right now were all appointed in previous administration. They have a job that oversees contractors. Their attorney rendered an opinion, the Board concurred with that opinion. I don't know whether that opinion is correct or not, and it's really irrelevant to our process. Because we have stepped away from anything that that opinion may impact and gone to a new SFO.

Mayor Norris: The point was made somewhere that the attorney for that board was appointed by the governor.

Mr. Forbes: The attorney for that board was appointed by that board in my understanding, and that board, no member on that board was appointed by our current governor.

Mayor Norris: Well, there is a little misconception out there then.

Mr. Forbes: There's more than a little, sir.

Mayor Norris: By a few people.

Mayor Norris: Those applications will be taken by that same priority?

Mr. Forbes: That's the priority, yes sir, we'll do the survey. Thank you for asking this, this is a nuance, we will put the survey out. We'll be doing public announcement blasts, email blasts. We will be contacting homeowners through the FEMA Individual Assistance Database contact information to say please fill out the survey. The survey is essentially the first step in the application process. We can then take the information from the survey, and identify the folks, who are going to be in this phase one. And then reach out to them about completing the rest of the application. So, what we don't want to do is have a flood of people, everybody filling out an application for a few reasons. One, there's 36,000 potential applicants and it could bog the process down with the number of folks that we'll have to do in the case management. Now as importantly, if you apply, if you submit a formal application, you've got to stop work. If you have work ongoing on your house, by federal environmental rules, until we can get the environmental review done. And, of course, we can't do 36,000 environmental reviews in a week either. And the process can take up to 45 days. So our objective is, to pull people in both as the program is ready to take them, and as we can get the environmental done. So that we don't have everybody up there with their work stopped. And so this process should help us get that.

Mr. Olivier: A reissue of the RFP, as I appreciate it that was dealing with this license issue?

Mr. Forbes: Yes sir, the Contracting Board's attorney issued an opinion that contractor's licenses would be required at the time of submittal of proposal. That's not our rules for an RFP generally. We require any necessary licenses at the time that you do the work that requires a license. Or at the time of contracting which is what our RFP said. Contracting Board's attorney issued an opinion otherwise. That says contract is required at the time submittal. 3 of our 5 responsive submitters did not have contracting licenses that opinion said they needed, residential contracting license. It would have left us with two responsive bidders. And costs higher on all the proposals than we're budgeting for. And as well as the, the possibility that all the argument over that piece of law would stop us from executing a contract. So the purpose for moving to the SFO is to leave all that behind and out of our process.

Mr. Olivier: So did the three of the five go and get the license? Were they able to get the license?

Mr. Forbes: We will see on April 7th, certainly.

Mr. Olivier: They can get a license within that period of time?

Mr. Forbes: I believe that the contracting board, and again, this is just from reading in the paper. But I believe the contracting board is offering the opportunity to come in and get expedited license decisions.

Mr. Olivier: And then there's a subsequent legal challenge going on, has that got an impact?

Mr. Forbes: It should not by virtue of the fact that we have voided that RFP.

Mr. Olivier: Okay, so that takes away the illegal issues, I guess.

Mr. Forbes: Takes away the illegal issues for us, for our process. We have moved on to a different solicitation.

Mr. Oliver: Okay.

Mr. Forbes: We will sign a contractor on through that solicitation. I don't know what's going to go on with those legal issues, and at this point it's a moot point for our process.

Mr. Olivier: Business recovery?

Mr. Forbes: Yes, sir.

Mr. Olivier: I'm sorry to keep asking about it, but where are we on that?

Mr. Forbes: Actually I have some hidden slides that I can go through with you on the RFP and the grant loan processes. We went through those last meeting, and I didn't bring them. But I'm sure that I can find that presentation and give it to you. The only remaining piece of that to talk through with you guys. And I think that we're going to do this at the next meeting, is the agricultural piece. But we will also, next meeting, have updates on where we are in the process. In April, I believe, we are taking in applications from nonprofits to be the lenders for the small firm grant and loan program. So, I think this is my last slide, any other questions?

Mr. Durbin: Let me see if I can understand what you've just stated. The first action plan was completed on December 3rd, that's when the public comment, that period began. January that action plan was formalized and sent to HUD for review, for the \$438 million appropriation.

Mr. Forbes: Yes.

Mr. Durbin: Second action plan was completed in, I believe, mid-February. Public comment period went through timely. That action plan was approved and it went to HUD also. That action plan was for the \$1.2 billion appropriation. Now, if I

understand from talking to you, HUD is focused on not issuing two lines of the credit, but only one line of credit for the two action plans, is that what I understand?

Mr. Forbes: Yes sir, that's correct. We were so close behind with the second action plan that everybody decided that the most efficient and effective thing to do was to combine them into one grant agreement.

Mr. Durbin: Okay, so but the second action plan has not been completed. The review about HUD of the second action plan is about to be completed if I understand.

Mr. Forbes: That's correct, yes sir.

Mr. Durbin: Okay, and so shortly after that, you or who if a different administration we'll be hearing from HUD formally saying we are ready to process a line of credit agreement?

Mr. Forbes: The HUD will send the commissioner a grant agreement, the commissioner of administration a grant agreement for signature.

Mr. Durbin: Mr. Jay Dardenne will be the one to execute that agreement?

Mr. Forbes: That's correct. He'll send that back. That will initiate HUD's effort to take money, set up a line of credit in the federal treasury specifically for our recovery purposes. There are some other pieces around that, sort of details about loading in funds and loading in activities from our end, but that's essentially the process.

Mr. Durbin: So you and the commissioner's office, Jay Dardenne, we are awaiting a signed communication from HUD that this would be forthcoming sometime in April. And the final action plan has been approved and a line of action forthcoming to the Division Administration for execution, and based on your timeline, your timeline, you feel that's in your communications between you, Mr. Forbes, and the HUD officials that is probably going to take place in April?

Mr. Forbes: Yes, sir. In fact, we were estimating on their normal time. We were estimating on their normal timeline that they would have gotten a line of credit set up by the end of April. Now it's probably looks closer to middle of April.

Mr. Durbin: I agree. Any questions on that?

Mayor Tyler: I do, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to, for clarity purposes, so no line of credit has been set, even for the initial \$438 million.

Mr. Forbes: That's correct, zero dollars are available to us to spend on recovery right now.

Mayor Tyler: Okay, and I understand you say that the last action plan still has not been approved, even though you have collapsed the two?

Mr. Forbes: To be clear, the combination is not in the action plans so much as in the grant agreement. Once they approve our second action plan, they can issue us a combined grant agreement for the entire \$1.6 billion.

Mayor Tyler: Thank you, okay. Also, I just want to say to be a little humorous don't forget about northwest Louisiana and we're going to be extended until September.

Mr. Forbes: Yes, ma'am.

Mayor Tyler: So, that people can still submit for reimbursement on damages to their homes.

Mr. Forbes: Absolutely and so yes, and we will, here's why that so critical, is that folks can start talking with case managers with our contractor. Once they get in the program and if they're in the middle of rebuilding. They can understand from the coast from the case managers, what those deadlines are, what those triggers are, what they need to do or not do to get that right. And again, as I said earlier, the March floods were really the compelling reason for HUDs providing the extension. And as we go through this survey and gather information from folks about what's their status now. Because all we have right now are individual assistance data. What's your status now as we develop new data analysis from that and understand how many people are in the middle of rebuilding? If we get out September 8th and we've got a lot of people still in the midst of rebuilding and they're in phase five or phase six of our program. We are not going to get to him yet, we are certainly going to look at the possibility of requesting additional extension. Because it will be the right thing to do nobody including heard of congress or anybody else want people to quit rebuilding so.

Mayor Tyler: Okay, thank you so much.

Mr. Forbes: Thank you.

Mr. Durbin closed the floor for questions.

VII. PRESENTATIONS

~ Bradley Sweazy, Chief of Operations, Louisiana Housing Corporation

Mr. Sweazy: Thank you. Thank you all for having me here today. Thank you, Mayor, I've had a nice day and spent some good money in the community.

Mayor Tyler: Good.

Mr. Sweazy: I didn't win anything but I didn't mind taking any money out. I appreciate you all letting me come up and speak again.

Mr. Sweazy began his PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint can be found on restore.la.gov website.

Mr. Durbin allowed questions during the presentation.

Mayor Norris: Will these be the same ten parishes that have been identified as the greatest impact or supposedly, get a certain percentage of the awards?

Mr. Sweazy: I think we are not, we're going to open it up, and we're not necessarily limiting this program to the top ten parishes.

Mayor Norris: Yeah, but I'm talking about the workshop.

Mr. Sweazy: Yes, I'm sorry, so what our thought is, and we haven't come to a final decision, but in talking with John too, we thought about working a workshop plan and using the top ten parishes, going to city halls, and doing it as a collaborative effort. But we haven't finalized that as an idea, but that's the first idea, is to use the top ten parishes.

Mayor Norris: Well, if you want a place, I'll be glad to provide a place if Ouachita Parish is one of the parishes.

Mr. Sweazy: Thank you. That's it, so what I want to do next is get the line of credit executed, get our contract executed with OCD, and then get these workshops done. And we'll make sure we're all on cue with where they're at and how they're going to be held. I hope into the next few presentations is more or less about who we're actually serving and moneys coming out the door.

Commissioner Strain: What is the range of rent that you consider affordable?

Mr. Sweazy: The range of rent? So if someone is paying, the rule of thumb is if someone is earning, your housing cost should not exceed more than 30% of your income, and that's including utilities. And if you're a homeowner, it's principal, taxes, and insurance, if you're a renter, it's your rent and utilities.

Commissioner Strain: But when you're talking about one to seventy units of new construction, is there a target for what that rent should be by that property owner?

Mr. Sweazy: Yes, and it depends on the income we are going to serve, so far an example, if someone is on fixed income \$900 to \$1000 a month, we know that they can, technically, pay about \$300 a month, that \$300 a month in most markets, \$300 is not even a zero occupancy. Most one bedroom units across the state are around \$450 to \$500 a month. We have HUD standards, so HUD looks at if this is the household income, this is the rent.

Commissioner Strain: Per region, regionally?

Mr. Sweazy: Yes, it's done by parish.

Mayor Tyler: Mr. Chairman, I have one question. I just want to ask you for your Rapid Re-Housing Program on your slides, is that just for the top ten most impacted or is that across the state?

Mr. Sweazy: No, and I'll confirm this, but what we've changed to include all of the parishes that were impacted.

Mayor Tyler: Okay, so when you start doing outreach, will you be doing some in this area?

Mr. Sweazy: Yes, ma'am.

Mayor Tyler: Because we will be glad to host, also.

Mr. Sweazy: We'll be here.

Mr. Durbin closed the floor for questions.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Durbin: Before we start the public comment section of the agenda I'd like to recognize that we have with us today State Representative Barbara Norton. Thank you Representative Norton for joining us, hold your hand up so we can see you, thank you for coming. I will go into public comments now at this time, all public meetings, and this is a public body, all public meetings are required to have a period of time at the end of the presentations for anyone present, you come forward and make a public comment if you have one. If you do come forward, please identify yourself by name and who you are with.

Minnie Jenkins, resident of Caddo Parish

Ms. Jenkins: Good morning, my name is Minnie Jenkins and I'm a resident here of Caddo Parish. I just have really a quick question, one, after completing the survey in the application, I see here in phases three and four, the ten most impacted areas. Because I live in Caddo, and if my process, as me as an individual, runs smoothly, where by the survey and application, do I have to wait until phase five, where it says the remaining 41 flood impacted parishes to be served?

Mr. Forbes: I would say that based on what you described, yes you'd probably wait until phase five. But what we're asking everybody to do regardless of what phase you think you're in or whether you even think you're eligible, is to fill out the survey so that we can look at your information and decide. There may be something in there that put you in phase two or three or four, I don't know. And so it is difficult to talk about a specific case. But the main message is fill out the survey and let us figure out what phase you're in. And we'll let you know that so you can plan.

Mayor Norris: Let me ask Pat a question, an extension to that same question. I don't know what these phases are. But you don't have to complete a certain phase before you move to the others.

Mr. Forbes: No sir, the phases are the phases that our program will roll out. It's going to target first the elderly and low to moderate income, and people with folks with disabilities in their household. And then we'll on move to people on the 10 most impacted and distressed parishes. And then we'll move on to all the other parish.

Mayor Norris: But, you don't have to complete everybody's project in phase one, before you start taking two?

Mr. Forbes: Thank you, no absolutely not.

Mayor Norris: And that's where I might be more discouraged than she should have been.

Mr. Forbes: Okay, I'm sorry. Right, so it's a great clarification. We're not going to do phase one, get everybody's construction complete, put our hammers down and then start on phase two. It's going to be a rolling intake process. Soon as we get all of the phase one folks who have put in surveys process we'll be moving through those phases, irrespective of where construction is, okay. Thank you.

State Representative Barbara Norton, House District 3

Representative Norton: Let me say first, thanking God for his grace and his mercy and his goodness. I'm surprised that you all didn't call me to the microphone representing the State of Louisiana. Well, let me say that I'm here representing behalf of House District 3. And do want to welcome you all here. Had a family emergency this morning, and I'm just basically kind of showing my face and coming through. But I want you all to know I piggyback what the mayor said, Mayor Ollie Tyler. Please do not forget us here in north Louisiana, we want you all to know that we are all concerned about the entire state of Louisiana. But we're certainly concerned about right here, at home. And when I think about the ten parishes that I saw up on the slides, I want to make sure that North Louisiana is one of those parishes. That you all will be coming back, and you all will be making sure that we are right there at the table to receive all of the things that you all are given throughout all of the parishes here in the State of Louisiana. So I want to say to you all, it's good to see many of you all that I know, glad you are here. Don't ever think that we're too far up north for you all to come to, to share that information, and to bring us some funding. Again, thank you all so much for being here.

Anita Garner, Louisiana Spirit

Ms. Garner: Yes, I'm Anita Garner with Louisiana Spirit and we've come across a number of people who did not file a FEMA claim. And I wanted to know would they be eligible for funding from Restore Louisiana, if they did not file a claim.

Mr. Tingle: I'll probably let Pat reference the eligibility of the state program through CDBG relative to the FEMA assistance. I would say that the FEMA application period is closed, we can get some names offline and see if there's anything that we can do on that regard. And then I'll defer to Pat on the Restore Louisiana Program.

Mr. Forbes: Being in the FEMA individual assistance database makes things a lot easier, but we certainly have policies in place to be able to go establish damages and all those things for people who did not apply for FEMA assistance.

Mr. Durbin: So, what do you have to say to this lady?

Mr. Forbes: Fill out our survey online and get us all the information that you can. Ideally, Casey figures out a way to get her into individual assistance. That's not just about the efficiency and ease of application for folks in our program, it's also about duplication of benefits. The FEMA funds are supposed to be the first funds in to a project. And somebody was in fact, eligible for FEMA individual assistance, there's the possibility that we have to count as duplication of benefits, something that they never receive. Because they could have been eligible for it. So, there are a lot of reasons beyond just starting the process and our program to get in the individual systems if you still can.

Ms. Garner: We canvas with Louisiana Spirit and we're working with a number of flood survivors. And many of the flood survivors are low information people, they don't have access to computers. And for whatever reason, they did not apply for FEMA assistance and they are still at level zero with repairs. So we are just trying to find out what is it that we can tell these people that some help is on the way, or something, because they did not apply for the process. Many did not know, and then when they did find out, it was too late. But there are a number of people, so when I saw the number of households, that can

be increased. Because they applied for FEMA, but we found a large number that did not apply because they did not know to apply. And when they did find out, it was too late to apply.

Mayor Tyler: And Mr. Chairman, I too would like to just kind of piggy back on what Ms. Garner has said. We are running across citizens in that same situations, of course, she's from Shreveport also in Caddo Parish. So if they've not received any FEMA assistance, they will be eligible for what? To help them if they've been impacted by the floods?

Mr. Forbes: Yes, ma'am, we'll have policies in place to make that happen on a case by case basis. But again, there're is going to be some difficulties if they had flood damage, with respect to duplication of benefits that they should've gotten from FEMA. Because federal governments still looks at every, they look at their response in tiered approach. And the first thing they expect you to do is go to SBA and then get FEMA assistance. And then if CDBG funds are available, use the CDBG funds, none of which can duplicate each other as you all know. But they even prohibit duplicating a benefit that you should have received, had you applied.

Mayor Tyler: So what you're saying, if they could have received, but because they did not have access to the information, knowledge, didn't know how to apply. They may not be eligible for CDBG funds.

Mr. Forbes: Not necessarily that they may not be eligible, but that we would have to count as a duplication what they would have gotten.

Mayor Tyler: Even though they didn't get it?

Mr. Forbes: Correct.

Mayor Tyler: Wow.

Mr. Forbes: Which is why it's so important, if we can figure it out how to do it, and how to get these folks applied into. If they apply into individual assistance and are determined to have no grant, then we have eliminated the duplication of benefit.

Mayor Tyler: Okay my last question Mr. Chairman would be, then if they have not applied is it too late for them to apply for the FEMA dollars?

Mr. Forbes: I think that all the application periods are closed. But I'm going to let Mr. Tingle address that.

Mr. Tingle: Officially, yes. Although we will go in and work with whatever names that we can get. And try to handle those with FEMA on a case by case basis, to see if there's anything we can do. We'll certainly make those efforts to try to do that.

Mayor Tyler: Okay, we appreciate that. Thank you.

Representative Norton re-approached the witness table.

Representative Norton: I have a question. I know you all just made reference to the fact that what you're going to try to see what you can do. Is there any way that you all can look into that, and find out what you can do? And get back to the mayor's office, so she can get that information out to those persons. Because a lot of people suffer and not get an opportunity to be a part of certain things, because they don't have computers. And we know senior citizens, a lot of them if they had a computer, they still don't know how to work the computer. And I think it's sad, that when we hear about citizens who deserve those funds and who've lost everything. And now because they didn't know, or didn't know what the process was, they are not included. And we need to find another way that we can get that information out to those persons who doesn't have computers. And to those persons who are not knowledgeable enough to be able to read that information. And I certainly want to thank the young lady that came up, I know her, but I can't remember her name. Who came up and said that they are helping those people. And I need you all to help them too. And I need you all to look at everything that you can look at, and see how you can help those people be able to be a part of those funds. And that process that can be implemented, so they too won't be lost out because they've lost everything. I just want to make sure that this committee understand, we need your help in everything that you all can do to make sure that is included like the others are. Thank you.

Mr. Durbin: Thank you Representative. Mr. Tingle, were you going to make another comment?

Mr. Tingle: Just to reiterate the point that as far as the FEMA program is involved. Our request will have to go to them for them to be able to afford an additional application period to those individuals. And we'll have to be able to justify the details of that request. So we'll gather the names that we can and make the best case of those of those individuals that we can possibly can. I know that in reference to the states programs they're going to make every effort to make those technologies available in a way that can meet those populations where they need to be in terms of survey and application intake. And I don't want to speak for Pat on that, but just to know that certainly is an issue that we're aware of. FEMA took efforts to get across some of those barriers. And apparently there was some gaps that we'll try to figure out what we can do about.

Mr. Durbin: And we can trust that we are going to try to find an exception to the general rule?

Mr. Tingle: We are going to do our best to do that.

Mr. Durbin: If you do or if you don't, you will report that finding back to the mayor?

Mr. Tingle: Yes.

Mr. Forbes: And I want to thank Representative Norton for her comments. Absolutely I think they were about the FEMA process but for our processes as you have heard us say before. The survey is 100% online. But that does not mean that you have to have computer access to be able to fill it out. There will be phone lines you can call and have people fill it out for

you over the phone. There will be housing assistance centers where you can go in person and get somebody to fill it out on the computer for you. The reason we're doing it 100% online is because of lessons we've learned from other disasters. Where people's paperwork is lost. They think they've applied but their paperwork isn't there. And then two years later they're waiting for us to call and they thought the application was in. We can't afford that obviously. We also know we have the IA database. The individual assistance database, that allows us to reach out to folks through email, phone calls, what have you. We also are planning, through our contractor, to have outreach where we can find underrepresented communities. If there's somebody that we just can't reach. We know that the most vulnerable parts of our population are the ones most likely to fall through the cracks. In terms of getting into the program and getting the help they need. So we will have specific outreach for those populations that are not getting back to us and getting in the survey process. Thank you.

Mr. Durbin: Thank you. Okay, any other public comments?

Mayor Norris: If I could, I would like to make an editorial comment. Obviously, this will be struck from the record, probably, but I've read a couple of newspaper stories written by people that represent Louisiana in a variety of ways. Our president made a comment not too long ago where he said who knew that healthcare was so complicated. Which was a pretty bad comment for somebody to make that had run for office. Based on that, but as I've been involved in this process I didn't have any idea how complicated this process was. And it's been amazing to me how we've learned and it's Pat's group and others that were with them what pitfalls you can fall into by oversimplifying what the process is. First of all we're dealing with the Federal Government, which is pretty complicated to start with. This process has been around a long time, it's been refined I think probably to achieve the goals that were set up, but it isn't, it isn't uncomplicated, and for people would sometimes say how hard is it to help people whose house flooded. I heard one person comment just give everybody a certain sum of money. It hasn't been easy. But I appreciate the people that have made these meetings and the people that have made the presentations. And I think the presentations that Pat and his group have made have been modified based on the conversation of this group with all the people that came to the meetings. Who've all learned a lot. I'm sorry it's taken this long. I'm embarrassed that we don't have a better way to do it. But I do believe it's just too complicated to have a rush through it. And I appreciate the fact the Governor worked so hard to get the people in the March flood included in this process. It was over with for us, until he pulled the two groups together. It could have stayed that way, but it didn't.

Mayor Tyler: Right.

Mayor Norris: He really fought for the state, and particularly for the people that were involved in the March event. Now some parishes had March and August also, but as far as us in North Louisiana, the March event was the one that mattered. So it's always easier to pot shot people when you're not part of the process from 20,000 feet. So I commend your group for staying with it, and for the Governor for staying with it. And we're also going to get a lot of criticism once the money starts coming in because people are not going to understand why they're not eligible That's just part, if you're going to do something to try to help people, you're always going to be subject to criticism by those that felt like they weren't a part of the group. So I just think it's worthwhile for us to talk about, that this is not an easy job. And I think up to this point it's been handled very well. End of comment.

Mr. Durbin: Pat, if you would come to the mic, I do have a question that I was going to ask and I don't quite know the answer. How much longer is this task force going to be needed?

Mr. Forbes: In the best case scenario, the Governor is successful in getting us additional funding and then you all have lots more decisions to make. So, that would be months, again, going through similar processes that we've been through already. That's what we all are working towards.

Mayor Norris: But you know, the comments that are made about this program are going to have some impact on whether or not we might get some additional funding. When somebody in Congress says they haven't used the money they've got, and I saw that comment, they haven't used the money they've got, why are they asking for more, we hurt ourselves when we say foolish things like that.

Commissioner Strain: And also on those same lines, that's why we have to do everything in a very transparent and appropriate manner, because what will happen if there is a misstep? My fault, your fault, no one's fault, then there will be members in Congress who don't think that any of these programs should exist anyway until their state is hit, of course. They will say, well listen, they have misspent this and it cuts off the rest of the assistance.

Mayor Norris: That is why it's so complicated. Since this money comes from HUD, we'd better get it under this fiscal year because they may not be available any longer.

Mr. Durbin: Thank you, Pat. Alright, I'm looking to my right, Ms. Dupont, are there any other business?

Ms. Dupont: Yes, sir.

Mr. Durbin closed the floor for questions.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Durbin: Three tabs in your binder, tab nine, which is the update from GOHSEP, tab 10 and 11 is the glossary of terms and the average median income tiers. And my final comment, our next meeting for this task force will be held on Friday, April 21, beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the Louisiana State Capitol. You will be receiving information from Ms. Dupont.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Durbin: If there is nothing else, this meeting is adjourned.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jimmy Durbin
Co-Chair of the Restore Louisiana Task Force

Date Approved: April 21, 2017 *LD*