**Regional Parish OHSEP Director’s Subcommittee Monthly Meeting**

Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 10:00 AM

Terrebonne Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

101 Government Street

Gray, Louisiana 70359

**ATTENDEES**

Rodger McConnell, Jared Maze, Ashley Beetz, Terry Guidry, Sandra Gaspard, Kenneth Moore, Amanda Barnett, Collin Arnold, Earl Eues, Darren Guidry, Melton Gaspard, Lynne Browning, Neal Brown, Mark Bolton, Meg Dejean, Matt Hammons, Marcella Horne, Mark Ward, Neal Fudge, Dean Davis, Todd Smith, John Gardner, Stephen Durel, Euclid Talley, Ashley Leblanc, Jezreel Joseph, Amy Michiels, Melvin Jackson, Jacques Thibodeaux, Clay Rives

**Call to Order /Welcome**

Earl Eues called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. Earl completed the roll call and a quorum was established. Earl welcomed the group.

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| **Regions** | **Directors** | **Meeting Designee** | **Present** | **Absent** |
| Region One | Collin Arnold |  | P |  |
| Region Two | Clay Rives |  | P |  |
| Region Three | Earl Eues |  | P |  |
| Region Four | Terry Guidry |  | P |  |
| Region Five | Jared Maze |  | P |  |
| Region Six | Kenneth Moore |  | P |  |
| Region Seven | Robert Jump | Dean Davis | P |  |
| Region Eight | Rodger McConnell |  | P |  |
| Region Nine | Dawson Primes |  |  | A |
| GOHSEP Director | Jacques Thibodeaux |  | P |  |

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES from February 2025**

**Motion by**: Clay Rives

**Seconded by**: Terry Guidry

There were no oppositions. February 2025 minutes were approved.

**GOHSEP Updates/ Reports**

Jacques Thibodeaux, GOHSEP Director

* Director Thibodeaux advised of significant changes mentioned in an article written by President Trump. The main objectives are to put more FEMA responsibilities into the hands of each state and allow FEMA to function like a Parish OEP or GOHSEP, working directly for the President.
  + Director Thibodeaux is anticipating the need for a focus group on how to move FEMA from Prepare and Respond to Recovery, Mitigate, and Prevent. Focus group will be comprised of Director Thibodeaux, Neal Brown, Sandra Gaspard and Hazard Mitigation team, Lynne Browning and the PA team.
  + Director Thibodeaux proposed that EMPG and SHSP funds are given directly to states without FEMA being an approving authority.
  + FEMA is not going to go away, but they will need to restructure. IMAT and trainings will be the responsibility of the state. The ICS system will likely evolve as well.
  + FEMA’s plan is laid out in the most recent FEMA Review Council Charter document. FEMA will likely be directly under the White House. Get with your Regional Coordinator if you would a copy of the referenced document.
* The State of Louisiana formed a State Emergency Response Fund (SERF) in 2020. Director Thibodeaux advised this fund was designed by the Legislature to fund events that occur where there is no Presidential Declaration. It is GOHSEP’s goal to establish regional declarations to help support the parishes and municipalities.
  + GOHSEP used the terrorist attack, Super Bowl, and Mardi Gras as an opportunity to spend money where Federal reimbursement is expected. It is GOHSEP’s intention to get to use the SERF while we are waiting on Federal reimbursement from DHS. GOHSEP would then reimburse the parishes, particularly the New Orleans Metro area, but all the areas where you had an emergency declared by OHSEP and no mechanism in place for the parishes to get federal funds.
  + In the Senate Finance Committee meeting (3/10/2025), The Division of Administration publicly acknowledge that they plan to pay off the $42M that the State incurred during the terrorist attack, Super Bowl, and Mardi Gras. Once GOHSEP is reimbursed, GOHSEP will supplement the SERF.
  + It is GOHSEP’s intention that the SERF would be an operational fund where GOHSEP has access to it on a regular basis.
  + The supplemental budget has 17 parishes that are going to get $11M on these regional declarations now that GOHSEP has certified that the regional declarations are here to stay with a 75/25 cost share with the State and parishes. Regional declarations shapes the new way of doing this and gives the parishes a 75/25 cost share for a tornado, ice storm, flood, etc.
* Regarding EMPG and SHSP, Neal is working on a couple of things to improve the process. One option is to host a workshop at ULL where individuals can come and we will actually do your SHSP and EMPG grants with your personnel there.
  + Neal is also working to take some of GOHSEP’s vacancies and making immediate personnel adjustments to help out with Grants.
  + Neal is hopeful that all 2024 SHSP applications should be approved by the end of this week (3/14) or next week (3/21). As of 3/10/2024, 44 SHSP applications have been approved. Grants will begin working on EMPG applications after SHSP applications are approved. Hoping to have an update regarding EMPG hold by LEMC in May.
  + Neal advised GOHSEP is working on a workgroup for the new grants system; workgroup will consist of several Regional Directors. GOHSEP will have initial meeting with SDMI next week (3/17-3/21) then will start looping others in.
* Neal provided updated regarding FEMA trailers. Ten trailers are remain in Terrebonne Parish; four of those are going through the eviction process now. Veronica, GOHSEP Legal is drafting a pleading for eviction. Three trailers picked up in Shreveport (Caddo Parish) last week, so Caddo is complete. Six or seven left in Plaquemines Parish that will be sold to the individuals. Everyone else will be evicted out. Hopeful that no State owned trailers will be left in these parishes by LEMC in May.
  + FEMA Direct Housing did not get an approval for an extension.
* Director Thibodeaux asked that Regional Directors push the SERF and supporting the regional declaration process and how we can expand the regional declarations to include floods, snow, etc.
* Director Thibodeaux provided GOHSEP Staffing changes:
  + Ashley Beetz was promoted to Director of External Affairs.
  + Kim Beetz was hired on as our Region 3 Regional Coordinator.
  + Jackie Manton was hired as our Director of Center for Safe Schools.
  + Ashley Leblanc hired on last year as Region 4 Regional Coordinator.

**Public Assistance Updates**

Lynne Browning, Asst. Director Public Assistance

* PDA deadline for the Winter Weather event was on March 9, 2025. State did not meet the threshold. GOHSEP has asked for another 15 day extension; no word back on that yet. GOHSEP has validated $7M in costs; have another $1.7M to go. Hoping the extra two weeks will allow GOHSEP to validate costs and meet the threshold. FEMA Declaration does not necessarily have to give us a declaration; the threshold is one of the indicators.
  + Asked that Parishes that have already met the threshold to send in any extra incidental costs
* Louisiana PA Communication pushed out on 3/10/2025 indicating additional reviews are being done in hopes that the reimbursement time will decrease.
  + Reviews mainly focused on Non-governmental organizations. The biggest impact, in terms of dollars, would be private nonprofit hospitals and

co-ops. GOHSEP will take a look after 30 to 45 days to see if it’s really having an impact on GOHSEP’s ability to fund within 10-14 days.

**Hazard Mitigation and Preparedness Updates**

Sandra Dugas Gaspard, Asst. Director Hazard Mitigation and Preparedness

* HM and Preparedness Grants pushed out similar message regarding reviews related to obligations and reimbursements.
* FMA SWIFT Current FY24 is due to GOHSEP in FEMA Go on March 16th (internal deadline).
* Traditional FMA and BRICK due to GOHSEP in FEMA Go on March 18th (internal deadline).
* FEMA has pulled back all NOFOs; reviewing for consistency with the President’s directives.
* Other GOHSEP personnel assisting Grants Division with back log of payments, as well as applications in the system that need to be approved.
* FEMA’s funding holds and extension remain the same as last month.
  + FY21 NSGP, FY22 EMPG, FY21 SHSP, and FY21 OPSG are on hold as of now. FEMA may do a batch release but the date is unknown.

**Financial Operations and Administration Updates**

Laura Beth Lott, Asst Director Financial Operations and Administration

* Working on FY25 & FY26. For FY25, the biggest obstacle is supplemental. Supplemental is money that we requested from the Legislature to supplement our FY25 budget. It is likely that the SERF will be used and then the federal reimbursement will be used to replenish the SERF.
  + Senate Finance meeting on 3/10/2025 focused on FY 26 budget; budget will likely remain the same for FY26.
  + $1.8M new money for FY26 for LWIN that was supported and annualized positions that transferred to GOHSEP for cyber.
  + Met with Department of Administration and asked for an appeal for them to consider additional positions for GOHSEP and to consider additional money for the drone program and AI. At this point, it has not been supported.
  + Senate Finance meeting went well. Next meeting scheduled for March 24th.
  + $42M reduction in budget for FY26, but this is normal. Cuts are non-recurring and completely expected. Budget is broken down into two categories: Recurring and Non-recurring. Recurring means we are funded every year pending some kind of drastic cut. Supplemental funding is considered non-recurring. They will give you the money, but you will not get it again. It also has to be re-requested. A good example of non-recurring is the purchasing of vehicles. If the vehicles have not come in yet, that money will be rolled into next year’s recurring.
  + No reductions of service to you as Regions or Parishes.
* Slight personnel changes coming; working through interviews and distributing duties between purchasing and invoicing. Hoping to expedite both processes.
  + Governor Landry asked GOHSEP to identify possible efficiencies, or money, for FY25 & FY26. They felt like a request to repurpose those back into GOHSEP was valid. Feels like GOHSEP is in good shape going forward.
* Suggested that concerns about schools be brought to Legislature’s attention.

**Emergency Management Updates**

Mark Ward, Asst Director Emergency Management

* 65 Day recap- all Executives or Assistant Directors put together an Executive Summary on what that looked like for their division. We are putting that together and will get that out to everyone soon. Also working to combine all AARs for mass causality event, Mardi Gras, and Super Bowl into one giant AAR to publish out.
  + Lesson learned during the last 65 days was a common operating picture. Moving forward GOHSEP will be used ESRI products.
  + Identified a gap with some of other state agencies and stakeholders.
  + Will be hosting a GIS Emergency Managers workshop in November; more to follow.
* FEMA’s side of training is changing. GOHSEP is trying to change the way that our training is set up. Most training in the future will be pushed through the University of Lafayette (ULL).
  + Encouraged all to look for courses on STEMS; GOHSEP pays for hotel and meals.
* Statewide Exercise in April; finalizing those plans.
* Regional Hurricane meetings; GOHSEP is taking on a stronger role. One thing they need from the parishes is help identifying gaps in your response.
  + Goal is to bring in ESF Staff, Regional Staff, and District Staff- including but not limited to DOTD, Wildlife and Fisheries, LSP, and so on to meet those folks face to face.
* ESF Quarterly meeting to be held on 3/13.
* LEMC coming up; encouraged to sign up. First day will focus on 20 years since Katrina and Rita- where we were and where we are now.
* Working through EMAT process with intention of being certified.
* Army Core of Engineers (249th) will be conducting generator assessments in May of this year. Will try to get as many assessments done as possible during a ten day period. Looking at critical infrastructure that do not have automatic hookups and what would they need.

**Security and Interoperability Updates**

Euclid Talley, Asst Director Security and Interoperability

* 90% of the division were deployed beginning at 5:30 am on 1/1/2025.
* Structural Analysis project is ongoing for all towers owned by GOHSEP, prioritization for the first one hundred ongoing special events, especially SEAR 1 events.
  + Identified gap- shy of 15 channels for capabilities for the Super Bowl. Action taken with less than 72 hour turnaround. Also got a microwave shot that boosted the bandwidth there as well.
* Introduced new Director of Center for Safe Schools- Jackie Manton
* Jackie Manton discussed how Center for Safe Schools is structured.
  + Headquarters staff, which is managed by Robert (Robby) Martin- responsible for key lines of effort with Grants Program Manager, Program Officer, and Behavioral Health Manager
  + Three Area Coordinators- Wendy Gill (Regions 1, 3, & 9), Sarah Theriot (Regions 2, 4, & 5), and Scott Johnson (Regions 6, 7, & 8). Area coordinators are in the field to help push and support those key lines of effort.
* Jackie Manton also reminded us that the Panic Button is still being offered.
* Jackie Manton advised that the last push for bleed kit distribution will be next week (3/17-3/21).
* Grants
  + FY24- finishing up projects; done and mostly paid.
  + FY25- sent three weeks ago for their execution along with their advancements; schools are starting to make draws
  + FY 26- finalizing Notice of Funding Opportunity; will have that ready next week to submit to Legal. Applications will be sent out mid-May. Targeting 125 applicants at max of $50K per school.
  + $8M budget, which includes an annual grant of $5M, specifically for hardening facilities, installing different elements of security- cameras, SROs, etc..
  + A part of Jackie’s initiative within the next 30 days is to locate Federal funding specifically for schools.
* Concerns brought up concerning interop channels being handed out like candy during the Super Bowl and Mardi Gras and strain on LWIN towers. Suggestions included rethinking how we assign channels during special events and creating functional groups on radios.

**Cybersecurity Updates**

Stephen Durel, Asst Director Cybersecurity

* OCR program continues to make headway across the State. Have assisted over one hundred agencies with assessments, about 275 agencies remaining. Team is conducting twelve assessments right now; hoping to have done with those within the next two weeks. Hoping to complete all by the end of this calendar year.
  + Question asked by Regional Director if Hospital Service Districts are eligible for these assessments. Yes, as long as it is supported by the State; primarily focused on State agencies.
  + Assessments have a six to nine month turnaround time.
  + Regional Director advised that Terrebonne Parish recently had their assessment done and their IT department was very impressed. The report included very thorough information and very good report.
* CTAC (Threat Analytics Center)- put into play for the Super Bowl and Mardi Gras. It was a huge win. Received intel through lots of sources, including the dark web.
  + Will begin onboarding a pilot program to allow agencies to share what they are seeing in the field and the threat and indicators to compromise. Will begin with ten agencies and looking to add additional agencies by the end of the year.
* On incident response, they have supported five events and three agencies. Hoping to have those wrapped up by the end of the month.
* Crowdstrike, our endpoint detection software- over 150,000 licenses deployed over 200 agencies; hard stop is at the end of this fiscal year. We are hoping to hit 175,000 licenses and then we will renew starting July 1st.
* AI class held at ULL last month was a huge success. Over 75 participants in the class with positive feedback.
  + Feedback in this meeting was that they would like the course to show them how to use AI for emails, writing letters, summarizing larger words, completing CPG 101 and look at your plan. They would like the course to be more functional, not technical.
* Continuing to work with New Orleans CIO. Identified gaps that they had. CIO, Ms. Kim, wants us to continue work, especially during the French Quarter Fest and the Jazz Fest. Our staff will continue working to secure those issues that they have in their network.

**OHSEP Directors Updates**

* Updates given by the Regional Directors.
* Next meeting date to be determined.

**Adjourn**

Motion by: Earl Eues

Seconded by: unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 10:56 AM