

Council on Watershed Management Meeting Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 1:30 PM

- I. Called to Order by Pat Forbes at 1:32 PM**
Welcome and opening comments
- II. Council Member Roll Call:**
Pat Forbes (OCD)
James Waskom (GOHSEP)
Jack Montoucet (LDWF)
Chris Knotts (DOTD)
Bren Haase (CPRA)
- III. Pledge of Allegiance**
Led by James Waskom, GOHSEP
- IV. Public Comment**
Comments can be taken at the time the item is up on the agenda
Please limit comments to two minutes per citizen
- V. Consent Agenda Items**
Approval of November 8, 2018 Meeting Minutes – Approved, no opposition
- VI. Old Business**
There is none.
- VII. New Business**
Pat Forbes: Members of the working group will now walk us through new business items, and we will discuss and open to public comment as needed.
 - 1. Program Administration, Alexandra Carter, OCD**
Ms. Carter: Please refer to the 2019 Council on Watershed Management Proposed Meeting Schedule, which is labeled Handout No. 1 in your packet. Due to the Government shutdown, there has been some unexpected delay in the Initiative’s Program funding. In addition, we’re anticipating significant outreach events in February (Best Practices Summit), April (Interstate Summit) and August (Federal Summit). For these reasons, and to ensure our time and energy is focused on successful turnout and coordination both across the state and with the Councilmembers, the Working Group recommends the Council on Watershed Management’s meetings be held bi-monthly, while also retaining the option to meet monthly, should a Council decision-making short-turn around be needed. Those dates greyed out within Handout No. 1 would be available, as needed, to meet for this purpose.

Mr. Forbes: Do I have a motion to approve the 2019 Council on Watershed Management proposed meeting schedule?

Mr. Knotts: Motion.

Mr. Waskom: Second.

Mr. Forbes: All in favor, say Aye.

Council: Aye.

Mr. Forbes: Motion passed unanimously.

2. Engagement TAG

a. Best Practices Summit, Jeffrey Giering, GOHSEP

Mr. Giering: The Louisiana Watershed Initiative plans to host a Best Practices Summit in Lafayette on February 19, 2019. The goal of this Summit is to build a foundation of knowledge among those working on the watershed initiative, legislators, stakeholders, and the public. This event will enable guest experts from other states to share their lessons learned in successful watershed management activities, and these presenters will interact with local experts in order to collaborate further on challenges specific to Louisiana. The working group requests approval to proceed with hosting the Best Practices Summit.

Mr. Forbes: Do I have a motion to approve hosting the Best Practices Summit, as proposed?

Mr. Waskom: Motion.

Mr. Knotts: Second.

Mr. Forbes: All in favor, say Aye.

Council: Aye.

Mr. Forbes: Motion passed unanimously.

b. Regional Meetings, Alexandra Carter, OCD

Ms. Carter: In coordination with the Engagement and Data TAGs, the Office of Community Development plans to begin scheduling regional meetings in February, March, and April to discuss the Initiative's immediate next steps. These meetings are proposed as either one-on-one or small groups (as requested) with Parish leadership (Parish Presidents and Mayors), their staff, and other individual stakeholder groups interested in our ongoing efforts. Depending on the size of the group, meeting content will address the Initiative's evolving modeling and procurement strategy, potential funding for projects and local cooperative efforts, and the proposed 2019 Engagement Strategy. At this time, we are requesting approval to proceed with meeting scheduling, so we can complete these meetings in advance of our next scheduled Council Meeting in late March.

Mr. Forbes: Do I have a motion to approve the scheduling of regional meetings, as proposed?

Mr. Waskom: Motion.

Mr. Knotts: Second.

Mr. Forbes: All in favor, say Aye.

Council: Aye.

Mr. Forbes: Motion passed unanimously.

c. PR and Engagement TAG, Jeffrey Giering, GOHSEP

Mr. Giering: The PR and Engagement TAGs are currently separate, however as the Louisiana Watershed Initiative matures, the work of these TAGs has become more closely aligned and has encompassed more outreach to regional stakeholders and the public. Members of both the Engagement and PR tags have agreed to join into a single TAG, and the final TAG will include all existing members. The working group requests approval to combine the PR and Engagement TAGs into the "Outreach" TAG, to more accurately reflect the tasks of the group going forward.

Mr. Knotts: Was the decision to combine the TAGs a unanimous one?

Mr. Giering: Yes, sir.

Mr. Forbes: Do I have a motion to approve combining the PR and Engagement TAGs, as proposed?

Mr. Haase: Motion.

Mr. Knotts: Second.

Mr. Forbes: All in favor, say Aye.

Council: Aye.

Mr. Forbes: Motion passed unanimously.

d. Policy TAG, Sam Martin, CPRA

Mr. Martin: As its Order of Business No. 1, the Policy TAG has identified a need to conduct investigations into existing programs, practices, and policies of state agencies engaged in work that impacts flood risk and watershed resilience to identify ways to increase alignment of these agencies with the mission of the initiative. A pilot investigation would consist of an inventory of existing conditions, consideration of alternatives or adjustments to existing programs, practices, and policies, and recommendations on future action by the agency(ies) investigated. A pilot investigation may be conducted by the Policy TAG with the assistance of a third party for the purpose of robust analysis and technical expertise. As the Office of Community Development administers a substantial amount of grant assistance to areas subject to flood risk, this agency is an appropriate subject for the first pilot investigation. The working group requests approval to proceed with initiating a pilot investigation into the programs, practices, and policy of the Office of Community Development to ensure agency alignment with the Louisiana Watershed Initiative.

Mr. Waskom: Is this so each one can look for over lapses, etc.?

Mr. Martin: Yes, and for alignment of programs.

Mr. Forbes: Do I have a motion to proceed with initiating a pilot investigation into the programs, practices, and policy of the Office of Community Development?

Mr. Waskom: Motion.

Mr. Haase: Second.

Mr. Forbes: All in favor, say Aye.

Council: Aye.

Mr. Forbes: Motion passed unanimously.

e. Data TAG

- i. Presentation, University of Louisiana at Lafayette & Tulane University
Dr. Emad Habib and Dr. Ehab Meshele began with a brief presentation.**

Ms. Carter: As described by Dr. Habib and Dr. Meselhe's presentation, the Initiative has conducted a recent investigation in support of statewide data collection & modeling, and is in the process of identifying ways to address anticipated gaps in LiDAR Data. To this effect, the State will pursue opportunities in coordination with state agencies to expedite LiDAR collection, processing, and QA/AC in support of Statewide modeling.

ii. Statewide Modeling Framework
Alexandra Carter, OCD

Ms. Carter: In consultation with the DATA and Working Group members, we request approval of the following recommendations, which will "frame" the work and considerations of the Data TAG moving forward. It is expected that a finalized framework for the data & modeling procurement strategy will be available to discuss and adopt in March.

Current recommendations of the LWI include: First, that the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development should perform both the procurement and contract management of Statewide Models, in accordance with the pending Louisiana Watershed Initiative Modeling and Procurement Strategy.

Key considerations included:

- **Timeliness:** Many elements of LWI will rely heavily on the statewide models to inform priorities and decisions and are awaiting their completion
- **Consistency:** Utilizing a consistent procurement method will enhance both the efficiency and time needed to complete this work
- **Demonstrated Capacity and Capability:** DOTD has historically performed this service

Secondly, to provide an opportunity for regional input, the Data TAG and Working Group also recommend that both regional stakeholders and agencies participating in the Initiative be provided the opportunity to make a selection recommendation in accordance with DOTD's procurement process

Thirdly, both planning of the data & modeling standards and procurement of the data & modeling contracts should be sequenced in accordance with data availability and oriented around watershed boundaries

Next, in areas currently lacking data, in the short term, the Initiative should pursue efforts to support and build out hydrologic networks pending data & modeling contracts

In order to allow firms time to pull together their teams in advance of data & modeling contracts, the Working Group and Data TAG recommends that State pre-advertise the upcoming opportunity in accordance with DOTD's procurement process

Mr. Forbes: Do I have a motion to approve the proposed framework, as described?

Mr. Knotts: Motion.

Mr. Haase: Second.

Mr. Forbes: All in favor, say Aye.

Council: Aye.

Mr. Forbes: Motion passed unanimously.

iii. TAG Name Change (Approval to rename 'Data & Modeling TAG')
Pat Landry, DOTD

Mr. Landry: In order to avoid misunderstanding the work of the Data TAG, both the TAG and the Working Group request approval to rename the group “Data and Modeling (or D&M) TAG,” which more fully addresses both Tracks represented in their Orders of Business.

Mr. Knotts: Again, did all parties agree to this change?

Mr. Landry: Yes, sir.

Mr. Forbes: Do I have a motion to approve the renaming of the Data TAG?

Mr. Haase: Motion.

Mr. Knotts: Second.

Mr. Forbes: All in favor, say Aye.

Council: Aye.

Mr. Forbes: Motion passed unanimously.

f. Projects TAG, Matt Weigel, LDWF

Mr. Weigel: The Projects TAG has prepared recommendations for the Round 1 Funding Opportunity.

With regards to the Funding Distribution, the Projects TAG recommends Round 1 make available a total of 100 million dollars, wherein 40% or 40 million dollars be set aside for regions and 60% or 60 million be awarded Statewide. The TAG recommends all project funds be competitive and meet minimum project criteria and that only State and Local Government Agencies may be Eligible Grantees. Other parties may work with an eligible agency to submit a proposal

With regards to Project Goals and Objectives, these have been identified as:

1. Reducing Flood Risk.
2. Transparency.
3. Encourage Cooperation.
4. Reward and Incentivize Resilient Land Use and Development.

With regards to Eligible Activities, these have been identified as:

1. Floodplain Restoration and Preservation
2. Regional Flood Storage
3. Critical Facilities and Infrastructure Flood Mitigation
4. Stormwater Management - Gray Infrastructure
5. Stormwater Management - Green Infrastructure
6. Non-structural mitigation (Residential/Commercial)
7. Other innovative and/or replicable flood control activities

With regards to the Application Review Process, the Projects TAG recommends eligible applicants include state and local government agencies and that the process be divided into three phases, wherein:

Phase I - Initial application screening

Applicants will submit basic project application information to confirm that the project and applicant are eligible and meet threshold criteria.

Phase II - Detailed project evaluation criteria.

Applicants will submit a full application that must meet the detailed evaluation criteria, and the applicant and reviewers will work together to define project metrics

Phase III - Project design and metrics confirmation.

Project design will be reviewed to confirm achievement of agreed upon project metrics. The course of the application process has been described in detail before and is illustrated in this slide shown here. For additional detail on this process, please refer to Handout No. 1: Application Overview, which has been distributed today and will be posted online for public comment for 30 days. For everyone's reference, the application overview describes the funding opportunity, including its goals and objectives, and addresses eligible project types, eligible applicants, and project development support in more detail. With regards to Project Evaluation Criteria, these are illustrated on the above slide, but are also described in more detail in Handout No. 2, which has also been distributed today and will be posted online for public comment for 30 days. The project evaluation criteria quantitatively addresses the goals of effectiveness. Feasibility, affordability/schedule, social benefits, natural functions, and community investment.

The working group requests a motion to approve the strategy enumerated in the application overview and project evaluation criteria, including any OCD amendments necessitated by the HUD Federal Register Notice, which has not yet been published.

Mr. Forbes: Do I have a motion to approve the strategy enumerated in the application overview and project evaluation criteria, including any OCD amendments necessitated by the HUD Federal Register Notice, which has not yet been published?

Mr. Waskom: Motion.

Mr. Montoucet: Second.

Mr. Forbes: All in favor, say Aye.

Council: Aye.

Mr. Forbes: Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Updates and Introductions/Future Items

Mr. Forbes: Alex, please walk us through these items, and we will discuss as needed, and open to public comment at the end.

Ms. Carter: Listening Tour Report Out - The Louisiana Watershed Initiative has prepared a document titled the "2018 Statewide Listening Tour Key Findings Summary Report," which synthesizes feedback and input received over the span of eight listening sessions held throughout the state, with a total of 555 stakeholders in attendance. The Initiative also provided a webinar to present this summarized information to stakeholders and regional representatives on January 25th, which will also be available online. We're asking the public to review this document and provide comment and feedback via the Initiative's online comment feature, located at watershed.la.gov. The working group intends to present this document for approval at the March Council meeting once public review is completed and comments have been incorporated.

2019 Engagement Strategy - The Louisiana Watershed Initiative has also prepared an "Outreach & Engagement Plan" to guide the evolving engagement activities of the Initiative, and aid in its mission of building trust, sharpening messaging, and increasing efficiency. We're asking the public to review this document and provide comment and feedback via the Initiative's online comment feature, located at watershed.la.gov. The working group intends to present this document for approval at the March Council meeting once public review is completed and comments have been incorporated. It should be noted that these materials

should be considered "living documents," and will likely continue to be amended as the Watershed Initiative matures and its outreach and engagement needs evolve.

Regional Capacity Building Grant Program - An amendment to an OCD Action Plan is needed to distribute funds to regions to support both local capacity and cooperation with the Initiative. This has moved the estimated program implementation timeline to Spring 2019.

SR172 - The Initiative has been advised that the Report in response to SR 172 is expected to be complete in early February. Should anyone have questions regarding its content, please direct these questions to DOTD.

IX. Closing Remarks

X. Adjournment

Mr. Forbes: Do I have a motion to adjourn?

Mr. Haase: Motion.

Mr. Knotts: Second.

Mr. Forbes: Adjournment at 2:48 PM.