

COUNCIL ON WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

MEETING NO. 14: WEDNESDAY, JULY 30, 2020 AND TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2020

Time: 1:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

I. Call to Order

Led by Council Chairman – Pat Forbes, OCD

II. Roll Call

Led by Council Secretary – Helen Waller, OCD

Pat Forbes (OCD)

Robert Shadoin (LDWF)

James Waskom (GOHSEP)

Shawn Wilson (DOTD)

Bren Haase (CPRA)

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Bren Haase, CPRA

IV. Public Comment

No public comment at this time.

Helen Waller, OCD, outlined protocols for the online format

V. Consent Agenda Items

Council Chairman Pat Forbes asked to approve March 11, 2020 council meeting minutes.

Motion: Shawn Wilson motions to review the March 11, 2020 council meeting minutes

Second: Bren Haase

Yeas: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: N/A

Council Chairman Pat Forbes asked for concurrence on the March 11, 2020 council meeting minutes.

Approved with no objections.

VI. Opening Remarks

Council Chairman, Pat Forbes, OCD

Thanked everyone for attending the meeting of the **Council on Watershed Management**.
Provided a brief overview of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative.

Noted that this meeting would cover:



- Provide updates on **funding and applications for flood-risk reduction projects** and
- Discuss **completed regional flood risk discussions statewide** and **next steps towards regional governance**
- Discuss **ongoing projects and collaboration among state agencies** to reduce the flood risk hazards faced by Louisiana residents.

Bradley Spiegel, OCD, noted that the meeting would be recorded and posted.

VII. Updates

A. HUD Grant Agreement

Pat Forbes, executive director of OCD,

Noted that the HUD funds are not currently available.

Alexandra Carter, OCD

Spoke to everyone's anticipation of the HUD grant agreement being signed and preparedness of LWI to act on the CDBG-MIT action plan once signed. Updates will always be available on watershed.la.gov. Further detail on the action plan which outlines programs to advance community resilience and projects to address immediate flood mitigation needs was provided.

B. Round 1 Timeline and Full Application

Evelyn Campo, OCD

Reviewed the objective of Round 1 projects to use \$100M in CDBG-MIT funds implement low-risk, high impact projects that will mitigate flood risk and encourage the prioritization of projects through regional collaboration. Further explanation of the single intake process and dual selection processes was provided. Attendees were reminded that applicants have already gone through a pre-application process, completed in January 2020, to screen for eligibility. This was done to ensure that applicants who complete the extensive full application online during the three-month application window which will open once the HUD grant agreement is signed are submitting projects which meet HUD, OCD, and LWI criteria.

Alexandra Carter, OCD

Noted that both the signing of the HUD grant agreement and review of a potential 300+ applications should could change the timeline for announcing project awards.

Evelyn Campo, OCD

Encouraged citizen to stay informed about the process through LWI media platforms.

Pat Forbes, council chairman, OCD

Reiterated that there has already been a lot of work and a lot of programs and projects will be ready to start funding becomes available.

C. Regional Capacity Building Program

Alexandra Carter, OCD



Spoke to the work of the Regional Steering Committees, composed of representative from each parish in the region, aimed at facilitating regional coordination based on watershed boundaries and the way water naturally moves across the state and providing recommendations for regional project selection as part of the Round 1 funding opportunity. The cultivation of staff capacity at local and regional levels was also mentioned. The recent adoption of work plans and completion flood risk presentations designed to establish a baseline understanding of flood risk at a regional level were also discussed.

Alberto Galan, Regional Coordinator, Region 4

Noted the recent adoption of a mission and framework by the Region 4 steering committee as well as conducting the state's first regional flood risk presentation on June 15 considering flood risk from several angles, i.e. wetlands/working with nature, social vulnerability, future projections of risk, and traditional risk factors.

Bradley Spiegel, OCD

Remarked on the success of the regionals in continually adapting to the environment including the transition to virtual meetings.

Alexandra Carter, OCD

Reiterated the value of the flood risk presentations to allow for root cause analysis of flood risk in each region and the development of priorities and governance structures which could best serve each region. Governance was further characterized as

- Accountability: where roles and responsibilities are clearly defined,
- Authority: where decision-makers are empowered to face difficult issues, and
- Process: where the processes by which decisions are made are standardized and based on best practices.

Stakeholders were encouraged to provide input on governance models for their region.

D. Watershed Monitoring, Mapping and Modeling Program

Ian Trahan, DOTD

Spoke to the continued progress on developing the statewide H&H computer models to analyze projects and avoid unanticipated negative outcomes of projects by

- Helping decision-makers study the feasibility and impact of proposed flood risk reduction projects
- Assessing flood risks, including the adverse impacts and consequences of mitigation efforts
- Guiding decisions involving future developments and sustainable community growth
- Evaluating proposed projects, watershed management strategies and policies

Updates on DOTD's execution of all 7 contracts with all 7 teams of model consultants, an impending notice to proceed, coordination among the consultants and with Regional Steering Committees were provided.

Chuck Berger, DEQ



Outlined the success of engaging stakeholders to suggest river and rain gauge locations resulted in nearly 500 suggestions, the prioritization of which is being established in coordination with NOAA, NWS, and USGS. Prioritization criteria will include the following:

- HUC8 watersheds with no gauges
- Areas with high flood risk
- Streams with large drainage areas
- Important control structures
- Critical sites connecting coastal zones and inland watersheds
- Gaps identified by USGS and NWS

D. State and Federal Agency Alignment

i. USACE Silver Jackets Program Selection

Alexandra Carter, OCD

Explained that the Silver Jackets program into which LWI has been accepted for FY '21 will provide \$100,000 in funds to each USACE office in Louisiana, New Orleans and Vicksburg to support interagency efforts and projects. Notably, this will allow for LWI to build on existing data and models available to avoid duplication of efforts.

ii. Nature Based Solutions

Matthew Weigel, LDWF

Articulated the need for Louisiana-specific strategies for flood mitigation that use the best available information on ecological functions and environmental planning. A Nature Based Solutions group will guide the nature based solutions program by

- Identifying high value approaches that incorporate natural functions and different nature-based strategies in flood risk mitigation,
- Evaluating the costs and benefits of these approaches and strategies, and
- Highlighting which deserve greater consideration under varying circumstances.

This will better enable the development of regional priorities as well as the creation of Round 1 & 2 projects which reflect a watershed approach that elevates and enhances natural functions.

iii. CMP/HMGP Non-Structural Elevations

Sam Martin, CPRA

Articulated how the 2017 Coastal Master Plan identified areas subject to increased future flood-risk and the 2019 Annual Plan established a pilot non-structural program to mitigate risks in these areas. Following coordination with affected parishes, CPRA and GOHSEP worked with Jefferson Parish to elevate severe repetitive loss properties, leveraging HMGP funds. Outcomes for residents and local government were improved by leveraging available funds, accomplishing together what neither



could do alone. This collaboration models future opportunities for coordination that can be facilitated through the Louisiana Watershed Initiative.

VIII. New Business

A. Nomination of New Officers

Pat Forbes, Council Chairman, OCD, called for a nomination for the offices of chair and vice-chair of the Council on Watershed Management and demurred from accepting any nomination.

i. Chair:

Motion: James Waksom, GOSHEP, motions to nominate CPRA as chair of the Council on Watershed Management.

Second: Chris Knotts, DOTD.

Helen Waller, OCD, takes a roll call vote. CPRA is elected chair by a unanimous vote.

Meeting interrupted due to unforeseen circumstances.

August 4, 2020 – 9 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Led by Council Chairman – Pat Forbes, OCD

II. Roll Call

Led by Council Secretary – Lori Dupont, OCD

Bren Haase – Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority

Casey Tingle – Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness

Pat Landry – Department of Transportation & Development

Matt Weigel – Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Patrick Forbes – Office of Community Development

5 members present, we do have a quorum.

VI. Opening Remarks

Pat Forbes, OCD

Gave an apology and explanation for previous meeting ending unexpectedly. Provided an update on items covered during 7/30 meeting. Due to the abruptness of the 7/30 meeting ending, a review and vote for the Vice-Chair started the meeting.



i. Vice Chair

Pat Landry, DOTD, motions to nominate GOHSEP as vice-chair of the Council on Watershed Management.

Second: Matt Weigel, LDWF.

Lori Dupont, OCD, takes a roll call vote. GOHSEP is elected vice-chair by a unanimous vote.

Continued agenda items:

IX. Public Comment

Public Comment: In the true spirit of alignment of all agencies, shouldn't we have one elevation standard? Since OCD requires a 2 foot above BFE standard, shouldn't all the elevation projects require a 2 foot freeboard?

Pat Forbes, OCD – provided answer to public comment received at the end of the 7/30 meeting.

X. Closing Remarks

Pat Forbes, OCD

Thanked everyone for their hard work and dedication in changing this pyramid for us. Thanked the Governor for allowing us to make differences for the State of Louisiana. Will continue to work to advance the initiative.

Pat Landry, DOTD

Thanked Pat Forbes for his service as Chairman the last two years and look forward to continuing working with him on this initiative.

XI. Adjournment

Casey Tingle, GOHSEP, motioned to adjourn the Council on Watershed Management Meeting.

Second: Bren Haase, CPRA.