

COUNCIL ON WATERSHED MANAGEMENT MEETING MINUTES

MEETING NO. 10: THURSDAY, NOV. 21, 2019

Time: 10:00 am

Location: Louisiana State Capitol, House Committee Room 5

I. Call to Order

Council Chairman – Pat Forbes, OCD

Pat Forbes: Is it 10 o'clock, I would like to call this meeting of the Council on Watershed Management to order. Could we please call the roll, Secretary?

II. Roll Call

Council Secretary – Lori Dupont, OCD

Lori Dupont: Office of Community Development, Patrick Forbes

Pat Forbes: Here

Lori Dupont: Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Matt Weigel

Matt Weigel: Here

Lori Dupont: Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, Casey Tingle

Casey Tingle: Here

Lori Dupont: Department of Transportation and Development, Pat Landry

Pat Landry: Here

Lori Dupont: Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Bren Haase

Bren Haase: Here

Lori Dupont: Five members are present, we do have a quorum.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Council Chairman – Pat Forbes, OCD

Pat Forbes: Mr. Casey Tingle has offered to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Casey Tingle: Everyone please rise.

IV. Public Comment

Council Chairman – Pat Forbes, OCD

Pat Forbes: Okay, before we get started, the agenda has been published, so if any members of the public have comments on the agenda before we get started, you're free to make those now with a three-minute time limit, please.

V. Consent Agenda Items

A. Approval of August 8, 2019 meeting minutes

Council Chairman – Pat Forbes, OCD

Pat Forbes: Seeing none, okay, we would normally approve the minutes from the last meeting at this point. We're gonna defer that. We have not distributed the minutes to the council members at this point. So we'll defer that until the next meeting for approval of minutes.

VI. Opening Remarks

Council Chairman – Pat Forbes, OCD

Pat Forbes: Instead of showing a bunch of summary slides today, we're gonna kind of go back through where we are and how we've gotten here, for anybody who may not be familiar with the Watershed Initiative, and the Watershed Council and the process. Thank you all for attending. For those of you who are new to the business of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative, this effort was launched in response to two historic rainfall events in March and August of 2016. After those events, Governor Edwards pulled these five agencies together and said, we have to do better than this in the future. We have to change the way that we're addressing flood risks for the people of the state. Ultimately, he produced an executive order that created the Watershed Council, to coordinate statewide flood plain management efforts through a watershed management approach in response these great floods. And its worth noting, to the great floods that we know will be coming in the future. To date, the initiative has launched a data and modeling program, for which DOTD has actively been procuring engineering firms for that modeling, for hydraulic and hydrologic models. You'll hear more about that today, and where we are in that process. The purpose of these models is to provide decision makers with the best science and engineering, so that they can make the wisest decisions with the limited funds we have to address this great risk that we face. The initiative is also actively providing resources to watershed regions. You'll see a slide today about the regions. But you have seen them many times before, I'm sure. They're provisionally recognized by the council at this point, they will be recognized through the action plan. They're also, it is important for us to continue to stress, subject to change in the future. This is a living process and we will continue to adapt as we get information and results from what we do, and see what works and what doesn't. The assistance that's being provided to the regions is a regional capacity building grant in the form of \$400,000 grant to each of the eight regions. The purpose of this is to ensure that every single region has the resources necessary to access the programs and the funds that will be made available through the Watershed Initiative, not only with this \$1.2 billion, but in the future. But we have to ramp up in a hurry. We can't afford for anybody to be left behind. Consequently, these capacity building grants will fill that gap for a while, while the regions get up to speed, and make sure that nobody misses a step in the process of participating in this and participating in funding. In an effort to coordinate state agency funding streams in support of the initiative, OCD has been actively developing the state's master action plan in preparation for submitting to HUD. It has been published now for some four weeks, five weeks. The close of comment period is November 29th. So there's still an opportunity to submit comments. We'll discuss preliminary approval of that action plan today, and what the process looks like if we have additional changes from comments that we might subsequently receive. In anticipation of approval of the action plan and the funds that will be made available through that action plan, the state has begun the application process for the first round of project funding. And we'll be

providing updates on that as well, something we've been calling round one of the Watershed Initiative funding. At this point, I would like to ask Mr. Landry to give us a quick recap in context on the modeling process, thank you.

Pat Landry: Thank you, Pat. To recap a bit for those who have not been following the modeling procurement process very closely, but earlier this year, the state DOTD advertised on behalf of the Watershed Initiative, a request for qualifications to perform H&H modeling for all of the 59 HUC8 watersheds across the state. That happened during the summer, probably early June. The awards for the first four contracts, four out of seven, were made in early October. Oral presentations for the three remaining contracts will be scheduled the first week of January, moving forward. For more information and full details regarding the selections, you can visit DOTD's advertisement and addendum website, which can be accessed by a link that has been posted on the Watershed Initiative Web page, Facebook, or Twitter page. Until all awards have been made and contracts executed, state employees remain in a blackout period. We may not be able to address any questions at this time regarding the RFQs. Should you have any questions, you can direct them to the appropriate channels, which would be through our contracting services people at DOTD. As such, we will not be answering any questions today regarding the procuring of the modeling contracts. Thank those who have submitted proposals. We're very fortunate to have many qualified consulting firms that have put in proposals for the modelling contracts in performing this work. With that, I'll turn it back over to Pat.

Pat Forbes: Thank you much, Pat. Okay, with that, we will get down to business. Alex, will you please provide the updates.

VII. Updates

A. Round 1 Funding

Alexandra Carter: All right, thank you so much Pat. If we could get the presentation to the screen, we'll go ahead. While we work on that, just to provide a little bit of context, the first item on the agenda for updates is round one funding. And so before we launch into the updates, it's important that we all pull from the same sort of understanding. First, the state's action plan. The proposed action plan includes funding for three rounds of funding. So this is the first of what we anticipate to be three for local and regional watershed projects. And round one of the program acknowledges that we must reduce known risks as quickly as possible. So we're doing this while we're moving through the action plan approval process because we do want to be able to issue awards immediately upon getting that line of credit with HUD. So we say that and we also couch that the importance of making objective data-driven investments to reduce future flood risk in Louisiana cannot be overstated, right? So while we want to hurry, we also know that we have to make good decisions. And so knowing that, just keep in mind that future rounds associated with this program will leverage computer models developed to help predict the flow of water. So while those are development, as mentioned by Pat Landry, this round moves forward quickly to try to address the known risks we are aware of today. So to this effect, round one has three main objectives. To fund low risk high reward projects to help shift the decision making paradigm of sort of state agency, or even local agency or local jurisdiction decision making to more regional coordination. And then also to build trust and partnerships with our locals as we move forward in implementing this program. So it's really important, as

LaKesha, I am gonna introduce her in just a moment, so if you want to come on up. It's really important to understand that this program is designed to recognize the value of local and regional input. And enhance the opportunity to organize regionally and ensure that the program funding is provided for high quality projects that will reduce flooding in the very near future. So, LaKesha, if you want to go ahead and introduce yourself, we'll get rolling. I do think we're working on the slides.

LaKesha Hart: Good morning. My name is Lakisha Hart. I am a program manager with the Economic Development and Infrastructure group under the Officer Community Development. And my team will be assisting in the implementation of the round one funding. So just to give you a little background. This round of funding is for up to \$100 million for low risk, high reward projects that incentivize prioritization of projects through regional collaboration. The way we have it split, we have \$60 million that will be allocated to state-selected projects through the Watershed Initiative process, which I'll get into a little bit later. And then up to \$40 million that will be set aside for allocations at each region, with up to \$5 million given to each of the eight regions. So that eligible applicants, basically any public entity in Louisiana. You must have jurisdiction and authority to implement and operate and maintain a project, and demonstrate the capacity to serve as a CDBG-mitigation recipient. And then I'll go into now the application process. You can go to the next slide. So we're looking at this as a process with one intake and two funding streams. So once the NOFA is posted and the application period opens, we have a pre-app that will be available to applicants where you can go online and apply. Once that application is received, our team at LCD will review it for basic CDBG-mitigation eligibility. If you are deemed eligible and your project is a viable project, you will receive a notice to proceed to a full application.

Alexandra Carter: And I want to just emphasize here the reason why we're moving with this pre-application is we want to save costs and time. So to be able to work with communities to say, this is a project that will work for full design, before you go ahead and move forward within a major effort to complete a full application. We are trying to save you costs and time if in fact it may need more work and may be more appropriate for round two.

LaKesha Hart: Absolutely, thank you, Alex. So once we deem that your preliminary description of your process and your project is something that we can fund with CDBG mitigation funds and you are indeed an eligible applicant, you will receive a notification to submit a full application online. Once we receive the full application, again, the OCD staff will review it for a final mitigation review to make sure that everything that was submitted in the pre-app is still applicable. Once that happens, the projects will be routed through the Watershed Initiative to the other state agencies that are part of the initiative for review so that we can get input from their perspective. Whether the project is viable, whether it aligns with the goals of their agency and if they have any opinion as to whether there will be any long-term issues associated with the project. Once that process happens, if the project is selected to move forward, that project will then be scored again by a committee that's made up of members of the Watershed Initiative. Once those projects are scored, the state, through the Watershed Initiative, will select up to \$60 million of projects to fund. And the remaining projects will be routed to the regional steering committees for them to select up to \$5 million in projects that they want to fund. And Alex, I don't know if you wanted to go into a little more detail about that?

Alexandra Carter: I think maybe the opposite, right? And kind of pull back just for a minute. And just explain more simply, because I think you all are in implementation, so that's great. Because you all have a lot of detailed information about this. But to say that the process is basically broken down into three phases. That you have a pre-application, that's pretty short. It's ten basic questions. The idea is that you can get this done pretty quick at low costs and we can assess eligibility. And then based on your project being eligible, you can submit a full application that's gonna require some more detail. And then we'll move to project selection, which we expect to happen around the time that we're getting a line of credit with HUD. And that this whole process is very integrated with the Watershed Initiative. So where maybe previously, you had state agencies developing projects separately or understanding project impacts separately. That the project's tag is uniquely positioned to look at these projects together, understand their impacts based on their expertise and really score these projects well to make sure we make good quality investments. In this first round with the 60 million that will be selected by the state. And then whatever is remaining, will then move to the regions to get that regional input, make sure we understand their priorities and they're given the opportunity to select projects through that process. Is there anything you want to add, Pat?

Pat Forbes: Yes, can you all explain that sequence of the competitive 60 leading the allocated 40? Why that sequences in front of it?

Alexandra Carter: Yes, absolutely. So the reason why we think the state should select the 60 million first is because we want to issue awards quickly. All right, so when we know we have really good high quality projects, we want to facilitate the movement of that 60 million as soon as possible in advance of hurricane season and all these other things that we know are coming down the pipe. We do know that the regional steering committees, that there's gonna be some work involved in establishing their priorities and facilitating their selection process. So that will happen while the state is scoring projects and understanding those impacts. And making selections. So much like many of the activities of the Watershed Initiative, these things will run simultaneously. Will be facilitating the regional steering committee selection of projects. All the states making awards for 60 million they will run concurrently. But we will see a slight setback in the regional work because we expect their project selection process is gonna happen a little bit later.

Pat Forbes: But doesn't it also give the regions opportunity to make sure that none of their projects get picked for the \$60 million before?

Alexandra Carter: It does. Great point. It eliminates the idea that they could pick a project that would have otherwise been selected and funded by the state.

Pat Forbes: Okay, thank you. Very nice. Any other questions? Casey?

Casey Tingle: The one thing that I wanted to point out is that with the feasibility of these project applications at some level, to the extent that we have other funding sources that could potentially fund some of these projects. Even if they fall out somehow of the 60 or the 40, the feasibility of these project applications and ideas being on the table would allow us to look at other funding opportunities across the agencies that could potentially go towards those projects.

Alexandra Carter: You are absolutely right. I mean, essentially what we see for round one is facilitating is the beginnings of a regional watershed project list.

Casey Tingle: And the question that I had, the 60 million statewide which will be distributed first before the regional, correct? Would all of that be distributed or will there be some money left over in any event that a region had a project that was more than five million, which we're given five million to each of the regions, is that correct?

LaKeshia Hart: We're given five million to each region and what we anticipate is if that situation happens, we do have future rounds of funding. So if there is a really good project that comes out of the original selection process, first of all, let me back up, the projects that we will submit to the regions will have a \$5 million cap. So anything over \$5 million will most likely not be submitted to the region as a potential project. What we will do is reserve that project for potential inclusion in round two which is gonna come sometime next year.

Alexandra Carter: Well, now I would specify that there are some hard limitations in breaking projects up so where you would instinctively want to do that. We're gonna spell this out more in the TA in the briefings that we have once the NOFA is posted. We'll further provide more detail in the policies and procedures, but I think the important thing to note here and we'll cover this in just, I think a slide or two, is that the maximum project amount is 10 million and the minimum is 500,000. So we do not want the regions to think they can't submit things over five million because the state is gonna be selecting projects first, and those projects could be over five million. So I think we've got to be a little gentle on this and make sure we provide the parameters as 10 million and 500,000 are the maximum minimum. And when we get to the point of moving projects to the regions, we're gonna have to think about those lists and how those costs layout.

Casey Tingle: And based on that sequence we were just talking about, the highest quality projects would be funded with the 60 million anyway, if it were over 5 million, right?

Alexandra Carter: That is the most likely scenario.

Pat Forbes: Bren Haase.

Bren Haase: Thank you, Pat. I guess my question would be, what opportunities do we envision or do we see, I guess for sort of coordination between the two funding streams?

Alexandra Carter: It kind of gets to your last point, I guess, but there may be, let's say a state selected project that a region would want to enhance or plus up or however you'd want to say that. So, will there be an opportunity for that? I think yes. I think the idea is we want to encourage projects that be kind of pushed along to be more in line with the initiative. And so, isolating the projects that are out there or sort of, I think the round ones first purpose, and then to work with these regions to refine them is sort of the second. That's why we built partnership and capacity with them, bring them together and see where these can be improved if necessary.

Bren Haase: Okay, thank you.

Alexandra Carter: Okay, so continuing on basically the allowable activities and where we can fund projects, any other projects that are going to be considered for this round of funding and for the mitigation funding must increase flood resilience and it also must benefit the most impacted and distressed area. As identified in the action plan, right now we had identified me as the 10 that were included in the 2016 floods. And also the Louisiana State identified me as which were basically all of the other parishes that were impacted by the floods. And then again, the types of projects we are looking for basic, generally flood restoration and preservation projects, food storage, mitigation of critical infrastructure and facilities, non-structural mitigation, green and grey infrastructure projects and anything else that's innovative and

replicable in the mitigation field. Within the state master action plan, we propose adding an additional 40 some odd parishes to our identified most impacted and distressed areas. So if you're in a grey area and you're thinking about putting together a project, I would say, just know we're pending HUD's approval and if you can tie benefits to those areas that are blue, that are hardened identified MIDs, you would further solidify your ability to fund, should there be any change in the state identified MIDs. Again the funds are up to \$60 million in the states selected pool. All projects will be scored competitively using the Louisiana Watershed Initiative criteria. The awards will be announced in April and qualifying unfunded projects of \$5 million or less will be forwarded to the regional selection process. And I'll touch on just in terms of regional selection because I know we're gonna get a lot of questions from our watershed regions. What does this look like? Just know we are developing guidelines for this now, and that what you'll see in the NOFA once it's out is that the regional steering committees must be formed on, they have to determine some shared values and criteria, so we're gonna work with you all on that. And that we expect that these awards by the regions would happen before or by the end of July this summer. So I won't spend too much time on this slide, but generally this is the highlight of the scoring criteria that has been developed by the project's tag, with a little bit of tweaking after the Federal Register notice came out to address the specific requirements that came out of the notice. So generally, we're looking at scoring across the different areas to include social benefits, enhancement of natural functions, of course, addressing a state or HUD identified MID, effectiveness in minimizing risk, and then project cost and implementation. So generally, again, we're looking for projects that reduce flood risk. We're looking for projects that could be deemed shovel ready, that benefit low and moderate income populations, and enhance natural functions of the floodplain. As we said, the NOFA we pushed out this month. Then we'll have some pre-application briefings and TA in the watershed regions the first week of December. The deadline for the receipt of the pre-apps is December 20th. The full application briefings and TA period will happen between January 20th and February 14th, that pushes our full application deadline is set for Friday, March 27th. And we anticipate being able to issue award letters and begin the regional selection process by Friday, April 24th.

Pat Forbes: Are these hard deadlines?

Alexandra Carter: Hard deadlines. So what we've done, and we'll start a quick tutorial because we anticipate the NOFA will be released either today or tomorrow, sometime this week. And when you look for it, we want to make sure you know where to look and how to sign up for briefings. So it's gonna be at watershed.la.gov. There's gonna be a banner at the top of the screen where you can click to view the NOFA. This is the notice of funding availability that outlines all the requirements, and this is the Watershed Projects Grant Program Local and Regional- Round 1. You'll see, notice the funding availability is what you want to be looking for. There's gonna be a button where you can click to view the NOFA. It's very short, it's only 13 pages long. We really want to just get you in the door to put together this pre-app, right? And get the process moving forward, essentially it gives you what you need to know to get moving. We do anticipate the policies and procedures will be released in December. The key here is with the pre-application, you can click to complete it online. The December 20th is the deadline. So you can click on the pre-application link. Part of it is online, and sort of you just type it in and submit. It's really more related to the application, the point of contact, and just

getting your information on how we get everybody on the same page. Some acknowledgements about what is ineligible, so you can kind of understand before you begin what works. Some quick true and false, and then you can go ahead. And I think this is important to note, that there's a sections B and D, or B through D, you've got to click this button at the bottom to input more project specific information. So this is gonna be where you describe your project, the areas that it benefits, its impacts, descriptions of the mitigation, like what flood risk are you mitigating. We give you pretty easy things, you just have to check a box. [LAUGH] Some space to put your project proposal together, it's pretty short. It's only 10 questions, but just keep in mind that when you finish the online portion, you've got to click on that PDF. A lot of this is just HUD requirements, we do ask you to identify your watershed region and your most impacted and distressed area. We want you to kind of just click the plan that you're in alignment with, and that's pretty much it. In terms of the actual pre-application, so some of its online and other, the more detailed information, then you just upload it by the PDF and you submit. In the shorter term, to assist regions with doing this process and filling out that application, you can find the round one projects under the program's tab too. You don't have to use the banner, and you can look and see there are now briefings from December 2nd to December 11th. So you can find the one in your region, the locations and times are already set. And you can add it to your calendar, and we're gonna walk through the NOFA in more detail. You can also sign up for technical assistance within each region. These happen immediately after the briefing, and you can register for the technical assistance online today, or, well, once the NOFA's out. And so just find the region That you're in and the meeting you are planning on going to, you can do that by just clicking More. You just click on that and it'll have two technical assistance sections will happen simultaneously, you can pick the one that's most convenient for your time. So there's gonna be multiple ones you can sign up for, and then you just put in your email, your name and your last name and you basically just set it up. And they'll add a calendar invite and we'll know when we'll be seeing you essentially. So this is important because, we want to make sure that if you're identifying any issues that you're struggling with, well is this a project that aligns with the mission? This is the time to have those conversations one on one with our engineers and our projects tech members and our staff. So we want to make sure everybody understands there is this opportunity, you can sign up today, they're right around the corner, we're gonna go through Thanksgiving and then we'll be in these briefings in this TA. So it's gonna be important to look at your calendar and set these up and there's a lot of flexibility for when you can do that. Okay, let me go back to pause, okay, do you all have any questions?

Casey Tingle: Alex, one of the last slides there referenced TA. Could you speak a little bit more about what that technical assistance will look like, what it will do? I want to make sure that we are providing face-to-face interaction to work through questions and that sort of thing. And that it's not going to just be a submit some paper and then the group will send you back questions and there's this back and forth. That there's an opportunity at the outset to really work through some things in a face-to-face manner that might be helpful to those that are particularly walking through this for the first time since its brand new.

Alexandra Carter: Exactly, I think it's a great question to think about what this means. We're hoping that applicants come with a partially completed pre-app. And they're gonna ask specific questions about things that they are unsure about. So that might be how the score criteria may help with their full application. Is it worth, I think we're gonna get a lot of, is it worth submitting

this project, how is the scoring criteria gonna play out later down the line? So we're gonna walk through that scoring criteria, how it could be interpreted. We're also gonna talk through on the watershed initiatives mission and what we imagined those projects will look like. I think we're gonna have some tough conversations about, is this in the line with the mission, is it gonna score well because it does or doesn't line up? At the same time, we're gonna work with them with the MIDs areas, and helping to work through that. Project descriptions, locations, benefits, and I think we are gonna have to have some conversations and we'll have engineers at these meetings at every technical assistance briefing we will have an engineer. And someone from the watershed initiative staff, we're looking to coordinate with the projects techs to get them there so that you have the developers there with the engineers to talk about projects and their impacts. So I think, we're trying to get pretty much everything we can get done in that meeting so that they feel comfortable submitting shortly thereafter with very little back and forth.

B. Regional Capacity Building Grant

Nicolette Jones: Good morning everyone, I'm Nicolette Jones, I'm the Regional Coordinator on behalf of the Watershed Initiative. We're just gonna give a quick update on the capacity building grant program here. And again to reiterate the goals which Mr. Forbes mentioned earlier of this program. The first is to establish a watershed coalition, which we envision as a decision making entity to guide water management activities including policy development, and project implementation at the regional watershed level. The second goal of the program is to cultivate staff capacity in the region to enhance the impact of outreach and floodplain management activities. And again, there's \$400,000 available per region for this grant. Each of the eight regions convened and chose one fiscal agent to submit a letter of interest for the program. These were received in October. And we'd like to commend and congratulate all the regions on their coming together and their coordination. OCD gave a notice to proceed to the eight fiscal agents and is expecting the full phase II application by December 13th, which is the deadline for this program. And we are providing TA in terms of the capacity building grant program application submittal. So we encourage fiscal agents, if they're having any, or need any kind of assistance, to call us for that help. And just to show summary of the selected fiscal agents, we have them all listed in this table. We have six fiscal agents that are planning on development districts and we have two that are Parish governments, and we look forward to working with all of these entities. And we are encouraged by their abilities to move this capacity building effort forward. Thanks.

Pat Forbes: I just want to go back to that slide real quick and just point out that this was, a lot of work went in at all levels to get that level of cooperation with something that's never really been done before. And I just think it's worth pointing out that while this is just the first step, it is a significant step in moving us forward from a regional perspective and getting that level of participation and sign ons. I just want to reiterate the importance of that and thank all of those that participated in that process. I know that there were some challenges and getting spun up and working together at that scale for something that's brand new. I just think it's a really significant step forward and a sign of progress. Obviously, we got a lot left to do, but I think that's really significant.

VIII. New Business

A. Action Plan

Pat Forbes: We're gonna provide an update on the CDBG mitigation action plan. Just to reiterate for everyone, this is for access to 1.2 billion in mitigation funds. It's from a congressional allocation in 2018. The HUD guidance was published on August 30th. Our draft action plan was posted online on September 26th, and we are currently in the 45-day public comment period which will end on November 29th. Just in summary, the plan details the state's approach for fund use. So including programs for projects, data collection and modeling. It incentivizes policy measures to advance community resilience, much in line with the regional watershed, the program that we just mentioned. It has four federally mandated public hearings that we've completed. And, again, the public comment period closes on November 29th. Just to review the process that we have to undergo to receive this funding, on September 25th, the Watershed Council reviewed and approved summary and budget. On October 16th, the proposed action was published, including a minimum 45-day period for citizen review and comment. Today, on November 21st, we're asking for a motion of approval to submit the proposed action plan to HUD. If approved, HUD will review the plan and will make a decision to approve or amend within 60 days. And then before dispersing funds to any organization that is carrying out CDBG activities, we must have a written agreement or a CEA must be executed. So this is why we keep preparing to move quickly. We want to be able to execute those agreements and move forward. As of today, we have a comment summary. We have received a lot of comments mostly from the public hearings. So this is a really good exercise to perform. Over 70 comments, some from the website, but mostly from the public hearings. We categorized them by modeling the regional capacity building grant program, projects and funding collaboration and then a general category. I think the key take away is what we're not hearing is amendments to the plan. What we are hearing is give me more detail about what the plan is gonna do in my area and what it means for my specific project, which is a very good sign, because it means we're providing the framework to answer those questions with programs for funding. And so what we've been doing is responding to those questions and advising individuals that the action plan isn't designed to answer specific project questions. So while they're valid, it won't necessitate a change to the plan. It will likely necessitate amendments to future policies and procedures for a program much like round one. Where we had comments that did deal with round one, we have incorporated them. So it's exciting that we've started that process and were able to align these efforts. The action plan process is just outlined here, the key being that we've done these public hearings and we've engaged with a lot of stakeholders before those public hearings. And I do believe that's why we haven't gotten substantive comments on the action plan because we've just done a lot of engagement through the listening tours, through our parish meetings and setting up these watershed regions, that we've just been talking to so many people that really want what everyone wants to know is more detail, what was happening next and how can they be engaged. We've reviewed this already but I think the key is September 2020 or spring. I'm sorry, spring 2020 is when we're hoping to get that grand agreement executed and that line of credit established. And it lines up. I think if you remember with that February, I mean that April 24th day, we want to really narrow in on day because we know were anticipating this process to line up

with it. So, what we're asking for today is a motion to approve the action plan submittal to HUD. We do realize that this is in advance of the closing of the comment period, and what we're proposing is, knowing with the holidays and the difficulty of rescheduling, we want to put the state in the best position to submit this as quickly as possible. So pending any comments that would otherwise change the plan, we would submit post on November 29th. If there were comments that came in between now and then, we fully intend on reconvening the council to discuss those comments and their impact on this plan. I could say we were hesitant when we saw the vote on the agenda, to vote with the public notice period ongoing, but given the assurances that the council will be able to revisit it, we're comfortable with the building today. Just to make sure we all understand the process, if a comment comes in that potentially results in our having to change the action plan, those changes would be distributed to the council prior to submittal so that we could approve the changes, apart from any spelling or grammar or table type changes, which we would think are non-substantial. Anything that would necessitate a change to a program or something that could affect the implications with the watershed initiative, we would absolutely move that to distribute to all the council members prior to submitting to HUD and prepare to reconvene if necessary. What we are approving today is the action plan as it is currently written. Alex, just to reiterate, with the comments that have been received to date, could you walk through again, just sort of the relative nature of those comments and what, if any, changes that they have required to the action plan thus far?

Alexandra Carter: At this point, they haven't really required changes to the action plan. The most significant changes that we've made to the action plan have been to build out the citizen participation process that we've been through. Because that wasn't there when we started this process public comment process. Most of the comments are asking questions about the regional capacity building grant program, so that they want to understand how regions are going to select projects or they're asking about round one. How much is the funding for round one? When is that gonna released? Who can be an applicant? So they're questions that are actually more about the things that are ongoing, sort of surrounding the action plan submittal. And less about the actual programs in the action plan that will be launched once it's approved. We have gotten comments that are about wanting to be involved. So like when we move forward with like the flood ready jobs program, there's been specific comments about, making sure that these individuals are notified that they can participate. The same goes for development, so we have gotten a lot of comments about how development happens. And like the standards seem to be elevated, they're worried about new development, flooding neighborhoods. We did get a lot of those types of comments, which again, I think we're setting the stage to be able to address that and the action plan talks about incentivizing policy with programming funds. And so it's in line with those comments, right? So we sort of carry the water with the plan, but the comments for the most part support the approach in the plan but asked for sort of more detail like what does this mean? And so a lot of its referring to round one or referring to regional capacity or referring to specific sections of the action playwright plan to clarify their question.

Pat Forbes: Okay, with all that said, do we have a motion to approve the submittal, subject to no changes to the action plan, to HUD?

Casey Tingle: Motion.

Pat Forbes: Do I have a second?

Bren Haase: Second.

Pat Forbes: Any opposition? Hearing none, the motion carries.

B. 2020 State Agency Alignment Program

Alexandra Carter: The next item on the agenda is actually the plan, the work plan for next year with the working group. So this is what the state agencies that are working on the Louisiana Watershed Initiative and the technical advisory groups that are supporting them. And what we've done since July is really refine the workflow to be very productive over 2020. It's been a very coordinated effort. And it focusses on meeting less often, focusing on key deliverables and what we are asking the council members to do today is to approve this approach and tasks that we've identified over the course of the next year to sort of avoid any surprises. And so Helen Waller who is with me here is gonna go and briefly walk through these major tasks. And just keep in mind that as we move forward, more detail about these tasks are gonna be brought to the council as we reach those milestones and those decision points.

Helen Waller: Good morning again, my name is Helen Waller and I'm among the team responsible for state agency coordination. So, going off of what Alex has said there are really four key tasks for all of the various agency members who are participating in the technical advisory groups. And for the working group members who are directing them. And all of them are moving towards you can see on the top left really the critical long term project of developing a state watershed plan and in fact the process for getting that. But there are a number of other steps that we will be taking one because this is important as a plan will be. The weather is not stopping, the rain will keep coming, and so we do want to have projects on the ground as quickly as possible. And also as we go through those projects and other processes that will contribute to the quality and the validity of whatever watershed plan that we ultimately decide to create for the state. So, we'll start as we heard with the evaluation, the awarding of state and regional projects, a number of those will be awarded in 2020. There are already evaluation criteria that we saw earlier for those. And we'll see how the projects that we have measure up to those and how that can continue to be enhanced to the benefit of projects for the regions and throughout the state. And then, also we'll initiate as we will be closing on all of our modeling contractors and they will begin modeling throughout the state that will benefit everybody. What we do also have a preexisting model that we will be using starting in 2020 that the Amite River Basin model we'll be running two separate pilots. There will be one that will be working with local governments. And then also, the FPC of Louisiana will also be using that model to inform the projects throughout this year. And through that project, and also through economic evaluations and looking at state policy, we can hopefully develop state agency mitigation standards that can really serve as a baseline of what we need to do, that will have a value add across the state. And then all of that ultimately will give us a very strong foundation for how we can go through in 2021 in developing our state watershed plan.

Alexandra Carter: And I will just reiterate, so the idea is we really need to focus on what we're gonna do over the next year to really achieve those outcomes. And so these four tasks are identified. And we've been working with the working group and the technical advisory groups to develop agendas for bimonthly meetings. So all of this is planned out. We kind of know how each domino is gonna fall, and we make sure we get, we kind of work backwards, to that goal. And then we also are looking at meeting quarterly for the council meetings. So we say that with the idea that we'll have 3, just like we did this year, we had 12 meetings on a calendar. Six were held, six were hard, that we knew we would be here for at least six. We're thinking that as we ramp up deliverable

and program launch, that we would want to similarly meet a little bit less often. Because we're gonna be kind of boots on the ground running these things down with the regions and the state agencies. And so we're gonna come up for air a little less often. And so we're looking at six meetings held and three meetings, definitely, that we will have. But if we have things we know we need to come to you all for, we will in one of those six meetings. So we bi-monthly council meetings, a schedule. And then every other one of those, we would absolutely be facing each other and talking through these issues.

Pat Forbes: I think that the meeting schedule of the TAGS and the working groups are the business of the TAGs and the working groups, but the motion to the council is whether we want to switch to quarterly meetings. Do I have a motion to approve?

Casey Tingle: Motion.

Matthew Weigel: Second.

Pat Forbes: Any opposition? Hearing none, the motion passes.

IX. Closing remarks

Pat Forbes: Before we adjourn, I would like to make sure nobody has any comments up here, or if there are any public comments anyone would like to make. Seeing none, and the board is clear.

X. Adjournment

Pat Forbes: Do I have a motion to adjourn?

Matthew Weigel: Motion.

Casey Tingle: Second.

Pat Forbes: Any objections? Hearing none, we are adjourned at 11:42 AM.