

RESTORE LOUISIANA TASK FORCE
September 22, 2017
Vermilion Parish Library
405 E. St. Victor St.
Abbeville, Louisiana 70510

Approved

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jimmy Durbin called the meeting to order at 9:36 AM.

Mr. Durbin: Good morning, everyone. We welcome you to our Restore Louisiana Task Force meeting set for today's date here in the great city of Abbeville. We have a lot of presentations today. I think they are all going to be interesting. We look forward to that. Madam Clerk, since I have called the meeting to order, please call the roll.

II. ROLL CALL

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Jimmy Durbin
Mr. Adam Knapp
Mr. Michael Olivier
Mayor-President Joel Robideaux
Commissioner Mike Strain
Mayor Ollie Tyler

TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Johnny Bradberry
Mr. Randy Clouatre (non-voting, ex-officio)
Mr. Mr. Roland Dartez
Mr. Michael Faulk
Mr. John Gallagher
Mr. Darryl Gissel
Representative Edward "Ted" James
Senator Dan "Blade" Morrish
Mayor Dave Norris
Mr. Don Pierson
Representative J. Rogers Pope
Mr. Sean Reilly
Dr. James Richardson
Representative Rob Shadoin
Dr. Shawn Wilson
Ms. Jacqui Vines Wyatt

Ms. Dupont: Sir Chair, 6 members are present. We do not have a quorum.

SUPPORTING STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patrick Forbes, Executive Director, Office of Community Development
Mark Riley, Office of Community Development
Pat Santos, Office of Community Development
LaSonta Davenport, Office of Community Development
Lori Dupont, Office of Community Development
Pat Witty, Louisiana Economic Development
Portia Johnson, Office of Community Development
Jeff Haley, Office of Community Development
Ray Rodriguez, Louisiana Housing Corporation
Casey Tingle, Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
Shauna Sanford, Governor's Office
Nick Speyrer, Emergent
Jon Mabry, IEM
Madhu Beriwal, IEM

III. APPROVAL OF JUNE 9, 2017 and JULY 14, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Durbin: You do have a copy of the minutes of the last meeting in your packet. Those minutes are of the meeting that took place in my city of Denham Springs, and we had a wonderful meeting. So I highly recommend a review if you were not at that particular meeting. So we will not take action on the minutes of that particular meeting of August the 18th.

IV. CHAIRPERSON OPENING REMARKS

~ Jimmy Durbin, Restore Louisiana Task Force Co-Chair

Mr. Durbin: I'd like to start my opening remarks with a very special thank you to the leaders and residents of Vermilion Parish for hosting us here today. Vermilion Parish is one of the top ten most impacted parishes of the great floods of 2016. We recognize the strength of this parish and commend its leadership and residents for their commitment and devotion to bringing their community back stronger. We chose to hold our meeting in Vermilion Parish today, because using our data analysis, over 56% of the flood victims in this area with FEMA verified loss, have not filled out the Restore Louisiana Homeowners Assistance Program survey. That calculates to approximately 1001 missing surveys. We are hoping to reach some of those victims here today and assist them in the survey step of the process. As some of you may have noticed upon arriving, there are tables set up right outside this meeting room with representatives of the Restore Louisiana Homeowners Assistance Program who can help submit surveys and answer questions homeowners may have. The following is an update on the progress of the Restore Louisiana Homeowner Program. We now have over 44,000 flood victims who have completed the Restore Louisiana Homeowner Assistance Program survey. More than 28,000 environmental reviews have been completed which represents 75% of the homeowners currently in phases one through six. Over 14,000 homeowners from phase one through three have been invited to complete an application of those, over 8,500 have submitted. As of today, approximately 600 homeowners have received grant award acknowledgements through the homeowner assistance program. That totals nearly \$18 million of the funds allocated to Louisiana getting out to Louisiana homeowners. If you recall in March of this year, HUD approved the state's request for a one-year extension on reimbursement of pre-awarded expenses for both the March and August 2016 flood events, extending the deadline to September 8, 2017 because so many people are still working on their homes. On August 25th, 2017, the state formally requested an additional one year extension of the reimbursement of eligible pre-application cost to September 8th, 2018. I am glad and happy to tell you that HUD approved this request on September 7th 2017. We know we have a long way to go to help everyone recover from these floods. We know that if you are still not back in your home, none of these things makes much difference. You still need help and this task force is committed to seeing that you get that help as quickly as possible within the system we have to work in. As I always do, I'll close my opening remarks with this extremely important reminder. If you are a homeowner and were impacted by the March and August floods of 2016, please take the homeowner flood damage survey. It does not matter where you are in your rebuilding process. We need to know what kind of help you need in the recovery. This is also the first step in applying and qualifying for assistance. Please visit the website and I will spell it out. R-E-S-T-O-R-E dot L-A dot G-O-V. Thank you. All right, at this time, I would like to invite to come to the table to speak, Mr. Ronald Darby, President of Vermillion Parish. Parish President?

V. VERMILION PARISH OFFICIALS

~ President Ronald Darby, Vermilion Parish Police Jury

President Darby: Good morning. Welcome to the RESTORE Task Force and every agency that is here today. I know most of you guys personally but I won't name any names. I want to thank everyone and especially ones from the governor's office because I know the governor's been pushing this for so long, trying to get our residence of Vermilion Parish back up and running to their normal lives. I thank the mayors for being here today, thank you for the parish presidents that are here today and the Acadiana Watershed Commission, which I serve on that board as well too. We've been talking about drainage for a long time prior to the 2016 incident that occurred in Vermillion Parish. Well over 1600 families were affected by the flood. About 1500 to 2000 families we had to rescue during that time. You know this is really devastating to our community. The flood was disturbing because the properties that flooded along the river had never flooded before, had never had any kind of problems. Every time we had a storm or something like that that came through here, those properties were never affected by that. Only some part of the Parish was affected some way or the other and those people there that couldn't afford anything, would always get affected by the storm. But most of the families along the river, some of them got their properties back up and running and was able to do so. But you still have a pretty good amount of people that's in the Maurice area, some in the Abbeville area that still need some help. And we tried to get the word out. We sent out letters to all those

families. We sent out like 1,600 letters to all those families that was affected. Also, we posted things in the city halls to let people know about the Restore Act, to try to get them the help that they need. A lot of them do the survey, so we're still trying to get people to get surveys. I see some residents here. I called a few of them myself to try to get them here to try to get the answers they need. So welcome to Vermilion Parish, enjoy our community. Stop off and get you something to eat before you leave out. We like you to spend the money here. And once again, I want to thank you guys for being here. Thank you.

Mr. Durbin: Thank you, and we wish your family the best, Mr. Darby. The next person I would like to invite to come up and speak is Mayor Mark Piazza, City of Abbeville Mayor.

Mayor Piazza: Good morning to everyone and welcome to beautiful, historic downtown Abbeville. Last year, Abbeville suffered the worst flood in 76 years. Well, we only got 20 inches of rain, and I say only, because if this year has taught us anything, it has taught us that we can get a lot more. Just when we thought last year was like the most devastating thing that's ever happened, then we see what's happened over there in Houston and Beaumont and Port Arthur. And it's like, oh my God, 40 something inches of rain that would just completely devastate this entire area from the Gulf of Mexico to Lafayette. So the reason I say that is because we just can't do it without the help and funds from the state and federal government. And it's just so important that we participate in something like the RESTORE Act. Because the more participants we get that qualify, then the message goes out to the federal government how desperate we are, and how badly we need it. So we need to send that message out and make that message very clear and I want to thank the RESTORE task force for your hard work and efforts. I have my good friend, Mayor Tyler, drove all the way from Shreveport that came down here today, welcome to Abbeville.

Mayor Tyler: Thank you, sir.

Mayor Piazza: And it's just very important, so I'll keep my speech short. I want to just welcome everybody that's out here today. Again like Ronald said, not to name any names, my fellow mayor from Maurice, Wayne Theriot. But one thing I did want to mention, while Mayor Robideaux's here is that there's only two cities that the Vermilion River flows through, Lafayette and Abbeville. But the drainage is so vast, from all the way from St. Martinville, where Guy Cormier comes from, all the way down here. And you know what they say about when water flows downhill. Well, we're downhill. And whatever happens in those areas north of here, and every time I hear Lafayette talk about improving drainage, well, then it makes us cringe down here. Because you've got the developments over there in Youngsville, the developments over in Broussard, Maurice is growing like crazy. But water has to go somewhere and all that water has got to come down here. So we need to learn a lesson from that, and we need to look at the entire picture of who all you going to affect, and where the water's going. And so I just wanted to mention that while Mayor Roubideaux is here, and he and I have had that discussion before. He knows that we're very conscious about that down here. So again, enjoy your day here, learn from this experience. And like Ronald said, we got some great seafood restaurants right here in Abbeville, so be sure to participate in that on your way out. Thank you very much.

Mr. Durbin: Thank you, Mayor. Next, I invite to come to the front Mayor Wayne Theriot, Village of Maurice.

Mayor Theriot: I'm Wayne Theriot from Maurice. Maurice is on the northern part of Vermilion Parish, right adjacent to Lafayette Parish and we are about a two mile square, and we were severely impacted. I mean, we may not have the numbers that Denham Springs had. But in that two-mile square, we had 84 homes that were severely impacted, substantially impacted. Of that 84 homes, people that were impacted, probably only 15% had flood insurance. I personally was impacted. I was one of the lucky ones. We did have flood insurance. Started buying it in 1980 and my wife would fuss at me and said we were wasting money, always said that we would never flood. And on the afternoon about 2 o'clock on August 13th, we evacuated our home in a boat. And as we were wading through, basically two and a half, three feet of water she turned and apologized. So we were one of the lucky ones. And as I said, in our community, there was only about 15% and we have some members of our community that are still trying to recover. There's one young lady here, and we've worked with her, trying to work with her. And she's not any closer to recovering what she was on August 12th, 13th. They need assistance. And this is all fine and dandy, fill out these surveys, but we need to know when they're going to get assistance. We've tried different and various agencies, going to different things. Our community all live in an area that had never flooded, even in the great flood of 1940, never flooded. I live a block from City Hall. We totally lost City Hall. We lost the police station. The fire station flooded. St. Alphonsus Church flooded. So we were drastically impacted. Of the 84 homes, probably we have 10 families that have actually left. Now Maurice is experiencing a phenomenal growth, Mayor Robideaux can attest to that. We are in the process of building about 350 home subdivisions right now. So, our infrastructure was impacted and when I say our infrastructure, our governmental functions. When I say city hall flooded, we lost everything, communications, records, and everything. It took us about two weeks to formulate some type of form of government. And now, we're struggling out of two temporary trailers, one for the administration and one for our court room and meeting room. We're working with FEMA. Some representatives here, we working with them. But it's safe to say we're not any closer just like the young lady, we're

not any closer than what we were back a year and two months ago. So we appreciate y'all coming here, appreciate y'all listening. I guess fact is that if we can get these families assistance as quick as possible so that they can get back into their homes, wherever they may be and get back to their lives. So thank y'all for coming, thank y'all for listening.

Mr. Durbin opened the floor for questions.

Commissioner Strain: Mr. Chairman, may I ask a question please?

Mr. Durbin: Yes

Commissioner Strain: One of the discussions we've had in other areas is that, as we're seeing the population shifts, and you're building new subdivisions, people moving closer to the interstates, and of course we'll call it the eternal continuous city. The discussion is if we get another rain event are you working with the Corps or anything to look how we get this water to the Gulf eventually? I don't know because I guess at the end of the day all of our drainage systems really need to be looked at because what's going to happen when we get another big event next year or the next year?

Mayor Theriot: They are looking at that, I don't know the exact name, but I think Mayor Robideaux, Guy Cormier and Mr. Darby and all, they're looking at that Vermilion watershed and what can be done. I know locally we have a midsize coulee, Coulee George. It goes to the Coulee Au Decon that separates the Vermilion parish from the Lafayette parish, which is the major drainage, but a good portion of Lafayette Parish that is on the northern part that goes to the Vermillion. Our drainage ditch, the Coulee Kinney Drainage District is right now doing a major project at Coulee George to where it gets to the Coulee Au Decon which will drastically, maybe reduce the amount of backlog of water as its draining. So kind of cleaning that out, because if you take a glass of water, and I want to fill it, and if I open the faucet and it'll fill that eight, ten ounce glass of water in a matter of two or three seconds. But if I put my hand over it, it will fill it, it will fill it in about 20 seconds. So then cleaning that coulee helps take those restrictions out. Now, those restrictions go all the way down to where the Vermilion empties into the Gulf. So all that would need to be, and I think there is a project that they are looking at that in the Corps. We are working with the Corps and they are working with the Corps and they're going to do studies on that. But we're doing things locally to maybe alleviate some of the issues. I hope that answers your question.

Commissioner Strain: It does. Thank you.

Mr. Durbin: Mayor Tyler?

Mayor Tyler: Good morning, thank you so much. Mayor Theriot, I'm trying to understand. It appears that your citizens are not getting what they need. Did I hear you say they've done the surveys and they've made the applications and you still haven't?

Mayor Theriot: As far as I know, as I said the young lady is here that's probably the one that's suffering the most right now of all citizens. As far as I know, I hope that she has done the survey. I know she has worked with us. We contacted various agencies, and she's trying to get something. Those are the people we feel for, as I said myself we were flooded, but we're back. Not to say we wouldn't need any assistance, but we're back. But you have families that are still kind of suffering and I would say that the young lady here, Miss Mutton, she's probably the one that's, I guess the furthest behind.

Mayor Tyler: Thank you.

Mayor Theriot: I appreciate y'all coming, I appreciate y'all listening.

Mr. Durbin closed the floor for questions.

VI. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE UPDATE

~ Erin Monroe Wesley, Special Counsel, Office of the Governor

Mr. Durbin: Thank you. Okay, next we invite to come forward the Erin Monroe Wesley of the governor's office to give us an update from Governor John Bel Edwards, Miss Wesley, nice to see you again.

Ms. Wesley: Good morning Mr. Chair and members of the task force. I want to spend a few minutes today talking about the state's recovery and rescue efforts in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. And also provide an update on the governor's recent trip to Washington DC to discuss the Comite River diversion project. As you know, Governor Edwards declared a state of emergency in Louisiana as Hurricane Harvey approached landfall. As we made the necessary preparations for the storm in Louisiana, the governor made certain that state resources were put into place immediately to respond to the needs of our neighbors in Texas who were impacted by Hurricane Harvey. Over 12 years ago, Texas opened their doors to people of Louisiana as Hurricane Katrina approached. So, more than a dozen agencies jumped into action in response to Harvey. This includes Louisiana National Guard, which deployed more than 950 soldiers and airman for search and rescue missions.

These brave men and women evacuated more than 2,800 people and pets and manned security and other missions throughout Louisiana and East Texas. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries provided 10 boats for search and rescue operations in Louisiana and 24 boats for similar operations in Texas. Rescuing 28 people and 2 pets from Louisiana homes, and over 1,500 people and roughly 190 pets from Texas. And I do want to thank Commissioner Strain with your leadership in housing these pets in shelters here. And the Department of Children and Family Services operated two state mega shelters in Alexandria and Shreveport to house roughly 2000 Texans. The Department of Transportation Development along with Louisiana State Police, worked collaboratively in the transport of Texas residents to those shelters. And so simply we want to highlight some of the agency work to give you a sense of the depth of the state's emergency preparedness and our response in these times of disaster. And we will certainly continue to work and make sure that we're a resource for our neighbors in Texas and Florida in their time of need while ensuring that our own stage recovery for the 2016 flooding events continues without delay. And I briefly want to talk about the Governor's trip to DC. As you know the governor traveled to Washington, DC, this past Monday, along with DOTD Secretary Sean Wilson, and the goal was to work with the Corps to discuss the Comite River Diversion Project. The purpose of the trip was to reaffirm the state's commitment, both from a financial and policy perspective to complete the Comite Diversion Canal project and most importantly, to seek the same from the Corps. The state is positioned to meet its financial commitment through capital outlay funding which currently has 15 million in priority one and 72 million in priority five. The Corps made a firm commitment to the state of Louisiana to move this project forward. The Corps accepted the state's letter of intent which positions the state to enter into a memorandum of agreement with the Corps. The MOA will speak to federal, state and local funding commitments and the phased approach of delivering segments of independent utility over time to complete the project. Yesterday the governor met with Congressman Graves, a representative from Congressman Richmond's office, members of the Capital Region Legislative Delegation, representatives from the Amite River Basin Commission, and leaders from Ascension Parish, East Baton Rouge Parish, and Livingston Parish to assess the state's path forward in supporting the completion of Comite and to ensure local partnership and funding of this project. And so again, I just want to give you a short brief on his trip and to talk about our flood recovery efforts and response efforts from Harvey. I did have some notes about timing and timeline in terms of the homeowner assistance program but, Chairman, you eloquently shared those notes in your opening remarks. So I'll open it up for any questions you may have.

Mr. Durbin opened the floor for questions.

Mr. Durbin: Question? Mayor Robideaux?

Mayor-President Robideaux: Thank you, Erin, thank you for that information. I know that, I think it's today or sometime soon, the legislature is going to recognize a surplus from last year. And what I would ask of the governor's office is just to give consideration to possibly having more mitigation money or some piece of that. Because what's happening is, as you know, in the Acadiana region, we took the hazardous mitigation. And we're approaching it from a regional perspective, which I think is the appropriate thing to do. But in doing that, we're looking at how we can best affect the entire watershed and help everybody out. But what gets left out of that equation is the smaller municipalities and the extraneous districts that exist may or may not have been qualified for some mitigation money. Because we really are trying to do the big projects that will allow the best results. And so if there's any piece of that surplus that could be reserved for some of these smaller municipalities throughout the state to then be able to tap into. I just think it would be both a goodwill gesture and something that's much needed in those areas. That they may or may not have as easy access to with the way that the Acadiana regions agreed to do their mitigation.

Ms. Wesley: And we do have some constitutional restrictions in terms of once a surplus is recognized that could free up monies elsewhere to be able to be shifted to mitigation projects. So we'll look at the totality of that and evaluate it.

Mayor-President Robideaux: That's right, yeah. And I know it's the five restrictions, and my thought was that possibly, some drain infrastructure may qualify. So just, if y'all could look into that, I think it would be appreciated. Thank you, that's all, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Knapp: Ms. Wesley, the money that you've outlined for the Comite project, can you go over those sources again? I know that the estimates have been rough in some earlier conversations. So I know that the number potentially for the full project and the duration of the project could be over 200 million by some estimates. So just kind of touch base on where those are for the portions that are in capital outlay in priority one and priority five, how much the Corps is doing, what the match looks like, and then kind of the timing of the total project from beginning to end. Can you just kind of go over those again?

Ms. Wesley: So the state funding from a capital outlay perspective, there's 15 million in priority one and 72 million in priority five. In terms of our assets, the Corps it's been \$125 million. And so as we look, we talked about independent utilities. We were looking at have a phased approach to the completion of the project. And so that first completion around

Lily Bayou, I believe we talked about roughly a \$20 million figure. I'm looking back to see. There's Casey. I'm going to ask Casey Tingle to come up. He was part of that meeting. So I can get the figures right at least on that portion, but it will be a phased approach.

Mr. Tingle: Good morning, Casey Tingle with GOHSEP. Erin, I don't know that DOTD probably has the better numbers. But the approach that was laid out yesterday was to basically get the Corps' buy in to work together to front load some of the state dollars into completing the next functional element which is basically all of the work around Highway 61, the move of the utilities, and then, I think, the next bridge. And to accomplish that infrastructure, the bridges, as well as to then connect that portion of the canal to the Lily Bayou structure which is already there and completed. And so the approach is for the state to move more aggressively in terms of using state dollars. The Corps has 6.7 million that's appropriated to them now and I think what the general committed to is that as they get better information about what their work plan and budget is for appropriation would be for the next fiscal year. That they would look to keep adding money as they go. And so basically, I think the change in the approach is to, instead of looking at the totality of the project, to find the money to build the next piece. And then to keep working at finding the money to then build the subsequent pieces. And I think what the commitment from the state is and from the governor's office is to apply the capital outlay money that we have available, the money that the ARBC currently has available through the tax collection, as well as the money that the Corps of Engineers has. And that to be able to first functional element, basically. There is still a delta, I think that delta is roughly 30 million to complete the first functional element, which is the difference between those three pots of money and what's needed to complete. But that process is expected to take about 18 months to complete that first element and the anticipation is that the Corps would realize additional funds throughout that 18-month period. Then going ahead and executing their contracting authority, which then allows them more flexibility and leverage of those dollars as they become available because now they've got an open contract and open work plan. And then should the state need to find additional dollars to continue to shrink that \$30 million gap over time that potentially moving some of the capital outlay money forward to help bridge that gap. And so I think the position of the governor is that the state is going to lean forward and utilize the money that's available to begin construction under the Corps of the first functional element to get it through that Highway 61 Bridge. And then maybe even I think there's another bridge that comes into play that will at least connect to Baton Rouge Bayou. So that's where the utility comes in. Without being able to connect to Baton Rouge Bayou, you're just digging the ditch and you're just moving utilities. Connecting to Baton Rouge Bayou will begin to provide some relief, at least for those communities upstream in Baker, and to some extent, Zachary. I think the bigger relief for them comes in the next bayou, but that at least gets the ball rolling, gets construction underway and gets the Corps committed for contracting capacity to the project in a way that they're not currently positioned.

Mr. Durbin: I have a question, thanks. So, if I hear you correctly, both of y'all, there is money that has been appropriated by the legislature, and some in category one, and some in category five. And some that has been raised by property taxes in the three parishes in the Amite River Basin Drainage District that is presently in the hands of the Amite River Basin Commission, that's going to be pooled together to fund the operations and construction by the Corps of Engineers? So this is going to be a Corps of Engineers, from Lilly Bayou going east to the railroad tracks, crossing that and crossing the north and south lanes of US Highway 61. Going east, whatever distance that money will allow, right?

Mr. Tingle: That's correct. The first functional element gets at least through 61, the railroad bridge, and it continues going because it picks up at least as far as Baton Rouge Bayou. And so that's where we get benefits from the project is at least connecting to that Bayou begins to provide some relief to that portion of the project, and it would be still contracted under the Corps using their plans and designs. The change would be that the state is, instead of holding back and only matching the Corps as they move along, we're moving our portion of the project up to get it started.

Mr. Durbin: I just wanted to clarify for those in the audience, and also President Robideaux, that this is money that has already been appropriated and raised through property taxes, not something that is coming from any other funds like a surplus or whatever, specifically for the Comite Diversion Canal right? Am I right on that?

Mr. Tingle: Yes sir, that's correct. That capital out lay is already there and that local tax has been in place since I think the year 2000 and it was then renewed again in 2010.

Mr. Durbin: Okay.

Ms. Wesley: And we also taxed East Baton Rouge parish, Livingston parish, and Ascension parish in terms of their hazard mitigation dollars. For example, East Baton Rouge parish received about \$112 million. And so they are partnering together working with DOTD to possibly provide some additional funding toward the project. So we do want some local skin in the game as well in the project.

Mr. Durbin closed the floor for questions.

VII. LOUISIANA OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

~ Patrick Forbes, Executive Director

Mr. Durbin: Okay I want to make an announcement for everyone in the audience today. There will be a public comment period nearing the end of the next presentation. Okay moving forward, we now invite to come forward and speak the Executive Director of the Office of Community Development, Pat Forbes. Mr. Forbes?

Mr. Forbes: Thank you Mr. Chairman, members of the task force, good morning. We'll skip to my presentation, but first I want to make sure everybody in the audience knows that we do have folks outside, Restore Program folks at the table who they have a computer and can help you if you're wondering where you are in the process. If you haven't filled out the survey and want to do that, if you have questions about your application; staff folks out there should be able to look at your file and get some help for you. Also I want to make sure everybody realizes this meeting is being live streamed on the governor's Facebook page and on the Restore Louisiana website.

Mr. Forbes immediately began his PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Durbin allowed questions during the presentation, therefore the floor was never officially opened for questions.

Mr. Ray Rodriguez joined Mr. Forbes at the witness table to discuss the Rapid Re-Housing Program. No questions were asked in regards to the Rapid Re-Housing Program.

Ms. LaSonta Davenport joined Mr. Forbes at the witness table to discuss the Small Business Program.

Mr. Knapp: Can you touch on the data that we had in the housing program that also talked about the amount of funding per applicant? Can you kind go over some of the numbers of obligated funds from the application that have received? What's the average size of loan for the 105 that have been completed applications? How much are they requesting?

Ms. Davenport: So on average I think we determined that it was around \$46,000 on an average. Again we have seen those that come in at 150, 100, talking about those that have submitted an exception request. And those are the ones that were the approved. Which we have seen some in underwriting where we did our duplication of benefits. And so there are some that are above the \$50,000. And in between that 50 and 150, so we have to take a deeper look that. But right now the average is around 46,000. The \$150,000 increase our maximum award amount has to be approved by HUD. So we submitted an action plan amendment as of yesterday to HUD to increase that award amount to 150. Our lenders are already aware of that and as soon as we get that approval from HUD, we will institute that 150 without having to do an exceptions request. Because right now we can award that 150, but it has that limit and you have to go through request process where OCD had to approve it. But that step will be taken away once the action plan amendment is approved. Which is five days from now, because it's non substantial.

Mayor-President Robideaux: Thank you Ms. Davenport. Just for point of clarity since it came up earlier, does the duplication of benefits as it relates to an SBA loan have any effect on whether or not a business would be able to qualify for these additional funds?

Ms. Davenport: It does, if the business does not have enough unmet need, then it will affect them where, if they don't have anything left over after we do our check, then they will not.

Mayor-President Robideaux: So just another reason that we need Congress to act on this SBA duplication of benefit, okay. Thank you.

Ms. Davenport: Yes, sir.

Mr. Durbin: Okay, thank you Ms. Davenport.

Mr. Durbin: Mr. Forbes, going back to the \$105 million for which is public assistance. I know that the Louisiana Municipal Association, I think conducted a presentation to communities, municipalities, on how to, I guess, document that the requested numbers to actually ask for public reimbursement, public assistance reimbursement. And I think that was held either earlier this month or at the last part of August, are you familiar with that?

Mr. Forbes: Yes sir, I know that LMA was participating in that and that we, as this slide shows OCD has been conducting three different meetings around the state for every single eligible applicant to come in and understand the differences between requirements for public assistance and requirements for this community development block grant funds. Because sadly, despite our repeated efforts to get HUD and FEMA to figure out how we could do this more easily it has not been that fruitful. So consequently we're following two different sets of regulatory requirements as we do this, but we're figuring out how to do that with as little impact on local governments as possible. To that point we had those meetings, for those

jurisdictions that we know deal with CDBG money all the time we're didn't require that they come. But for those agencies, non-profits, local governments maybe that don't generally deal with CDBG funds we'd require them to come to the meetings as a matter of being eligible for the funding. We continue to do outreach, we continue to do training on the differences in the programs. First and foremost is a requirement of following the Davis-Bacon and related labor acts, CDBG funds we have to do that, we don't have to do it with PA. So all the people who are used to spending public assistance are used to not having to comply with Davis-Bacon and we are getting to those agencies and school districts first and foremost. We know that a lot of school districts, we have to make sure they know the rules once they go out and hire architects, and engineers, and contractors to rebuild their schools. But we will continue to reach out to everybody, or make sure they're informed of that. To that point, we're still waiting on some guidance from U.S. Department of Labor that may be able to give us some relief from this, but in the meantime we're being extra cautious, we don't want anybody to wind up unable to access our funds by virtue of not having followed some rule that we were supposed to. Does that answer your question?

Mr. Durbin: Well I'm just, from the standpoint of the city of Denham Springs, and what little contact I have with the administration I understand that it is a very burdensome task for the local community to compile all of the figures and the numbers that are necessary. I understand from being mayor for 12 years that you have to compile a certain amount of numbers, but is it something that the OCD is working on with the communities across the State of Louisiana to see if they can better understand what they have to compile? Because I think there is a misunderstanding of what has to be compiled from what little information I have.

Mr. Forbes: Yes sir that was the point of the training. I will say equally important is that GOHSEP and OCD are working very closely together to make sure that we streamline use of each other's data so that we don't have to collect things twice from these municipalities and things like that. Nonetheless, the primary difference with CDBG funds is Davis-Bacon, and it is a bit of a paperwork headache. But as long as the architect, engineer, and the contractor all know that that's in place upfront we can generally avoid issues with Davis-Bacon, when we don't get there first is when the issues arise.

Mr. Durbin: So if there is other questions to be asked of how to compile these numbers, who is the contact person in OCD for a community to present these questions to?

Mr. Forbes: Ms. Kay LeSage is the infrastructure manager at OCD and I can get her email address.

Mr. Knapp: If I'm reading it right there that the listed amount on this slide, 101 million for example, that's the match estimate that this program would be covering if all the applications that are in process were approved?

Mr. Forbes: Projected.

Mr. Knapp: Projected, thank you. There's an approved volume of 66 million, and we've got processed through 15.9 million, so is that right? There's kind of a \$50 million delta between that what's been processed, and what FEMA has approved but has not gotten through the OCD process yet?

Mr. Forbes: Yeah, but I should have made this clear, the process for reimbursing this match is going to be done after closeout of the project worksheet. We've informed all the local governments and eligible entities of that. But if you're familiar at all with how the PA works, the number on the project worksheet is constantly changing until they finish the construction and close out the project. And so, we would be constantly changing our grant amount to each entity if we didn't wait till closeout. So the 26 million was something we could do for closed out projects, projects that were already closed out. I mean, I'm sorry, the 15 million, the 26 approved applications. But the vast majority of these are going to take a while to closeout and then we'll provide the funds as soon after they close out as possible.

Mr. Knapp: Thank you. That helps.

Mr. Durbin: Mayor?

Mayor Tyler: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Forbes, I wanted to go back to the homeowner's program and ask you a question, the slide with the key updates and I'm looking at the bullet number two, the large one. There were 28,000 environmental reviews. And 12,000 of those were invited to do the application. Does that mean that the others were not invited?

Mr. Forbes: Not yet because, of the phasing approach, we've only invited as of yesterday, everyone in phases one, two, and three who finished their survey by I think it's July 21st. So we're progressing through those phases and inviting people. And the challenge of course is balancing the workload with the number of people in the queue. We don't want to run out of work obviously. We want to get to everybody as quickly as we can. We don't want to overload the system and make people wait overly long between their application and inspection and then actually getting the grant funds.

Mr. Durbin: What is the average wait between those time frames?

Mr. Forbes: Between application and construction right now it's probably a month and a half. It's too long really. We are still in the process of getting all the systems going at full speed. And until we get there we're not going to be able to even

get people, when we invite them, an idea of what that timeline looks like. But we are working to get to that immediately. Our goal is that the process between application and then inspection and closing and construction is no more than a month.

Mr. Durbin: Really? All right then.

Mayor-President Robideaux: Pat, I know on the neighborhood landlord program it's up to seven units. And then on the multifamily loan program, it's 20 and above. So for that gap of 8 units to 19 units, is there a program in place for those individuals? And if not, are we tracking to see how many of those folks are getting fall in without the help Mr. Rodriguez?

Mr. Forbes: We don't have a program for between 8 and 20. And I'll explain some of the federal regulatory reasons for that. When we hit, when we go from seven to eight units it triggers the use, the requirement of Davis, Bacon, and related acts for that project. That's automatically almost kicks the money, the economic picture of developing that just doesn't work anymore. Because you had this added cost, added paperwork. And then to do the type of project with the underwriting and the pro forma work and all that the developers have to do. It doesn't make much sense from a cost per unit basis to do it for less than 20. So unfortunately, we don't have anything. I'll ask Mr. Rodriguez if there's anything else at LHC that might be available.

Mr. Rodriguez: No, and thank you for that. No, currently there is nothing that would address that population. And I can say you had asked if there was any numbers or any record that's being kept. And I can say that personally I've only heard from I think maybe two individuals who've professionally inquired about something that would fall in between the programs.

Mayor-President Robideaux: But there's nothing to preclude someone that let's say has ten units to say well I'm going to repair seven of them under the neighborhood landlord.

Mr. Rodriguez: That actually would not be eligible. So it's a ten unit structure, if it's all under one roof then that property would not be eligible for the program. The program limits at a seven unit structure. So anything beyond that eight unit structure would not be eligible. So anything seven and below.

Mr. Durbin: Why don't we just ask that we do kind of keep track of the numbers that are falling through the cracks there so that if in fact there's some solution going forward?

Mr. Rodriguez: Absolutely we can keep a record of as we've been getting calls and as we spoke to individuals, we'll keep a record of any folks that call that are not currently eligible we keep a record of that.

Mr. Durbin: Okay, thank you. Mr. Knapp?

Mr. Knapp: Just wanted to ask. This is back to the homeowner program. I apologize for missing the August meeting but looking back through the minutes, if I was reading the minutes correctly we were at 543 households, and 16 million in approved funds in the minutes that were reported last month. When I'm looking at the report today we're at 600 homeowners and just shy of 18 million disbursed. It seems like it's actually been relatively slow in the last month. That delta between the last meeting and this meeting is pretty small. Seemed like it had actually been accelerating up to that point. How much of that is Harvey or other effects or is it other internal issues?

Mr. Forbes: There are several pieces at play there. For one thing, you're right. We had a good ramp-up. We recognize that we more or less hit a plateau there. We are looking at ways to adapt. And we've been in the process of changing our systems, changing some processes. We're talking with HUD about alternative approaches to inspections. Harvey and Irma have depleted the qualified inspection core by almost half. And we expect that to continue to be a problem. We're adapting to it through numerous different ways. Contractors are changing some of the compensation structures for them. We're allowing overtime because they had the opportunity to go make a whole bunch of money in Texas by sleeping in their car and working a hundred hours a week. So we've got to give them the opportunities to make similar kind of money here. But we are also looking at training of inspectors and things like that. In addition there are a few other pieces. In the last meeting we added a group of people who are eligible. We've got to make some process adjustments within our own processes to adapt to bringing those folks in, but your observation is accurate. We ramped up to what was a decent speed, but not fast enough to get us through everybody in a year, which is what we've got to do, right? So we're just continuing to tweak the system now. And some of those tweaks might set us back a week on some production as we implement something new that's going to ultimately speed the program up.

Mayor-President Robideaux: Just going back to the seven units and the Davis-Bacon. I think it would probably behoove the state to also make that request while we're asking for the duplication of benefits to make a similar request that Congress look at, especially in light of Harvey and Irma. Because they're going to be in the same situation, that for, at least, a disaster-related piece, that Davis-Bacon somehow has changed to where maybe you can go up to the 20 units, as opposed to limiting it to just the 7. And then the last thing that I have is, on slide four, Pat, when you were going through the process of the survey and the application, the last piece of that is the reimbursement/repair. And one of the options for homeowners is to use our contractors, the program's contractors. I guess the question is, considering the two other disasters that are currently out there, are our contractors in any way locked down, for lack of a better word, through the contract with the state, to where

they're going to be available for the homeowners that are using them? As opposed to balancing between these disasters, and being hit or miss.

Mr. Forbes: That's a great question. We have certainly met with our contractor, IM, with their construction subcontractors. They're eager to do the work here, they are committed to it. They acknowledge that they may lose some staff. But we've talked with the Associated General Contractor board, several different agencies, and Stine Lumber, Home Depot. And for the most part, there is still not an expectation of huge outflow of skilled labor and materials that's going to impact us. And our contractors have made it very clear to us that they're committed to the work. So at this point, I won't say that it won't become an issue. I don't think we know completely how big Harvey and Irma, and now Maria are going to wind up being. But at this point, we look to be somewhat insulated from that. One thing that the folks in Texas, the associated general contractors in Texas said was Texas is a huge state, and small portion of it was impacted. And there are contractors coming in from all over Texas, and certainly, they'd rather have contractors and their labor crews from their own state. So at this point, that doesn't look like a huge impact, but we're certainly keeping our eye on it.

Mayor-President Robideaux: Good, I appreciate that, and then I would say this is as much a future comment, as it relates to whatever contracts we sign, though. Going forward, we may want to consider having some language in our contracts where there is some punitive clause. In the event that there's some multiple disasters, I mean, I don't think any of us contemplated that there's going to be 3, and possibly 4 disasters, really, within a 16-month period that would cause this kind of concern. But that may not be a bad idea going forward.

Mr. Forbes: We actually have that language in our contract right now. Once a home gets assigned to a contractor, he's got a maximum of 120 days to finish it, and if they don't finish it in that period, we have penalties.

Mr. Durbin closed the floor for questions.

VIII. ACADIANA WATERSHED INITIATIVE PRESENTATION

~ **President Guy Cormier, St. Martin Parish Government**

~ **Monique Boulet, CEO, Acadiana Planning Commission**

Mr. Durbin: Good, good information for the public to hear, thank you. I would like to invite to come up, President Guy Cormier, St. Martin Parish Government. President Cormier?

President Cormier: Thank you so much for having us here today. Mayor Durbin, thank you so much for bringing this meeting to Acadiana. And on behalf of myself and the folks that make up Acadiana, welcome, not only to Abbeville, Vermilion Parish, but Acadiana. I would normally apologize for my dress down today, because I'm in front of a room full of three-piece suits and nice dresses. But I paid ten bucks to wear this today. We have this initiative out of our office, where we give a \$10 donation to dress down. That money goes to the American Cancer Society. And I thought twice about doing that, but then I was coming to Vermillion Parish. And boots and jeans are just as important as three-piece suits here, so I'm just going to fit right in. So again, thank you for being here. And thank you for at least listening to our small summary of where we are, as far as the Acadiana Planning Commission goes and this watershed initiative that we started. I want to just thank you, not only you guys, but the governor. I've been in office 18 years. My government service has been 18 years, so I've lived through Hurricane Lilly, Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike, Isaac, and the great floods of 2016. And although I know there's some residents who are frustrated with the amount of time it takes to get reimbursed, or even projects to get started, this is the most organized effort I've ever seen, as far as recovery goes. And the outreach has been amazing, that you consistently meet on a monthly basis, and you spread that around. We don't have to go to Baton Rouge to do that. So thank you for doing that, and we appreciate you being here. Our efforts started just with a group of guys and gals who decided that we, as a region, look at this flood from a regional perspective, not just from a parish-by-parish perspective. And we gave you a presentation, I think, sometime last year in Youngsville, in the infant stages of where we were, and we've come a long way since then. We have put together an organization, or use an organization called the Acadiana Planning Commission, which is made up of seven affected parishes. But we've even included a parish that's not in our region, who was not affected in the August floods of last year, to be partners with us on this initiative to deal with watersheds throughout the Acadiana area. We figured that it was easier for us to get together to do projects that would fix a region, more so than us pulling the wagon in different directions, and I'll give you an example. Mayor Theriot stood up here earlier today and said that they're working on a coulee in his area, from a maintenance perspective. And trying to get that stuff done so that in the event that we get another flood happen, that that water could be carried to a bigger watershed. And in my parish, for instance, my voters went to the polls in December of last year, and we dedicated a tax to give some \$25 million Or the drainage work to just my parish. This organization that you all represent and the state has dedicated \$25 million for us as a region to study where we could possibly do some damage control in mitigation as far as the next storm coming, because we

know it's going to happen. Now I'm here to say that what makes us a little different than the rest of the state is that we are all working together to get that done. Not only the eight parishes that we have represented, we also have eight other local entities that are working with us. I think what makes us unique, we have five state agencies who have continuously come to our meetings and participated in what we're trying to do. And we have eight federal agencies as well that are coming to our meetings and trying to assist us in trying to get a fix for this particular area of dealing relative to at least relative to drainage. More than that, we have three nonprofits who have also taken an interest in what we're doing. So because of that regional perspective, I think people are recognizing that this is probably the way to fix problems moving forward. And we've had a lot of traction in the last couple of months since the governor has made the announcement of the 25 million. We continue to do meetings on a monthly basis with our commission. But we have specific watershed meetings that we set up about every other month to get public participation in it as well, and those have gone along very well. Ms. Boulet is with me today and I'll maybe give her an opportunity to kind of give you a timeline of where we stand. We're just starting to put a timeline together. Timelines are not a good word in government but we figured we needed something. Because I know just in my everyday job when somebody calls about a drainage ditch or road to be fixed, they want to know when it's going to get done. And that target always moves because of what we do on a daily basis. But at any rate, I just want to invite Ms. Monique Boulet, who's our executive director for Acadian Planning Commission, to kind of give you a synopsis of what we're doing and kind of a timeline behind it.

Mr. Durbin: Thank you, Ms. Boulet.

Ms. Boulet: Sure, thank you. So the timeline is really a preliminary, I don't have it in front of me. But really what we're trying to do is affect the way we make decisions and that's a big ask to bring more science to it and to bring more knowledge. And so in that, I guess we have a couple of phases. The first phase is putting more gauges and collecting more data in our watersheds. Acadiana, I know when you look at the map and you look at all the different gauges that USGS and the different agencies have out there. And the data that's pulling out of the Vermilion, the Teche, and the Mermentau, and those are the three basins we're really focused on. There's very little data. Some states have really mastered data collection and made it accessible. And from a watershed perspective, Louisiana should be there, and we're not. So we are looking at a gauge, I guess, deployment. We're working with the University of Louisiana and their hydrologist to put some recommendations together. We're going to go local with that. Our first meeting is next week in, I think, Ville Platte. Where we meet there with all of the relative people who make drainage decisions. From public works to the consultants to the local government officials, and get their feedback. Where are your problem issues? Where are your nuisance flooding areas? And how do we factor that in? And look at the recommendations the university's come up with. And does that work from the working knowledge you have on the ground? And so we really do plan to get input all the way up. We are also working with USGS and the other agencies that do have gauges out there so that what we do is coordinate with what they do. And from a funding perspective, we're not duplicating anything, and we're leveraging all the way from the local to the federal levels. Their efforts there are creating a data system with hopefully a web interface that can have some positive effects in the response time as well. So it's not just the recovery. This, in and of itself, once we get to the point of building a model for the region, feeds better data into a model. So then we have a much more effective tool to bring to our local government as they make. Guy's got over \$20 million to spend in St. Martin Parish. He doesn't have the science and hydrology maybe that he could have. So if we build that as a region, he has access to that. So whether it's state, federal or local dollars, our drainage dollars become much more upstream and downstream decisions rather than political jurisdictions. I do have the timeframe in front of me now but I don't want to share it with you because it is still a moving target and I think we're getting to the point where it's starting to become concrete and we're starting to finalize it. It's probably going to take us two and a half years or maybe another year and a half to really get to the point where we can to a project call. And really set some criteria as a region of how we pick projects and what are the factors we want to consider and agree upon before we make major drainage decisions. And so we'll have set out criteria to run projects through, and this model to run project through, and hydraulic expertise. So we're making smarter decisions in drainage, hopefully lowering the floodplain. Probably never able to avoid an incident like what happened in August, but if we can lower it by a few inches or a few feet then you can reduce the impacts tremendously. And so that's where we are and that's what we're doing. And I really want to thank the leadership in the region. I think it's a very special moment in time because they all get it from Robideaux, to Guy, to Ronald. Every one of them get it and it's very easy to put this together under them so thank you.

Mr. Durbin opened the floor for questions.

Mr. Olivier: Monique, you're right. Guy, you're right. This is going to happen again. And this process, however long it's going to take, I recall from the very first time that this group was assembled, we started having meetings with the federal authorities. And the one thing that they kept focusing on was resilience. What are you going to do? Let's go beyond the recovery efforts, let's talk about years from now. What are you doing to the projects that you've got on the table today that are going to need to make the changes to be more resilient? And that's what you're talking about right there. So as you are moving forward, we've got to keep these people informed. Because they change out, I mean, from year to year to year, they

change out, or either they're going through another catastrophic event like we've seen. But we need to keep them informed as much as possible. So I just ask that you keep that in mind as you're moving forward. If it's going to take the next year and a half, two and a half years, whatever, keep them informed so they know that we're doing those things.

Ms. Boulet: You mean the FEMA people?

Mr. Olivier: Yes.

Ms. Boulet: They chose the Vermilion watershed as a pilot. So they have walked with us, they are still walking with us very closely. I think in the next two to three weeks, some of them will transition out with the other disasters in the country. But they've actually provided some of the research as far as they are helping in this. They've been a very close partner along with GOHSEP and OCD is going to dictate. Our meetings are very impressive, at least they are right now, because we have so many federal State and local agencies at the meetings working through some of these issues. In fact, in building out to the summit we had in August, we did these local meetings and we brought all of those agencies into Ville Platte into Breaux Bridge and into New Iberia and really did interact with those local decision makers, and I say decision makers, because it's not just elected officials. It's not just the public works guys, it's all of the people relative in those decisions we've opened the conversations up to, because we need everybody on the same page. Small governments don't have people on staff. They hire consultants. We need the consultants understanding what we're doing and what our goals are, and how it fits into their as well. It's been really good so far. I think FEMA wants us to kind of walk on our own and I think we will. We can without a problem, but many of them have really enjoyed doing this and probably will personally stay informed along the way. Also where they can, we can reach back and probably ask for a little assistance here and there. But they've done a lot of GIS work as far as being research. We've asked them to do an ordinance analysis to look at all of our local ordinances in every municipality and we have 45 in parish building ordinances and how they relate to that data that they put in the watershed study. What is the difference one foot free board base? What we would have made. And can you see a difference in the impact of the communities that were impacted by the flood? So, eventually we get to the build question. How are we building? And how do we educate not only our build community, our builders, but our citizens on what is the best way to build in a water environment? We have a water environment. And we need to make that part of our consciousness all the time, and think twice before putting something flat on the ground. Do it really makes sense? And so eventually, I think we get to all of those questions.

Mr. Olivier: Well, it reminds me of the things that we did after the Katrina-Rina experience, we turned to the Dutch and Deltaries and all of those others because they have gone through this and they have documented all of those things, lessons learned. And that's where we are now, starting to document.

Ms. Boulet: On Tuesday, we are actually taking a field trip and we are bringing some of the state federal agencies with us down to Homer because after Katrina they implemented regional building codes. And so we're going to go down there and let Michael Mitchell (sp?), who was instrumental in developing that, Kim Belange (sp?), talk through how it evolved, what the effects are, there are challenges to it too. It's not perfect, but how does that work? It creates consistency from a regional perspective and any more regional mindset, I guess, in building an enforcement. And so, there are a lot of questions really before we change the complete dynamic, but I think we're on that path. Might be a long way.

Commissioner Strain: In other areas, we've had to do modifications to or temporary set-asides as some scenic rivers and I expect to do it through the state legislature. They really limit our ability to desnag and basically either dredge or deal with a number of those entities if they're in that system. And so, I would ask that if that's going to be part of the issue that we need to be prepared and let the next legislative session deal with that, so we don't get to a point, then find out we can't do anything, because it's prohibited under the state Sandy Act.

President Cormier: That's a great point.

Mr. Knapp: Ms. Boulet, what have you been hearing from FEMA about any changes to those flooded elevations in your parishes from the event last year?

Ms. Boulet: I don't think they're going to make changes, I think their maps what we heard here locally and what they interpreted their maps were spot on. So I have not heard of any changes.

President Cormier: I want to comment to that. Mr. Knapp, in my parish we got our maps in 2012, and at first rush I wanted to maybe protest those maps because of the five foot five hundred foot flood plain, and thought about doing that. There's a process you can follow but you have to hire your own engineering firm that's going to cost the taxpayer's a quarter million dollars which I didn't have to do. But we went ahead and just rolled with it. And I did receive a few calls from people who were now put in the flood zone that were never in the flood zone before. When this event happened, it was depending upon which meteorologist you talked to, some will say 500 a year, some 1,000 a year. This thing was almost within five feet, six feet in some area, where they said the 500 year flood was going to come up to. Because I knew that, because my brother owns a helicopter service, so I got to survey the damage a few times a day, throughout the event, and we got a lot of backwater flooding during the event. And so, every time we'd go up, I know all my local voters, because I've been in office

for a while, I would mark off where the water was and when it got to its highest point and it was spot on. If you overlaid the FEMA map on top of the map I had made, it was almost identical. I thank myself for not spending \$250,000 of the taxpayer's money because I would have been wrong. Now, it may have been different in different parishes but in my parish it was unbelievable. With this data, it's hard to not mark.

Mr. Olivier: Monique, another question. We are putting a lot of resources into this water institute that we have in our state, and so, how are you engaging them in this process with all your needs from mapping and GIS and all of it?

Ms. Boulet: So, I have met with them a few times and Dr. Moselli came to one of our meetings a week or two ago. Right now, we're not expending any extra funds, I guess, but from an advisory perspective, they're definitely, and that's kind of where I have all of the hydraulic people right now, just really kind of informing us. I see them going forward in a sometimes, roll like that. There's a lot of questions. If we put a model together, how we put a model together, one of the questions is 2D or 3D. There's some pushing that we need to go all the way to 3D, and there's some, philosophy who are really just trying to inform the decision-making process better, and what we need. Is 2D sufficient? There's a lot of questions out there right now, and I think that's what we're working through, really trying to get our footing on that, and understand that. Dr. Moselli is always very helpful, and part of this conversation.

President Cormier: Just in closing, I just want to thank the leadership from Acadiana and I want to steal a comment that President Robideaux said that stumped me. When we made a decision that we were going to do this based on a region, we got together as a group and with seven parish presidents in the room, and we said how do we move forward because the state is looking probably for some money our way? And it didn't take very long because we had been having this regional discussion already that President Robideaux said well, I think it just makes sense that we do this from a regional perspective. If anybody else has an idea why we shouldn't, bring it forward and the room got silent and then we all agreed that it would happen. But he made a comment that, and this is the first time I had heard of this, but it's spot on. Politically, we probably could have all just taken our little pots of money and go take care of all of those areas that we needed to. And that would probably would have been the politically right thing to do for us, but it wasn't the right thing to do for Acadiana. And I feel that because we came together and we said we're going to take this 25 million, and hopefully you can give us more once we show you how we spend this one, that's it's the right thing to do for Acadiana. So I just want to thank the leadership, because the initial meeting was called by me. I just reached out and said, let's see what happens. Where I thought I was going to have 20 people in a room, then I had 85 people in a room. We've gotten a lot of traction since then. But it didn't happen with just me or Miss Monique, it's happened because we all decided to go in this together. So I just wanted to thank you for that. And this should be probably a lesson for the rest of the state to try to just get along, and even the state government, just try to get along and get some solutions done.

Mr. Durbin: We applaud your efforts. Thank you.

Mr. Durbin closed the floor for questions.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Durbin: Okay, we're moving into the public comment period. The public comment period is declared open at this time, and I will invite to come forward to the mic, Ms. Janice McCumber. Ms. McCumber is a flooded homeowner. She lives in Abbeville.

Ms. McCumber: Yes, and like the other gentleman, I'm not dressed because I just came from the marsh in the camps. Anyway, I'm a widow, I was flooded. And with no insurance because again, we were in one of those areas that in 100 years or whatever, 1,000 years, it would never happen. So I had no insurance. When it did come through my home, I worked alongside and got as much done as I could being a laborer with the contractors and etc. And in April, we heard about Restore Louisiana. I applied immediately, crossed the T's dotted the I's. Did, since April probably made about 15 phone calls to make sure everything was on target, because we had heard that we had money available to us. I completed my home. I'm not saying I just put Band-Aids on it, but again when you do just as much to make it livable and I have to spend, not having insurance at this time, my own money and take out a loan. And then I heard of possibly there were funds available for people like me, fixed income, retired, 70 years old. And there are a lot of my neighbors in the same situation as me. There were more, though, that had insurance that covered way over their cost. I wonder, how many homeowners are here today? All right, three of us. I know you've all talked about people trying to, I've tried to talk to many of my friends to apply for Restore, do the survey. Can't get them because, I can tell you this, as you well know, not that it's just red tape but I wonder, I'm glad you brought that up, how long does it take? And then we get that email about extending the reimbursements, and I can

appreciate that. But for somebody like me, and yes, I had a person that took the pictures from the outside. There was a person that came in and did the lead assessment. There was a person who did basically what FEMA did, making sure I still had 2,600 sq. ft., and that I still had 13 inches of water in one place and 18 in another. Did all of that, spent two hours of my own time. I went through the whole process and every time I call, it's under review. Okay, and then this new email about the going forward on the reimbursements. Because frankly, I did not have enough money to change my doors, the windows, and some things that need to be done that requires funds, money. So my question always was, how can I move forward when I've already borrowed money before if I don't get reimbursed to move forward? And I'm speaking for several of my neighbors who couldn't come today who asked me to ask the same questions. How long does it take to get reimbursed? And I think people don't want to fool with this because of whatever experience they had with FEMA before, but now I can't get them to do the survey. And you can say there's a lot of people that haven't done the survey. I mean, I've been waiting an hour and a half to talk. I thought we were going to be, the first word but I'm happy now that listen to the rest of it, because I can see whatever entity needs money. So I wonder, how long is it going to take? I'm in phase one. And the 600 people who got \$18 million, that's like \$30,000, if you average it, about \$30,000. Personally, I'm not even asking for that.

Mr. Durbin: So Miss McCumber, let me just ask. Let me just try to clear up a few things, because I'm trying to fit things between what you're saying. And as I understand, you did complete the survey. You had a visit that came out and measured your premises after the survey. Have you received an invitation to complete the application?

Ms. McCumber: I mean, when I called, I asked them, I said, where am I? And they say I'm under review. So, I'm pretty sure I've completed everything.

Mr. Durbin: Okay, and you're asking for reimbursement, not construction work?

Ms. McCumber: Well, I didn't find out. Let me just say this. I'm not good on the computers, so I did my thing over the phone. So when the last guy was measuring my house said, are you under solution one or solution two, and I said, what you talking about? And he said this, because he saw my doors wasn't replaced, my windows were rotten, whatever. I said, well, I don't even have the money. I did what I could initially to get back in my house. I thought the per condition thing was just in reimbursement for expenses and there was money available for people like me.

Mr. Durbin: Well there is the CEO of the contracting firm that got the state award, is sitting right behind you, in the white jacket and she can help you a little bit later. We're going to invite somebody else to come up, but we've heard your question.

Ms. McCumber: So my thing is the longer this takes, and the administrative costs to hire the people that you all thought, the three different guys that came to my house, as this process goes on, does the money that we're asking for get depleted?

Mr. Durbin: No.

Ms. McCumber: Okay, that's great to hear, and you already answered about the Texas and Florida disasters. Will it affect our grants? You said no on that, that's good. Is the Corps of Engineers in the building, are they represented here at all?

Mr. Durbin: We don't have anything to do with Corps of Engineers. That's totally separate.

Ms. McCumber: But the whole state of Louisiana has a lot to do with it. Because you see I live on a corner where the state road ditches are full, drainage coulee has a drainage board, and then the police person is in charge of the front of my yard.

Mr. Durbin: We have nothing to do with that.

Ms. McCumber: But you can imagine the frustration and you wonder why people don't apply for these kind of things.

Mr. Durbin: We understand. Thank you. You've brought up some great points and questions. Just hang around a little bit longer. Okay, thank you.

Mr. Durbin: The next individual that has filled out a green card is Linda Mutton. Ms. Mutton? Miss Mutton lives in Maurice, Louisiana.

Ms. Mutton: I'm one of those that got flooded and lost everything. Filled out the application in phase one. I'm at a point where I'm just tired of waiting. Medical conditions, I don't want to go into all that, but I've been working with UpBring. I'm not sure if you're familiar with UpBring, along with the Mayor that put me through different organizations that helped. Right now, in my home, I have materials, I have wood. We did all the degutting, and the demolding, and everything, but I'm afraid because when you walk in you can smell more mold growing. So will that wood be wasted? Like I said I'm in phase one and I don't know.

Mr. Durbin: So you're interested to find out where you stand?

Ms. Mutton: How much longer like the other lady said.

Mr. Durbin: Okay Mayor I know you're very familiar with this lady's issues. Has she completed the application? Has she been invited to complete the application? Maybe you can answer that. The survey and then the application after the environmental review. Has anybody visited you?

Ms. Mutton: I don't think so, no.

Mr. Durbin: But the survey has been completed? And you are the homeowner of the property?

Ms. Mutton: Yes.

Mr. Durbin: Okay and I understand that you will qualify with your income, low income bracket, right?

Ms. Mutton: Right, and sometimes I could kick myself for that.

Mr. Durbin: All right has she visited with the ladies out front that has the computers available to find out and see where she is in the process? Restore is here today. They're outside in the hallway.

Ms. Mutton: They showed me in review.

Mr. Durbin: Okay do you know when you completed the application? Can you recall? This month September? Okay. Mayor Theriot, I would highly advise you to help your constituent to step in the hallway and see if they can pull up on the computer their tight end and to see where that is, because we all at this table would like to know where she is in the process since we believe she has completed the application form. Do you have anything else to share on that?

Mayor Theriot: No we've worked with, not only her, but a couple of other ones, and we work with the gentlemen in the back, Catholic Services, Mr. Crater and stuff. They've been tremendous and I guess the frustration is the amount of time. They're out of their homes. She just wants to get back. She don't want a mansion. She wants to have what she had before.

Mr. Durbin: We recognize the time that has gone by. It completely, it's boggling my mind as it is. Here we are, over a year later from the floods. I heard Mr. Forbes present this a minute ago, saying that from the application, from the completion of the application form, to having a visit with the contractor, is somewhere in the neighborhood of a month and a half following the application, could be a little bit longer. They're hoping to cut that time frame down to a month, that's why I asked that question a minute ago. Do you recall completing the application? The only person that can answer that is the person on the computer out there, and we love to hear that information here on this panel. Okay, we appreciate you coming.

Mr. Durbin: Next we have Tony Crater. Mr. Crater? Catholic Charity of Acadiana, Lafayette, Louisiana.

Mr. Crater: Yes. Part of the Diocese of Lafayette. And for some of the people here, I wanted to review them my case, I used to be with other organization for four years in disaster response but I retired and came back to help with the flood. One of the questions that I have is, number one, a lot of the NGOs and faith based organizations have been working with some of the individuals since day one. And trying to get them back into a living home, which if you look at what we've done so far, we're probably in the range of anywhere from 7 to \$10 million worth of in-kind and donation and what have you. In working with Restore, one of the questions if we can get clarification, we've gotten several different answers on it. As we're working with these individuals and they start qualifying through doing the survey, through the application, through starting the contract. I know I've heard from the application we started the contract about a month and a half. I'd like to know also how long from basically the survey time through the application process. Because we have been told that in between there somewhere in there, if the individual is doing work on their home they have to stop and that's kind of what we need clarification on. I try to keep up with most of the meetings. I don't make them but I watch them, the ones that are streamed and I read the notices that come out, but we Catholic Charity is also part of the Acadiana long-term recovery committee that's going on which we actually chair. So like I said, that's a major question right now. Because it's a period of time that the lady in there and Ms. Mutton said, we have materials that sometimes on site and we use a lot of volunteer labor, so it comes on weekends and when the groups are available and that they do the work. But it would really help if a clear definition of when the work would have to stop if Restore is going to do an evaluation and what have you.

Mr. Durbin: Mr. Forbes, Mr. Crater has that one question if you could help him with the timeframe.

Mr. Forbes: Yes, sir. Thank you. Thank you for asking the question, because this is an extremely important thing. Nobody wants anybody to quit working, which is the whole reason we did the environmental reviews ahead of time and so even once you've applied you can continue to work. Survey, keep working. Put in your application, keep working. Whenever we may ask you to stop is when we come out and do the inspection and decide you've finished 50% of your work and there's 50% yet to do. We're still finding that as more people come in and we gauge the amount of time between inspection and closing, so we're figuring out that piece, but until you get an inspection keep working, keep doing your work. We have questions into HUD right now about making sure that we can maximize that amount of time.

Mr. Crater: Yeah, There was one other question, I'm sorry. Is there any reimbursement paid? We have a number of small faith-based organizations, even some non-profits that putting basically everything they have into helping these individuals get back and I'm speaking for Acadiana. Is there any reimbursement in there for some of these agents that have continued to going on to do the work and then y'all pick it up from where they left off? That was another question that I had helping long term recovery.

Mr. Forbes: Any reimbursement that we have for a home owner is going to go that home owner. What they do with the money of course would be up to them. One alternative that I know that some nonprofits have done is become a contractor, for the folks so that we can reimburse the contractor, if you will, for doing the work. But in general, the federal regulations, I think I saw Earl Randall here earlier, if he's still here. The federal regulations even count charitable donations and volunteer work as a duplication of benefits. Same as SBA or insurance or anything else. In the event that you do that work, as a contractor, to the homeowner, then it changes that dynamic.

Mr. Crater: And for them to become a contractor, they have to meet certain qualifications.

Mr. Forbes: They do, they have to be licensed contractors and all that.

Mr. Durbin: Okay thank you sir. The Catholic Charity has done a great job.

Mr. Durbin: Charles Tate, you may come forward please.

Mr. Tate: My name is Charles Tate. I reside in Baton Rouge also. I'm involved with Affordable Housing Development. I have a small hand. I play, historically about \$80 million worth of work primarily for nonprofits. You heard Mr. Forbes talk. Well first, before I go any further, thank you all so much for all the work you're doing in behalf of the people of Louisiana. No kidding, when you took this oath when you agreed to take this oath for better or worse you might have asked well how much worse? The same thing with some of our elected leaders. The governors that'll chip on down through a staff have been just really something to be proud of and I want to thank you all and I'm not just saying that. Apparently, there's to be some affordable housing, rental resources freed up. Maybe repurposed to some extent, we don't know. Mr. Forbes, a moment ago, said that perhaps, informally, said maybe by next month and I want to echo what he'd said about the affordable housing shortage for rental housing and home ownership, but also rental housing across the state before these floods even occurred. I thought this might be interesting to you. Across the country, we know that one out of five households is rent burdened, across the country. There's no exception here. The assistance that people generally get to facilitate the ability to provide housing and cover their other family expenses tends to be either Section 8, here's an affordable voucher go find this other place, or project based rental assistance. I'm here to talk about the latter category. This plague of affordable housing is literally, literally, literally irreplaceable. So if we're trying to figure out moving forward, how to most cost-effectively preserve the resource, we know that are available that are being irreplaceable, due consideration ought to be given to preserving it. Re-capitalizing it and preserving long-term affordable equivalent housing I just mentioned. I saw the per-unit costs as we all did, for the work that's been done. Far and away, the less expensive cost is for preservation, rehab versus new construction. I also saw the affordability restrictions which vary depending on the type of housing. There are a lot of examples I'm going to tell you about. But for example, I know of one St. Martin Parish. 35 years old. The original owners except for one have moved on, passed away. There's one left standing. A nonprofit would like to acquire it. HUD will mandate the 40 or 50 year of portability restriction. To me, that's one example. You're going to be hearing more because people are going to rightfully want to advocate for example, a nonprofit acquisition we already had long term preservation. The affordable housing of the type you just heard me talk about. If you want to talk about resilience, let's be sure out folks continue to have a place to live, and this is a very cost effective way to get there. Back to the point, thank y'all for all of your time and all of your services, I mean, really thank y'all very much.

Mr. Durbin: We appreciate your comments, thank you. All right.

Mr. Durbin closed the floor for public comment.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Durbin: Next order of business is other business, item ten and GOHSEP task force update is tab six. Per the request of the task force, OCD has provided us with the AMI, average median income, tiers and a glossary of terms in tabs seven and eight. And our next meeting will be in October somewhere. October 20th or 27th, on one of those Fridays. We will hear from Lori somewhere in the next two weeks on that meeting time. And we believe it's going to be in Slidell, possibly. Okay, this meeting is now adjourned. Thank you all.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:46 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jimmy Durbin
Co-Chair of the Restore Louisiana Task Force

Date Approved: October 27, 2017

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