

**RESTORE LOUISIANA TASK FORCE**

**February 24, 2017**

**Louisiana State Capitol  
House Committee Room 5**

*Approved*

**MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**Ms. Wyatt:** So glad to see you here Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome. Sharon, so glad to see you here. Sharon.

**Mayor-President Broome:** Glad to be here.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Okay so we are going to start by calling the meeting to order. Let's do roll call. Where is my friend? He just taught me how to do this. I turn this off?

**Ms. Dupont:** Yes.

**II. ROLL CALL**

**TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Johnny Bradberry  
Mr. Randy Cloutre (non-voting, ex-officio)  
Mr. Jimmy Durbin  
Mr. John Gallagher  
Mr. Raymond Jetson  
Mr. Adam Knapp  
Mr. Don Pierson  
Representative J. Rogers Pope  
Dr. James Richardson  
Commissioner Mike Strain  
Mayor Ollie Tyler  
Dr. Shawn Wilson  
Ms. Jacqui Vines Wyatt

**TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Roland Dartez  
Mr. Michael Faulk  
Representative Edward "Ted" James  
Senator Dan "Blade" Morrish  
Mayor Dave Norris  
Mr. Michael Olivier  
Mr. Sean Reilly  
Mayor-President Joel Robideaux  
Representative Rob Shadoin

**Ms. Dupont:** 12 members are present, 1 non-voting member present. Madam Chair, we do have a quorum.

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

Mr. Roland Dartez  
Representative Edward "Ted" James  
Mr. Michael Olivier

**SUPPORTING STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Patrick Forbes, Executive Director, Office of Community Development  
Lauren Tichenor Nichols, Office of Community Development  
Dan Rees, Office of Community Development  
Jeff Haley, Office of Community Development  
Lori Dupont, Office of Community Development  
Kim Jupiter, Office of Community Development  
Pat Witty, Louisiana Economic Development

### **III. CHAIRPERSON OPENING REMARKS**

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

**Ms. Wyatt:** Since we have a quorum this morning, I'd like to ask members if we can add the approval of the January 20, 2017 and February 3, 2017 meeting minutes to the agenda. Are there any objections? Hearing none, move to approve both sets of the minutes. I would like to start my opening remarks, reiterating three main points for my colleagues on the task force, and for the Louisiana public, we serve. First that we the task force and the Governor Edwards administration are doing everything we can to bring these federal dollars as quickly as we can. As examples, on Thursday of last week we received HUD's approval letter of the 438 million action plan we put out for the public. Put out for public comment just three weeks after the federal register notice was published. We submitted the first action plan for approval more than six weeks ahead of the federal schedule. In the approval letter, HUD commends the state for increasing the speed of recovery. And the historically fast pace for submission of the action plan. And we're really proud of that, only because it's a right thing and we're doing the best we can as quickly as we can, it's not for the faint hearted. I've heard so many stories and we're doing the best we can with what we have, okay. On Friday of last week, the state submitted the HUD, to HUD the action plan for the additional \$1.2 billion, appropriation from Congress. Again, the state submitted the required action plan ahead of schedule, more than two months ahead of the federal deadline. The deadline for submitting proposals to run the restored Louisiana Home Owner Rehab Program was Wednesday, February 22, six proposals were received and the review process is already underway. So we can get the contractor in place as quickly as possible. Second, we and Governor Edwards' administration are doing everything we can to bring home the federal dollars at the most efficient and lowest cost that we can. And finally, we on this task force and the Governor Edwards administration are doing everything we can to ensure the funds are used as wisely and effectively as possible. So, that many Louisiana citizens businesses and communities can rebuild as quickly as possible under this limited amount of money. We all know that this money is not enough to help everyone we want to help. It is \$2 billion short. Governor Edwards is returning to Washington DC today for the seventh time since the floods. And is working daily with the congressional delegation to urge congress to bring home the additional finds needed for a sustainable recovery. And I believe he will. I know he will. He's done so much so, with so little, so quickly. And we have hope there is a saying that when things go wrong you have faith. When things go well, you keep hope and we have hope that we're going to do the right thing, and our Governor's going to do the right thing. We would like to remind everyone to sign up for updates on the Restore Louisiana Task Force website, this is some Julie stuff right here, [restore.la.gov](http://restore.la.gov) to stay informed on the latest developments. Now, I'd like to ask Ms. Julie Baxter Payer to take the witness table, to provide the task force with the governor's office update.

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

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

**Ms. Payer:** Good morning. I will provide the Governor's Office update today as the Governor is in DC today for the seventh time since the August flood event. He is meeting with the action director of FEMA, Robert Fenton, today, and will be talking about the February tornadoes across five parishes. Ascension, Livingston, Jefferson, Orleans and St. James. Louisiana received federal major disaster declaration for Individual Assistance in two parishes, Livingston and Orleans. A letter re-urging the federal government to grant Individual Assistance also to Ascension and St. James Parish on February 17<sup>th</sup>, also re-urging a decision on Public Assistance, which hasn't happened yet, in five parishes-Ascension, Livingston, Jefferson, Orleans and St. James. We have 2,580 individual assistance registrations in Orleans and Livingston Parishes, and the Disaster Recovery Center in Livingston has been closed and Orleans remains open. The Governor's Office would like to thank GOHSEP, all of our Parish OEPs and the American Red Cross, who have worked very hard since the flood to improve our no-notice event sheltering plan, which they were just drilling in February, and which we believe showed very good results in the tornadoes, and is promising we believe of good things to come in terms of an improved no-notice partnership between the state, parishes and non-profits when it comes to sheltering quickly. So, I think that we'll see some good results from hard work that's gone on over the last six months. We are thrilled that we received our first action plan approval, last Friday, from HUD. And that the Department of Housing and Urban Development has this to say about the way the State of Louisiana has moved quickly in the federal timeline to help its citizen's recovery. I know it was up on your screen. And I'm not going to apologize for reading it here. And Pat, you can read it again if you want to read it again. But this is, the folks in OCD work with HUD more than I do and have for longer than I have. But this is unprecedented that this would be put in a letter to a state. And I just want to make sure that the state of Louisiana hears it. The department would like to commend the state for its commitment to increasing the speed of recovery. This is evidenced by the historically fast action plan submission whereby the state submitted the action plan for HUD review 45 days in advance of the 90 day deadline set forth in the notice. The department shares this commitment, and was able to expedite the publication of the federal register notice,

in less than two months from the enactment of the public law. While the department has up to 60 days to review the CDBG-DR action plans, this review and approval was completed in less than 45 days. The department believes that early engagement with technical assistance and regular staff level communication enabled both the state and HUD to expedite these milestones. And I just want to say thank you to the Office of Community Development, to Pat Forbes and all of his team there for the incredible commitment that we have. And to this task force, without your approval of plans and recommendations, and helping us to stay on track with communities around this state, that are recovering in the 56 parishes that were devastated by the March and August floods, we couldn't have done that. But at the same time, we all recognize that it feels very slow to someone that's been out of their house, since either the March flood, or the August flood. We never lose sight of that in the governor's office. I know the task force doesn't. And so I just want to let you know that we remain committed to speed and doing this correctly, and doing this well for the citizens of our state. Also, last Friday, we submitted our state's action plan amendment that you recommended for the \$1.2 billion and Pat will tell you about today. The governor in DC, on this trip has some very important meetings one with President Trump's Office of Management and Budget newly confirmed director, Mick Mulvaney and this is a very important meeting for us to make our case to President Trump's administration for another \$2.08 billion. It's critical as we seek to try to spread help to all of the home owners that were impacted by the March and August floods. We want to spread more out into the middle income levels. When the money comes through HUD, we have some requirements to service low and moderate income folks. And of course, we want to do that, but we recognize that the floods don't discriminate, that various sectors of our community have got to come back together to have a strong community. And so, this is an important meeting. We were also able this morning to confirm a meeting with the US House Appropriations Chair to communicate our need to him. This is critical, the last time we were in DC we met with Senate Appropriations folks. And so we are going to have this meeting, we want to be on the radar of both the US House and the US Senate in terms of as they put together this next appropriations bill. If you've been watching the news, you know they're doing that and we want to be top of mind for those folks as well. This week the governor's office hosted a group of about eight different appropriation staff members from the US senate who were on a site visit with the US Senate. We took them around to four of the most impacted parishes, Tangipahoa, Livingston, East Baton Rouge, and Lafayette Parish. We show them infrastructure damage. A bridge that was out, waiting repairs because of the flood. We showed them things like a 600 unit affordable rental set of apartments here in Baton Rouge, the Saint John Apartments, all of them empty, because of the flood. Now I want you to think about those 600 affordable units sitting empty while we have, today I believe the number is 719 families in TSA. So that's just one apartment complex, shows you the impact of what happen when affordable units went out of commission. And just we know as we've talked about here, that the affordable housing situation was in a crisis before the flood and so this is just a very important that we'll be coming back to you to talk about in the future. The TSA situation is one that we are focused on as a governor's office. That's the transitional sheltering assistance. And that's FEMA funded hotels, as you know that. One of the things we also talked to the congressional staffers about was probably what I felt was the most important part of their trip. All along the way, at their stops, we really packed a lot into one day. They were able to meet with Louisiana moms and dads and families and apartment managers, and maintenance crews, who were all in the struggle with us to bring our state back. And these people told their brave stories of why to their dismay they had not finished rebuilding their houses or they had not yet found another affordable rental unit. The federal programs that they were caught between and so I want to reiterate the request that the governor has made repeatedly to Congress and to federal agencies in Washington. We're asking for an extension of the one year HUD reimbursement limitation that doesn't reimburse if you've done work more than a year after the event. We're asking for an extension on that ability to reimburse, particularly for the March flood folks. But it's going to be a problem for the August flood folks too. I would like to get everybody back in their homes before August, but if we don't, that could be a problem for August flood survivors as well. We're of course asking for the waiver from the 70% requirement for low to moderate income folks down to 50%. We are really, really working on the environmental review site by site, house by house requirement of HUD. We are working on all levels on that. We are engaging individually with our congressional delegations saying we need this help. This is something that could not only cost each house more money in the state's program, but it could also cause time. It could cause home owners to, by order of the federal government, to have to stop construction while we do environmental review. That is something we don't even want to contemplate. We have to work with that regulation until we're able to find relief from it. So, we're working very hard on behalf of the homeowners for that. Of course, help on SBA, the Small Business Administration duplication of benefits question that we've been hearing from, you guys have heard from folks in our town meetings around the state that we would ask for a forgiveness of SBA loans for folks, or the ability to not be considered a duplication of benefits when our CDBG dollars come. So just know that all those individual requests are still being worked through. We're swapping wording with various committee staffers, trying to see what bills various relief language can be placed in to, so that we can help. And so, when it comes to transitional shelter assistance. As I mentioned, about 719 families are there. I want to say a thank you to the teams of folks from FEMA, from GOHSEP, from the governor's office, from LDH, our Louisiana Department of Health, and from our Office of Community Development. Since about Christmas, we have had a really, continued concentrated effort to try to help find solutions for those families

that are in hotels and I will tell you it's not easy. A lot of these families have very difficult financial situations, very difficult family. Sometimes mental health situations, sometimes it just logistical trying to get back to where they came from and find a job and transportation and a house that are all in the same area. And we have some really committed FEMA folks, some LDH folks, our Office of Community Development. We started in December with about 1,250 families that were still in FEMA funded hotels. It's my understanding that we have some folks who were able to find solutions over the past couple of weeks that we will have about 550 families tomorrow. It will be roughly around that amount, is what we project by the end of the weekend. But I'm telling you that when we get to those last roughly 400 families or so, there is not an easy solution. We have to help those families and so, we'll be looking at how we can do that, and asking for your input from each of your communities of what we can do to help that. Each family and each person in TSA faces very difficult circumstances. Financial, logistical reasons why they are not home yet. And it's very sad sometimes when you talk to the families and you hear their stories. And a lot of times they will do whatever they can to try to help be a part of the process to find that next long-term or even mid-term housing solution. And so, I want you to know that this is top of mind for the Governor's office, and we will continue to work to help these families. It's not easy, but I want to call upon our Louisiana families, and landlords and businesses to help in this effort. I have one just sort of reminder just to share with you before I close here. You may have heard in some news reports talk of why the state hasn't spent the money yet in terms of the CBDG funding. I want to make very clear we don't have the money yet in the federal process. We had a big step on Friday where we were able to receive approval from the federal government of our first \$438 million action plan. But you can rest assured that as soon as the grant agreements are given to us by HUD and signed and the line of credit is turned on, that you will begin to hear and in fact you will hear Pat Forbes today talk about what is the survey intake and application process going to look like for homeowners. That is the question I'm sure many of you are receiving, it's the one I'm receiving. How do I apply? How do I apply for help from the home and assistance program if I'm a landlord, how I get rental assistance help? If I'm a small business, when I can apply? And you'll hear about that today. We are already, as the Chairman mentioned, in the process of selecting the contractor that will run the program management, and the construction management for the home owner assistance. So, know that no grass is growing under our feet there. We are absolutely committed to moving with speed. Secondly, administrative costs, I hear people say 30%, that's incorrect. There is not a 30% administrative cost to the program the state of Louisiana is proposing. The administrative cost is 4%, it's lower than the HUD allowed 5%. That will fund our OCD office. And know that our OCD office, the Office of Community Development, does not run on state general fund dollars. It runs on each storms dollars. And, so, that is what that 4% will be used for and then a 15% program intake through completion cost. In other words, its program delivery but it includes everything from setting up the offices and the phones to take in the applications, the counselors to talk with folks, make sure that folks are eligible, get their information, then go through and do the inspections, any kind of reviews we have to do. Then making sure that the construction is done properly, the interaction with the customers, and then at the end, the inspections, to make sure that everything was done correctly. So I just wanted to correct those two facts and some of the stories that I've been hearing. But otherwise, thank you very much as a task force for your time, for your really detailed input as we craft this recovery and as we try to move it forward. And I just leave with you, think about affordable housing. We'll be back at the next meeting to talk to you about what we can do as a task force to help improve the number of units available for our flood survivors. So, thank you.

## **V. LOCAL OFFICIALS**

**~ Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome, Baton Rouge**

**Ms. Wyatt:** At this time, I would like to welcome the Mayor-President of Baton Rouge, Ms. Sharon Weston Broome, and I'm going to give her a big applause.

**Mayor-President Broome:** Thank you, madam chair, and thank you to all the members of the Restore Louisiana Task Force for having me here today. And thank you for the work you all have done over the past few months not only to recommend flood recovery programs that help as many people and businesses as possible given the limited funding resources provided thus far to Louisiana, but also to keep a focus and a spotlight on the long-term needs of the recovery of this state from the 2016 floods. And thanks also to Governor Edwards and his team, led on these issues by Julie Baxter Payer, and to Pat Forbes and the team at the Governor's Office of Community Development, for the work they've been doing to take this Task Force's recommendations on recovery programs and submit thorough and publicly vetted flood recovery plans to HUD – what HUD termed in its approval letter of the first action plan as a “historically fast” submission of a plan. Pat and his team have also hosted two public meetings in East Baton Rouge related to the action plans, and I'm grateful that they provided the opportunity for our residents to learn about the plans for the recovery dollars. Today I'd like to touch on a few recovery-related issues that I consider the highest priorities for my administration, since taking office on January 2. First, I'll outline the need both for additional recovery dollars and for greater flexibility for the use of those dollars, and how I join with you, the members of the Task Force, and Governor Edwards in the continued efforts to impress

upon the members of Congress the need for the additional dollars and for greater flexibility in the implementation of those dollars for our state. Second, along the same line with the need for additional dollars, I'll highlight what for me as the leader of East Baton Rouge Parish is a primary focus for my administration, and what I see as an issue that can significantly impact the future of this parish – and that is the issue of blight. And finally, I'm sure many of you are aware that East Baton Rouge Parish was granted \$11 million direct from HUD in response to the August flood event, and I'll talk through the plans for those funds. On the need for additional recovery dollars, I have provided you with a copy of a letter I submitted this week to members of Louisiana's Congressional delegation, supporting the call from the Governor and all of you for additional recovery dollars for our state. I recognize and fully support that the job of this Task Force is to ensure recovery funds are distributed across 56 of our state's 64 parishes. In my letter to the Congressional members, I highlight just some of the numbers in East Baton Rouge parish as an example of why we all recognize we are still woefully short of the funds needed for recovery. East Baton Rouge parish had over 44,000 structures impacted by the August flood. This includes nearly 1,000 public facilities, 2,300 commercial buildings, and nearly 41,000 residential structures. Clearly, with \$1.6 billion intended for recovery in nearly every parish across the state, not all impacted homeowners, renters and small businesses will be assisted with the current allocation of Community Development Block Grant dollars. I know I am preaching to the choir when I say that it is UNJUST for our state to be forced to choose which citizens qualify for recovery assistance, and which do not, because we have not been provided the resources necessary for our recovery. This is an irrational position to put our state in. And anyone questioning the justification for additional dollars NOW, is putting into jeopardy Louisiana's opportunity to bring in more dollars and help more citizens. Louisiana should not have to regulate who does and who does not qualify for assistance, and additional dollars to support the unmet needs that our data clearly shows to Congress and the Presidential administration should be unchallenged. Congress has a clear path for providing more flood recovery funds when it goes back in April of this year to fund the government. Our federal partners should also have no doubt that Louisiana will act responsibly with these dollars. As a former State Senator who has been involved with a number of previous recovery efforts in our state, I know that Louisiana has spent its allocated recovery funds in the past reliably and responsibly, and I believe Louisiana leads the nation in the efficient delivery of recovery funds to the people who need it. Congress needs to recognize that, and recognize the need that still exists. You will also see in my letter to the Congressional members my support for what the Governor and citizens of this state have been calling attention to for some time: easing some of the restrictive rules that are put in place for these long-term recovery funds. I know and support the Governor's efforts to call for greater flexibility for these recovery dollars, and I highlight in my letter only the example of duplication of benefits for the Small Business Administration loans. This is a significant challenge facing many individuals in this parish, and also statewide, and the Governor has offered up a reasonable solution to this in the form of a forgivable loan fix. I fully support this, because I know from speaking with many residents and families in East Baton Rouge parish that their SBA loan has created a financial hardship. I believe if there's any state that is qualified to help the federal government improve the delivery of recovery dollars to the people who need it, in a way that is both expeditious and also serves to be great stewards of taxpayer dollars, it is Louisiana. Members please know that I join with you in pushing for these smart fixes to the recovery programs. Next, I'd like to talk to you about the issue of blight in our parish. And the reason I am talking about this issue is because my office is working through the hard details of dealing with blighted and abandoned properties that were impacted by the flood, working towards a comprehensive solution to address it. As you can imagine, abandoned and blighted structures that are not repaired or rebuilt, and sit untouched for long periods of time can have a negative impact on both the quality of a neighborhood and, even more concerning, stand as a potential health hazard for a community. If post-flood blight goes unaddressed, it has far-reaching, negative impacts for property values, tax collections, economic development, neighborhoods, schools, they become not only eyesores but also increased risks for fire hazards, and on and on, all of which put further strain on a local government. Right now, just in East Baton Rouge we estimate the number of flood-impacted blighted properties to be in the hundreds, and we're working towards comprehensively identifying and tracking them. In the immediate time, we are working with GOHSEP and FEMA on identifying blight solutions, and I'd like to thank the staff and leadership at GOHSEP for their assistance in this process. But as you can imagine this will be a timely and challenging process, and with each passing day we risk putting neighborhoods at further jeopardy. We are looking to you all, and to the state and federal governments, for assistance and partnership in this issue. The City-Parish currently does not have the general funding to tackle this issue alone, and there are complications to qualifying these properties for federal disaster assistance. We will continue to engage with GOHSEP and with the Office of Community Development for creative solutions to this issue, as it will take efforts from all of us to explore what other disaster-impacted communities throughout the country have done to deal with blight. Additionally, we continue to address flood debris in the parish. To date, we have picked up nearly 1.9 million cubic yards of flood debris in East Baton Rouge Parish, at a cost of over \$41 million. We started picking up debris in the days immediately following the flood, and have made a number of complete sweeps of the parish. Because many families are still just starting to come back into their homes to start their rebuilding process, earlier this month I requested and received approval from FEMA for a 6-month extension for flood debris clean-up, beyond the standard 180-day deadline. We will continue conducting debris pickup in the parish as long as it's needed. And finally, late last year, due

in part to the efforts of Pat Forbes' office, HUD directly granted East Baton Rouge Parish just over \$11 million for flood recovery, called sanction funds. Mayor-President Robideaux and Lafayette Parish were also a recipient of these funds from HUD. Before I took office, a plan was put forth for the use of these sanction funds. However, when I came into office, I felt that there were more effective ways to utilize and leverage these limited dollars, and so I have set forth to amend that plan to what I believe is a more comprehensive and more effective use of the sanction funds. I have worked with my team to more equitably serve and more efficiently impact flood recovery, with a greater focus on getting funds to the people who truly need it, with less dollars being spent on administrative and non-essential functions. I am also leveraging these vital recovery fund dollars with other funding resources that come through the City/parish's Office of Community Development and with other private funding sources, in order to stretch the \$11 million as far as possible, and to assist as many people as possible. Much like the state, I too put a focus on getting the flood recovery dollars obligated as quickly as possible to East Baton Rouge Parish, which was achieved last week, so that when all of the programs are approved by HUD, we will be ready to deploy. Within the next two weeks, we will submit an amended plan for public review and then to HUD, outlining programs that will address homelessness prevention that will increase the number of affordable rental units in the parish, and that will leverage the state's homeowner assistance program to serve homeowners who otherwise may not qualify for rebuilding assistance. One aspect of the plan that we have already gotten underway is a homelessness prevention initiative, which assists the most vulnerable of the population who are still trying to recover. We are working closely in partnership with the State and the Disaster Case Management program in order to reach the impacted population who will qualify for this program, so that we can stabilize households and ensure participants sustain their networks, like schools, employment, healthcare delivery, and family relations, which all serve as a safety net for a neighborhood or a community. I want to thank the state's Office of Community Development, who has been our partner in this and has been providing East Baton Rouge with staff support and technical assistance for the sanction funds. For the 54 days I've been in office thus far, flood recovery has been a top priority for me and there has not been a day that's gone by that I haven't met with or spoken with someone who's been impacted and is looking for help. I commit to working with all of you towards that end. It is our shared desire to see that everyone impacted gets the help they need to find solutions for their family and their particular situation. It will take the collective efforts of all of our strength, our voices and our tenacity to continue to fight for this state to not be forgotten. Thank you for your time and consideration today, and I look forward to our continued partnership.

**Ms. Wyatt opened the floor for questions.**

**Commissioner Strain:** Good morning Madam Mayor.

**Mayor-President Broome:** Good morning Commissioner.

**Commissioner Strain:** How are you?

**Mayor-President Broome:** I'm doing great.

**Commissioner Strain:** Well, welcome to the administrative branch of government. It does seem a little odd for me to be on this side of the dais. For the last nine years it has been reverse.

**Mayor-President Broome:** I know.

**Commissioner Strain:** In the aftermath of Katrina and Rita, specifically for Orleans Parish and some of the parishes affected, we passed special legislation to deal with blight. To where there was an expedited process, to where we could either expropriate or sell those properties and a way to clean that up. Because blight is going to be a huge issue, and lack of funding to correct that. And what the blight does, as you quite well know, has a very negative impact on the overall health of the community. And so, I think that maybe that's something that we need to look at. If we're gonna need some special legislation to deal with that. But also, as we can find some way as a priority to the state to start looking at blight here and elsewhere. So, I would, please I'd like to work with you. And I'm sure we all would to that effect.

**Mayor-President Broome:** Commissioner, I appreciate your comments on that issue. And, certainly, we're going to make sure that we execute and look at all opportunities to make sure that blight is a priority. And to look at other areas that have achieved and accomplished the ability to get rid of blight, in situations like this. I know you mentioned, what happened post-hurricane Katrina. And so, I can assure you that my staff is looking at all of those angles. But it certainly would be great if there were legislation put in that could, perhaps, help all of the state. Because the disaster that we had, Madam Chair, in August of last year, certainly continues as we talk about the tornado disaster, etc. So, looking at this blight holistically, I think it would be advantageous from a legislative and policy point of view.

**Mayor Tyler:** Good morning, Madame Weston Broome, and welcome to the world of the mayoral position.

**Mayor-President Broome:** Thank you.

**Mayor Tyler:** I want to say thank you first, for all your service, down through the years, here in the legislature. Certainly, she helped me so much on the State Department of Education. But an idea that I've received just from listening to your passion this morning. I'd like to make a suggestion that all of the mayors that were affected across the state with the flooding

from March and August, could come together and do a letter, and maybe Mr. Gallagher could help us out from LMA, and allow us to all sign off on the letter to our congressional delegation, as well as our president to ask for, and make a case for, additional funding and resources needed for the recovery here in Louisiana. And I just wanna throw that idea out. I think that with unity comes strength. So thank you so much for the idea.

**Mayor-President Broome:** I agree, I agree. Thank you, and I thank you for sharing that. I wholeheartedly agree that collaboration and consensus and moving forward as a unit, certainly, gives us leverage. And it's good to have that in government.

**Mr. Gallagher:** Thank you, thank you chair and Mayor, I spent many years, as you know, sitting in that very seat while you chaired municipal committee, representing the views of the LMA. And sometimes I was successful, sometimes was not, but really always appreciated your insight.

**Mayor-President Broome:** We're going to have a better working relationship now.

**Mr. Gallagher:** I think I'm on my 56th day as the executive director of the LMA. So I do appreciate it, and as you know, in meeting with you that the blight, of course, is one of the big focuses of the Municipal Association. And we want to continue to work with you and also with the task force and the legislature on helping address it. It is a state wide issue and it's something we're very focused on. And also, again, I appreciate your comments and want to let you know, and Mayor Tyler know, that I'll be joining a group of mayors, our board members and other mayors at the National League of Cities, in about three weeks, to go up to Washington. We will be meeting with Senator Cassidy, and Representative Graves, and several other members of the delegation. And I do want you to know, that I will be happy to share your comments, and concerns on the issue, as we continue to work for additional funding because we do need to make sure that everybody is assisting in the recovery, and almost as important, is making sure that local government infrastructure is back and working. Because as we say, if we get everybody back in their homes, we still need that infrastructure, the water, sewer to connect to. So, we really want to focus on that as well. But I do appreciate it, and I will make sure that we do relay your concerns in our visit and continue to work with you as part of the LMA.

**Mayor-President Broome:** I appreciate you reiterating that need to our congressional delegation. I'm convinced the more that we speak the same thing, and are on the same page, the farther it gets us down the road, in terms of getting additional money.

**Mr. Gallagher:** Yes, thank you.

**Representative Pope:** Congratulations to you by the way.

**Mayor-President Broome:** Thank you, Representative Pope.

**Representative Pope:** At least eight years in this legislative body, and you were very, very successful in what you did, and I'm sure you'll be a success where you are today. Certainly will encourage you to do that. I do have issues, and I think Blight is absolutely on the radar. And I think we're going to applaud you for making it a statewide effort because it is. It's not just a local effort, it's a statewide effort that I think all communities that have been affected will experience this. And certainly, we would certainly support anything that we can do with Blight. I would like to comment and congratulate you for making this comment because we have been making it forever. And we will continue to make it, and that is having people put in place or in a position, not a place, within a position of having to choose who gets assistance. That, to me, is just totally, totally unfair. I think everybody, and we all know that everybody that has a new, mention the 56 districts of parishes, if you will. All those people have gone through the same thing, regardless of where we are in status, those kind of things. And I applaud for taking that position on that because I think that's absolutely crucial to the success of what we do in this state and to the success of how we come back from the disasters that we've had.

**Mayor-President Broome:** Absolutely.

**Representative Pope:** The third thing that I'd like to say is not directly to you, I'm going to go over your head. Because you brought it up and that is something that I'm not familiar with and that's the sanction funds and how you go about applying for that. So I'll ask Mr. Forbes that when he gets here.

**Mayor-President Broome:** Okay, okay, thank you, Representative Pope. And once again, as I said, this is such a large impact for our state. I don't see us competing, Madam Chair, against one another, but I see us all at the table together to advance an agenda that certainly will empower all our cities and communities that need it. Thank you so much.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Makes sense, thank you, appreciate you.

**Mr. Dartez:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to make a comment, and first off, congratulations again, representing the Police Jury Association and East Baton Rouge as a member. They have fast things happen. John, I'll just agree, we're going to do a joint letter for both our associations. He goes to DC for that National Legislative Conference in three weeks. We actually, we bring in a delegation of over 100 parish members tomorrow. We leave tomorrow for DC. And so we're going to make copies of your letter, we work with Julie and Pat and the committee here and we got all their bullet points as

well, so I know we got our support of our delegation. But we're also going to meet with the state directors of the Hurricane Matthew states, as well as now the new flood states on the West coast. We're meeting with those folks on Sunday to bring a joint effort to Congress about all these floods. So hopefully, we'll get some traction, not only with the Blight issue, but we notice in your letter, which is very important, this SBA issue as well. So thank you for your service, not only in the Senate, but also as a new member of ours. Thank you very much.

**Ms. Wyatt closed the floor for questions.**

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

**Ms. Wyatt:** Thank you, so now we're going to bring up Pat Forbes, the Executive Director extraordinaire of the Louisiana Office of Community Development. Extraordinaire we call him.

**Mr. Forbes:** Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, members of the task force. First, I want to thank Mayor Broome for stealing our chief, I mean for being such a great partner in these first 54 days, thank you. And I also want to thank her for giving me credit for the sanction fund, but I cannot take that credit. That is a direct result of the Governor's request of Secretary Castro back in September, for those sanctions funds and HUD was very gracious in providing those, and Representative Pope with the respect to applying for those funds, they are reserved exclusively for entitlement communities, which is a term of art in HUD. It's communities that get direct grants from HUD on an annual basis. And so, that's why Baton Rouge, or city of Baton Rouge, and Lafayette were the two recipients, they were the two biggest.

**Representative Pope:** *Microphone was muted, unable to decipher.*

**Ms. Wyatt:** Representative Pope, please speak into your microphone.

**Mr. Forbes:** We should have talked about those earlier in the process, probably. What's been great is working with Baton Rouge and Lafayette in terms of making sure that our work that we're doing and that they're doing with those funds is complimentary. I appreciate the Mayor's reviewing where they're going with those funds.

**Mr. Forbes began his PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint can be found on [restore.la.gov](http://restore.la.gov) website.**

**Ms. Wyatt allowed questions during the presentation, therefore the floor was never officially opened for questions.**

**Mr. Knapp:** What did you mean by five were responsive?

**Mr. Forbes:** When a request for proposals goes out, there is a list of mandatory parts of a required response. If a proposal doesn't include every single one of those mandatory parts of the required response, we cannot review it and score it because it's impossible to compare it to the other proposals that were submitted.

**Mr. Forbes concluded his presentation.**

**Representative Pope:** Short question. I am looking at, on tab six, page three, and that is program allocations, and if I remember my numbers correctly, and I did miss a meeting so, that could have changed, I think initially the home owners program was \$900 and something million that was allocated, is that correct?

**Mr. Forbes:** I think it's actually \$1.2 billion, but the \$900 something is the amount going to homeowners.

**Representative Pope:** That's what I meant.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir.

**Representative Pope:** And I think that from what I'm looking here, you took \$30 million from that number to put into the rental assistance.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir, that's correct.

**Representative Pope:** How many, I think I have heard a number along the line it was probably 36,000 give a take a few of the home owners that will be able to see some assistance, is that correct?

**Mr. Forbes:** The universe we expect to be eligible for this is around 36,510.

**Representative Pope:** Okay, so how many would be reduced by this \$30 million?

**Mr. Forbes:** We do not think that we're going to have to reduce the number of people served. There's several different variables in place. One is, our math, to date, has included 100% participation rate of those 36,510 people, we've never had 100% participation rate in a homeowner program. It also assumes certain percentages of a number of people who started their rebuilding effort, and consequently would only be eligible for the reimbursement portion, which is reduced. We have



reason to believe, although this survey is going to help us understand better, that more people have gotten started rebuilding than we estimated. So we, at this point, we do not expect to impact the number of people served.

**Representative Pope:** I understand where you're having to jump through hoops with that theme, and that kind of stuff, and I don't have issues with taking the money, that's not where I was going, I was just wondering how many. And if you tell me that you think it's going to be negligible at best, I'm okay with it.

**Mr. Forbes:** That's the case but it's exactly the perfect question because every single decision we make is a decision about somebody who doesn't get money. There's no way around that.

**Representative Pope:** Thank you.

**Mr. Knapp:** Thank you for the updates on the small business loan and grant program. Could you clarify, does that also include the technical assistance portion of the business assistance programs?

**Mr. Forbes:** That is barreling head long as well, but this timeline is specific to getting the non-profits in place for the small farm grant loan program. We should be reporting at the next meeting on the all the other programs and status of those in time for rolling those out.

**Dr. Richardson:** Yeah, Pat, looking through all these flow charts, seems like the ones on page four and five and six really refer to administration type flowcharts things but you get to page seven, that's when individuals get into the mix.

**Mr. Forbes:** Let me go back to seven. Can you tell me the heading on the name on the homeowner program implementation? Yes, Sir.

**Dr. Richardson:** That's when, up until that time, it's all you or your stuff or HUD.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes, sir.

**Dr. Richardson:** Whereas here, and this is also where you have the survey, which really isn't a survey in the tip of just a sample, it's everybody. If you go and get that loan, you're going to be a part of that group.

**Mr. Forbes:** It's a 100% sample survey, yes sir.

**Dr. Richardson:** Okay, how are they going to do this now exactly, are they all online?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir, initially it will all be online, and I'll tell you there are a few pieces to that lessons learned from previous disasters. After Katrina, we did the home owner program, the road home program, there was the ability to send in handwritten applications. As soon as a person mails that handwritten application, they feel like they've applied. If that application has illegible portions to it, that system cannot figure out how to put in, we'll have no way to connect back to the person who thinks they have an application in place. So, consequently, we will have a 100% electronic entry to the survey. That is not to say that people who don't have access to internet will not be able to apply. We will be able, once we get the contractor in place, to take applications over the phone. During which the phone staff will enter electronically into the system the application. So that we reduce to zero, hopefully, the opportunities for applications to get lost. Which was a huge problem if everybody recalls after Katrina. There will be outreach to people who do not submit these surveys. The first run at the survey is to start to try to gauge who all is out there. And to start to identify the first people that we can go help in our phase one of the home owner program. But it is not the end of the process for people to get in. We will, the program will start to identify those folks who have not completed a survey and reach back out to them through the contact information in the individual assistance database. And in fact, as we've talked about before, if we can identify neighborhoods and communities where we seem to have an under representation of applicants, we'll go do outreach door to door, in churches and those kind of things to make sure we reach everybody. But yes sir, the survey will be 100% electronic.

**Dr. Richardson:** And it will be the first step in the application process as you stated earlier.

**Mr. Forbes:** That's correct, once you put your name and your FEMA individual assistance number into that survey, you're not going to have to provide those again. They will flow through to the application once you are invited to complete an application.

**Dr. Richardson:** You get that number when you start the process? Or should they have it already?

**Mr. Forbes:** No, I'm sorry, the individual application number, is already the FEMA number. We'll be trying to tie back to the FEMA database, just because they have so much information, and we don't want to have to collect that from people, again. So there will be every effort to make this as easy as possible for home owners to use data sources that we already have available. And not have to ask them to duplicate the information that they provide to us, or to FEMA, for that matter over and over again.

**Dr. Richardson:** Now you said it's going to be a 15 to 20 minute questionnaire at the beginning.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir.

**Dr. Richardson:** Roughly speaking, and what are you asking in that questionnaire?

**Mr. Forbes:** We are asking them things about where they are in their recovery process, how much they were damaged, what other sorts of resources they have, confirming income, and any other information we might have already from individual systems but in ways that we need. What we will not be seeking through the survey is any of the documentation

to support any of the information that they provide us initially. That would begin to constitute an application, which could have the potential of triggering the requirement for that environmental review. So we will gather that at the application process which would be the next step.

**Dr. Richardson:** Okay, and on that environmental review, that's by regulation from HUD or is that by law?

**Mr. Forbes:** There are several different pieces of this obviously, the NEPA is law, the National Environmental Protection Act. Every federal agency is required to comply with NEPA in the way that they see fit. HUD has developed over the years the way that they comply with NEPA. Whenever Congress writes the appropriating language to provide federal disaster funds to local and state governments, they will generally write that HUD has the option to waive whatever regulations he or she thinks would be appropriate to make the programs work better. Without exception, since Katrina, what Congress has always included after that is an exclusion of fair labor standards, fair housing and environmental compliance. So in other words they give the secretary the opportunity to wave things but not the environmental review. Consequently HUD follows back to their regulatory approach to NEPA compliance. And in HUD's regulatory approach to NEPA compliance, site by site review when you're rehabilitating homes is part of the process.

**Dr. Richardson:** For HUD to change that, what do they have to change? Their regulatory environment and the regulatory process?

**Mr. Forbes:** So the thing the Governor has done is provided some language to Congress but of course we rely on members of our delegation to take what's the smartest path, but the Governor has provided some draft language that says, it just tacks on to the language I talked to about earlier, which still prohibits the HUD secretary from waving NEPA compliance with the exception of work performed on single family dwellings that does not change the footprint of the home. So in essence, the vast, vast majority of the homeowners that we would be helping could then be by waiver of the secretary excluded from this environmental requirements if Congress included that language in the next round of funding for us. That's the objective and to have that be retroactive back to the first two appropriations.

**Dr. Richardson:** If they went a single, house by house inspection, does that mean somebody has to go out there, examines it?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir, that's why we have \$105 million budgeting for this.

**Dr. Richardson:** What do they see there? What do they ask?

**Mr. Forbes:** That's a great question that I wish I knew.

**Dr. Richardson:** How long is this report that we have to see to?

**Mr. Forbes:** The reports are not that long. The cost is about, right now, we already have to do that for previous disasters and our cost for doing that is around \$400 a unit. But that doesn't include the travel time to go out as you believe somebody has to drive out obviously there are ways to make that a little bit more efficient.

**Dr. Richardson:** Can you use drones for that, no?

**Mr. Forbes:** I'll ask that question, it's really a great question, I really, I'm glad to ask that.

**Dr. Richardson:** The joint, apparently they're doing appraisals, is that right now?

**Mr. Forbes:** For houses that were built before 1978, in fact, you have to go on site and have entry from the homeowners, so that you can look for lead based paint, and asbestos. For homes built after 1978, it can be accomplished by being on site, drive by, if you will. But it's to make sure that there's not your, you don't back up to a creek that there's not a- A super fund site next to your home, things like that. But again, I will reiterate that in the years of our doing this we have not stopped a single homeowner rehabilitation by virtue of the fact that the planning function associated with this environmental review told us stop the work. It just doesn't happen.

**Dr. Richardson:** Yeah, okay, I can understand the broader sense of the rule for a lot of different things. For this one, it seems to be overly-

**Mr. Forbes:** It doesn't seem to make sense.

**Dr. Richardson:** Yes, it doesn't, not for this particular situation-

**Mr. Forbes:** No, sir. It's not.

**Dr. Richardson:** Okay, thank you. So, online survey, if I were involved, I couldn't get her on the line, you'd call me, I'd call you up and you'd take all the information from there. But you're not verifying the information.

**Mr. Forbes:** Not at the survey level that's correct.

**Dr. Richardson:** You couldn't verify it?

**Mr. Forbes:** That's correct, we're going to start identifying people that we might go do environmental reviews on their homes. People who fit the first phase of our criteria, low to moderate income, elderly, persons with disabilities living in the household. Those sorts of things, so we can start identifying that first tranche of people.

**Dr. Richardson:** But if we get rid of the environmental rule, do we have to go through the survey to get to it, can't we just turn the application in?

**Mr. Forbes:** If we get the relief we're seeking on the environmental rule, that certainly simplifies a lot of things, yes sir.

**Dr. Richardson:** Okay, that allows us to go a little bit faster, right?

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir, we may still, and again, with your advice and consideration decide that it makes more sense to bring people into the application process in phases, so that people don't get their expectations up. Again, as I said last time, we're not going to hit 36,000 people in week one. So, we want people to have a realistic expectation of when we're going to get to them and bring them into the process.

**Dr. Richardson:** All right, thank you.

**Mr. Cloutre:** Thank you, ma'am. Once again, thank you for all your hard work. I have some of the same comments Dr. Richardson had, basically I think the NEPA is just bureaucracy at its best, at some point in individual homes. I do understand and all, I am in construction. But, I just want to touch base on what you had said. And one of my notes is the homeowner's expectations. The expectations of the home owners based on since the flood, even the FEMA applications. When they would apply, they had people sitting for months. They were getting no response or their application wasn't updated, things like that.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yeah, that's true.

**Mr. Cloutre:** So, within our program and a lot of local folks feel easy to blame the federal government early on but as we take on the responsibilities of assisting and getting some help to our people we can't blame the federal government. It's on us.

**Mr. Forbes:** No, sir. Thank you.

**Mr. Cloutre:** And seeing you through Katrina and several other large events, I think the state does have good systems worked out to try to cut through some of these long-term things. But staying in touch with the homeowners and we talked about the online survey and all. That just staying in touch with the homeowner or being able to actually reach out and know that you touched all the homeowners. The FEMA application list is your basis and that's very important. One thing that you talked about today was the extension, timeline extensions, that's a necessity. We can't lose on that, we can't lose anyway on that we have people we talked about this event and March event, and also the August event. People's ability to go back and try to rebuild and get back in their houses without needing a lot of assistance that's eligible to them. And yes, these extensions and these deadlines need to be, if we don't win any of the small battle upfront, we need to win that upfront because it's a long road. I want to make clear on like say the first pass, and still a lot of public we need some, get the public very much aware of where we're going. And that we're not going to get everybody on the first pass.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir.

**Mr. Cloutre:** Continuing on through the program, Mayor Broome, she expressed we have a lot of assistance going out on our first pass, we also have a lot of people that were in the middle class that we hope to touch with the next round. And so, we definitely want to key in on that. Once again, I think the most important thing is the initial educating the public and getting the extensions out because it's very frustrating for the public.

**Mr. Forbes:** Thank you, sir.

**Mr. Cloutre:** Thank you very much for your hard work.

**Mr. Forbes:** Thank you, I will reiterate that we seem to have gotten a pretty responsive answer from HUD regarding the extensions. Maybe not getting all the time we've asked for, but certainly, they seem to acknowledge that it's critical to our success that we get some sort of extension. So we'll see how that comes out.

**Mr. Cloutre:** As said earlier, we'll be in DC next week, from tomorrow on. And a lot of folks representing all the parishes in Louisiana. And any bullet points that we need to throw at our delegation as we meet through, we will.

**Mr. Forbes:** Yes sir, we're glad to provide some talking points for you while you're up there.

**Mr. Cloutre:** Thank you.

**Mr. Knapp:** A follow-up question to the same line of inquiry. Has the congressional delegation given us any insight on their intention to file bills? Especially related to the environmental review or begun drafting anything so that there is a path for that. I know that if there is an additional preparation, it could potentially be a part of the bill language, perhaps in the appropriation. But is there any sense of having something as a separate instrument? And if so, Madam Chair, I wonder if that's something we should be inviting the members of the delegations or their teams to come before the task force and give us some insight about their ability to champion some of these solutions through the process.

**Mr. Forbes:** I do know the governor has had regular meetings when we were up there two weeks ago. We met with the entire delegation and talked through these specifics with them. We also have weekly calls where we cover all the topics. I have not heard a member of the delegation specifically say that they were considering a separate vehicle for these items and I can't speak to that. Sorry.

**Ms. Wyatt:** It may be good for them to come and talk with us. Just so that we're all on the same page and clearly we are but it would be good to have them come. So, if you could just take that back.

**Mr. Forbes:** Certainly.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Okay, thank you. Any other questions for Pat? Alright, hearing none, thank you, sir.

**Mr. Forbes:** Thank you, thank you all.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Appreciate you, thank you so much.

**Ms. Wyatt closed the floor for questions.**

## **VII. ACTION ITEM**

### **Consideration of Recovery Process Resolution**

**Ms. Wyatt:** We're going to bring up Julie Baxter Payer to talk about, I think, a consideration of this recovery process resolution. I don't think we're going to take action on it but we're going to talk about it.

**Ms. Payer:** So, you have in your packets a resolution that was requested actually, by this task force that we begin to prepare this a couple of months ago. This is really focused on future disasters. And one of the things that happens in disasters, and we've, unfortunately, had probably one of the most abilities to see this, of all the states. Is that when you go through a disaster, everyone's working so hard to recover from it and you move on. And the next disaster happens and some of the same mistakes come up again. Or some of the same delays, I should say, and costs come up that are so frustrating. And we sort of don't stop to try to fix what happened after the disaster. So we had a very, I think, astute proposal by Secretary Wilson here and the discussion with other members of the task force that we should put together the specific hurdles that we face when we're trying to recover as a local community, as a state, as a parish and how can we remember we need to go fix this. And unfortunately, a lot of these are things like the environmental review that you're hearing about, that it sounds like it makes no sense on the local level and we should just quote unquote fix it, and you go to try to do it and you find difficulties in Washington. But this specifically, we've gone to many of the agencies to find out in the sheltering phase, in the debris removal phase. You'll see very practical suggestions in here. Medical facilities trying to respond to the recovery. The Stafford Act, you hear about how difficult that is. The eligible expenses, we talked about some infrastructure problems. And then, some of the varied problems that we've discussed here with the task force. That we're bringing to the congressional delegation to fix now in this recovery phase are mentioned here as well. But we didn't vote on this today, because we feel like. We'd really ask, that before the next meeting, you go back to your communities and your expertise, and look at this, and say, are we missing anything? Is there anything we can phrase better? Is there anything from the agriculture world that we have not included in here? Or whatever your area of expertise is. So, that's what this resolution is. We'd encourage the public too, this will be online with the meeting material on [restore.la.gov](http://restore.la.gov). Chairwoman, and so, please visit there, I'm inviting the members of the public to do that, too. And just see if there are specific hurdles not referenced here that we can send to Congress. This would be a resolution from the task force to our congressional delegation for fixes that can begin to work on for Louisiana, and other states as we move forward.

**Ms. Wyatt opened the floor for questions.**

**Mr. Jetson:** Julie, just very quickly I would like to commend you and the administration for the development of the particulars of the document. Adam and I have been talking back and forth for most of the meeting about opportunities for our congressional delegation to actually grab things and advance them and make them happen. I think that the document, even in its current state are represents a wonderful framework for congressional action and leadership to address issues that are not manifesting themselves for the first time in this particular disaster. What are things that are reoccurring challenges and so I'd like to commend you and the administration for the work that has gone into this and that which will be added to it. And hopefully it is something will actually be embraced and acted upon by the members of our congressional delegation.

**Ms. Payer:** Thank you, and I'll thank the Office of Community Development as well for helping us. They've worked with so many different storms in their recovery, so their staff helped with this as well.

**Dr. Richardson:** I want to echo Mr. Jetson's comments to you Julie and to the Office of Community Development. A couple of two things I have as you put all these details down, if I unless I missed it I think in this whole process. I see HUD referred to once, are there no other little things we can talk up with HUD that we may not have. Now just a suggestion, I'm not saying anything bad about HUD, they're doing their job as best they can. But do we have suggestions from them that we might put out there.

**Ms. Payer:** Suggestions from HUD?

**Dr. Richardson:** For HUD, yeah.

**Ms. Payer:** We have suggestions for HUD. And yes, I'll go back through and make sure that we reference them if there's any tie to any of these hurdles, and if we've left any out. I think we've put all the ones in that the governor is requesting the congressional delegation work at. But I'll double check that and make sure that we reference HUD.

**Dr. Richardson:** Again, since they are a major player with the grant, so and that's why I was, okay.

**Ms. Payer:** And that's where you get into the difficulty in terms of is it how they're interpreting what a law is. So, some of these laws that we reference that need to be touched, is it maybe, as HUD says, it's not their law, it's Congress that needs, so you know.

**Mr. Richardson:** Okay, yeah, but FEMA, we talk about FEMA a great deal though.

**Ms. Payer:** Yes.

**Dr. Richardson:** FEMA's every place, you can't miss it.

**Ms. Payer:** You're right, I'll go back and check that.

**Dr. Richardson:** I think you have things like Federal policy should be explored to require federally qualified health centers to provide medical support for shelters. This is on page three of the thing, it's just one example. Obviously that would require resources too, would it not? For the FQHCs.

**Ms. Payer:** Yes.

**Dr. Richardson:** If you look around this state, the FQHCs are concentrated in certain areas, like North Orleans. Bad news, we don't have many of them. If you're up to North Louisiana, they're really, really far and few between.

**Ms. Payer:** Right.

**Dr. Richardson:** So, there might be some other mechanism we work, think about it to, for example real health centers in those areas might be there.

**Ms. Payer:** Right.

**Dr. Richardson:** And that's just my first read, and I'll get back with you on other things.

**Ms. Payer:** Thank you, and please everyone, please feel free to send. You know there are some global issues too in terms of how do we get disaster dollars from the federal government and why is it that they can only come several months later, why is it that they come with all these strings that seem particularly difficult for rebuilding a home. Which is what everyone's trying to do, or finding a rental unit. So some of those things, I just would urge you to think about them too. We can add to this, we can improve this, and we want to take your input on that.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Great, no other questions? Thank you, Julie.

**Ms. Payer:** You're welcome.

**Ms. Wyatt closed the floor for questions.**

## **VIII. PRESENTATIONS**

**Laura Tuggle, Executive Director, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services**

**Amanda Brown, Attorney**

**Ms. Wyatt:** I think we've pushed Laura Tuggle off. She's the Executive Director for the Southeast Louisiana Legal Services last meeting. So, now is your time to shine.

**Ms. Tuggle:** Good morning everybody, thank you so much chairwoman, members of the committee, for allowing us to come back. And tell you a little more about an often overlooked, but what we know is an absolutely essential service to disaster recovery in our state. Our organization is the largest non-profit civil legal services provider in Louisiana. My name is Laura Tuggle and I'm the director. And over to my right is one of our fairly newly minted attorneys in Louisiana. She's focusing exclusively on disaster recovery along with some other folks we've been able to bring on board. And her name is Amanda Brown, and she is from Livingston Parish, from Denham Springs. So, we really felt blessed that we were able to bring some staff on who were directly impacted from the community that have a deep appreciation of what folks are going through. And you know, when you think about disaster. The images that all of this bring to your mind or people in Hazmat gear or the Cajun navy or the National Guard help people get out of homes and flooded subdivisions. Or just recently mucking and gutting and debris removal from floods or tornadoes in the New Orleans area that just hit us recently. But we know that just as important at those kinds of boot on the ground then we say suits on the ground. So to give you a little idea of what we mean there you can ready that forward. We've got a number of legal issues that spring to mind that really get pause incredible barriers to folks ability recover. And as you guys have heard about this morning, time in time again, regulations, lots of rules. And all those kind of things end up standing in the way of not only government's ability to respond, but in the way of individual home owners or renters or disaster survivors' ability to recover and to access the same kinds of dollars that you're talking about this morning.

**Ms. Tuggle began her PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint can be found on [restore.la.gov](http://restore.la.gov) website.**

**Ms. Wyatt opened the floor for questions.**

**Mr. Dartez:** Thank you Madam Chair, and thank you both for being here today and for the work that you do, because the low income folks need all the help that they can possibly get. And to go back to, is it, Amanda? Your story, and I'm just curious, years ago, I used to work with the Department of Justice, Attorney General's Division and did some work under consumer protection. When you find, now hidden fees, I'm sure that's civil in nature. I'm sure we've all seen the news lately of the fraud being perpetrated on a bunch of our residents. When you all find that or believe that you find it, do you advise these folks to go to the local district attorney? If you think it's a criminal matter or do you forward that yourself?

**Ms. Tuggle:** Sometimes, sometimes, we'll do the case ourselves or try to negotiate it because we want to try to get help to folks as quickly as possible. Depending upon exactly what it is we often refer cases also to the attorney general's office. Or the state contracting licensing board, the contracting board.

**Mr. Dartez:** They're very good about that.

**Ms. Tuggle:** But that is certainly something that it really depends how deep it is or how egregious. And sometimes homeowners just want to move on. But we try to give them as many resources as possible so they can try to address that issue.

**Mr. Dartez:** Okay, perfect, thank you, thank you Madam Chair.

**Ms. Wyatt:** Thank you, ladies.

**Ms. Tuggle:** Thank you.

**Ms. Wyatt closed the floor for questions.**

## **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Ms. Wyatt:** Do we have any public comments? Okay, hearing none, we're going to move to other business.

## **X. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Ms. Wyatt:** There's a task force update in your tab nine, you guys can read those and we can talk about it. We will not have a meeting on Friday, March 3rd. Our next meeting will be on Friday, March 17th. Lori is working on where that'll be, what location that'll be. Wait, it has been confirmed. It will be at Lamar Dixon in Ascension Parish on March 17<sup>th</sup>. My co-chair will be chairing that meeting in Ascension Parish.

## **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Wyatt:** The meeting is here by adjourned.

**Meeting was adjourned at 11:32 AM.**

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

Date Approved: April 21, 2017

*LD*