

Cemetery Response Task Force
Meeting Minutes
May 28, 2020

Members Present:

Lucy McCann – Louisiana Cemetery Board (LCB)
Ryan M. Seidemann – Louisiana Department of Justice (LDOJ)
Henry Yennie – Louisiana Department of Health (LDH)
Amy Dawson – Governor’s Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP)
Ginesse Listi – LSU FACES Laboratory (FACES)
William “Beau” Clark – EBR Coroner, Louisiana Coroner’s Association Member (LCA)

Others Present:

Christine Halling – Louisiana Department of Justice (LDOJ)
David Schultz – Louisiana Department of Health (LDH)
Carol Walker – Louisiana Department of Health (LDH)
C. Shane Evans – EBR Coroner’s Office
Arbie Goings – Goings Consulting Services (GCS)

Members Absent:

None

1. Meeting Start time: 10:04 AM

This was the first 2020 meeting of the Statewide Cemetery Response Task Force (“CRTF”). A quorum of members was present.

2. Old business:

Ryan Seidemann (DOJ) reminded the CRTF members that, per prior discussions, we had discussed the need for trainings of local officials. All agreed that such trainings could not begin until after the COVID pandemic was under control.

3. New business:

Ryan Seidemann (DOJ) noted that LDH would soon need a new member due to Henry Yennie’s (LDH) impending retirement. Henry Yennie (LDH) indicated that Carol Walker (LDH) was slated to be his replacement on the CRTF.

Beau Clark (LCA) generally discussed the coroner’s role in cemetery disruption response. While Dr. Clark indicated a continuing interest for the coroners to remain on the Task Force, he acknowledged that actual coroners’ roles would be minimal in a response. Dr. Clark also indicated his intent to appoint C. Shane Evans as his designee to the CRTF and Ryan Seidemann (DOJ) informed Dr. Clark of the process for appointing designees.

Lucy McCann (LCB) raised the issue of whether the CRTF should seek an amendment of its enabling legislation regarding the Task Force's activation. This amendment would provide for activation upon the declaration of a disaster, but would eliminate the need for cemetery damage to be reported prior to activation. Such an amendment would authorize the CRTF to begin working immediately after a declaration to prepare for impacts and to assess assets. On motion of Ms. McCann (LCB) and second of Henry Yennie (LDH), the CRTF unanimously passed a resolution to seek such an amendment at an upcoming legislative session.

Arbie Goings raised questions regarding whether the CRTF should reach out to individual coroners and offices of homeland security to advise them of the Task Force's existence and role in disaster response. Mr. Goings also suggested that the CRTF send its contact information to 211. Amy Dawson (GOHSEP) and Ryan Seidemann (DOJ) participated in this discussion. On motion of Beau Clark (LCA) and second of Ms. Dawson (GOHSEP), the CRTF unanimously resolved to get this information, in a slide format, to Ms. Dawson (GOHSEP) for the purpose of including it in GOHSEP training materials.

Lucy McCann (LCB) raised a question regarding the creation and acquisition of usable GIS data for cemetery response efforts. Christine Halling (DOJ) and Arbie Goings participated in this discussion. Ms. Halling (DOJ) indicated that, as the COVID response work that each agency was participating in at the time was easing for the moment, she would begin to work on gathering these data.

4. Next meeting:

Unknown at this time. Members will gauge availability and set up the next meeting at a later date.

5. Adjourn

The meeting ended at 10:44 AM by a unanimous vote on a motion by Beau Clark (LCA) and second by Ginesse Listi (FACES).