

## **House Select Committee on Homeland Security**

Minutes of Meeting  
2016-2017 Interim  
August 31, 2016

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Representative Franklin J. Foil, chairman of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. in Room 6, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

### **II. ROLL CALL**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Representative Franklin J. Foil, chairman  
Representative John F. "Andy" Anders  
Representative Chad Brown  
Representative Jean-Paul P. Coussan  
Representative Kenny R. Cox  
Representative Cedric B. Glover  
Representative Lance Harris  
Representative Lowell C. "Chris" Hazel  
Representative Rodney Lyons  
Representative James H. "Jim" Morris  
Representative Clay Schexnayder  
Representative John M. Schroder, Sr.  
Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Representative Julie Emerson  
Representative Valarie Hodges, vice chairman  
Representative Barry Ivey  
Representative Walt Leger, III

#### **STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Glenn Fleming, analyst  
Lisha Landry, attorney  
Karen Stephens, secretary

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:**

Representative Edward C. "Ted" James  
Representative Edmond Jordan  
Clarence Russ, sergeant at arms

**III. OPENING REMARKS**

Representative Foil, said that he called the meeting in order to get answers about the resources available to help constituents during the recovery from the recent flooding, especially for those who had no flood insurance. He said there may be additional meetings to look at what went wrong and what needs to be done in the future, but that today's meeting would be focused on the resources available for the recovery effort. He introduced the witnesses, and asked them each to give an opening statement, to be followed by questions from the committee members.

**IV. DISCUSSION**

**LA Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP)**

Mr. William Rachal, GOHSEP chief of staff, 7667 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70816, (225) 358-5300, spoke for information only and gave a brief summary of GOHSEP efforts in response to the unprecedented rain event that began on August 11, 2016. He stated that the average rainfall over a 26-parish area was more than 20 inches, with the high being more than 32 inches. To date, 20 parishes have been declared a major disaster by the federal government: Acadia, Ascension, Avoyelles, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Vermilion, Washington, and West Feliciana. A request was made of the federal government yesterday to declare six additional parishes a major disaster: Assumption, Cameron, St. Charles, St. James, St. John, and West Baton Rouge.

Mr. Rachal said that approximately 28,000 rescues and 2,200 pet rescues were accomplished between the parish and state partners, and there were 13 flood-related fatalities. Shelters have housed as many as 11,000 survivors, with about 1,600 currently housed in nine parishes. Parish estimates of damaged homes are about 84,900, and geo-spatial data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indicates damage to about 150,000 structures. As a result, GOHSEP estimates damage to about 100,000 homes throughout the state. Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Iberia, Lafayette, Livingston, and Tangipahoa parishes were the most densely affected.

Mr. Rachal further stated that about a million sandbags were used, 833,000 bottles of water and 340,000 meals ready to eat (MREs) were distributed, and there remains one active point of distribution (POD) located in Baker, East Baton Rouge Parish.

Mr. Rachal said there were already 12,000 applicants for the state's Shelter at Home Program, which was activated just two days prior, on August 29, 2016.

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

Mr. Gerard M. Stolar, FEMA, 800 N. Loop 288, Denton, TX 76209, (940) 255-9267, spoke for information only and gave a brief summary of FEMA efforts. He said there were more than 2,300 FEMA personnel working on the disaster, which included at least 800 FEMA Corps and AmeriCorps members providing community service. There were 45 disaster survivor assistance teams working in the state and almost 131,000 Louisiana residents had registered with FEMA and more than \$315 million in assistance has already been approved. Of those funds, more than \$269 million was for housing assistance, 111,000 home inspections have been ordered, and approximately 56,000 inspections have been completed. Mr. Stolar said that FEMA was sensitive to the backlog of inspections and as a result, has increased the number of inspectors in the state to 1,100.

Mr. Stolar said that more than 28,000 flood insurance claims were filed and more than \$116 million in advance payments had been made to those policy holders. More than 8,000 people have visited the 22 disaster recovery centers open at this time, but more are planned, and they are working closely with the state to identify those locations. Mr. Stolar further explained that a disaster housing task force had been established to look at all housing alternatives in coordination with the state.

**Small Business Administration (SBA)**

Mr. Michael Flores, SBA, no address provided, (916) 764-9918, spoke for information only and explained the relationship between SBA and FEMA applications. He said that applicants start by registering with FEMA, then move onto an SBA loan application if there are any unmet needs. If the applicant is denied an SBA loan based on the lack of ability to repay, they are then assessed for any grant monies that are available.

Mr. Flores said there were seven business recovery centers open at present: one each in Ascension, Lafayette, and Tangipahoa parishes, and two each in East Baton Rouge and Livingston parishes.

**Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)**

Secretary Marketa Garner Walters, DCFS, 627 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-6930, spoke for information only and provided a handout, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records. She said the responsibilities of the agency were mass care (sheltering), housing, and human services. About 1,400 employees, roughly one third of DCFS staff, were deployed in providing the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) program to those impacted by the floods. She explained how D-SNAP works, as opposed to regular SNAP, and the procedure for applying for benefits.

Secretary Walters said that 38% of the state's foster children live in the 20 affected parishes, although not all had to evacuate. Staff contacted each foster family to make certain DCFS knew where the children were and that they had a safe route out of danger. Staff was now in the process of contacting the families again to find out their individual challenges with housing, and how DCFS might assist in their recovery.

Deputy Secretary Terri Ricks, DCFS, 627 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-6930, spoke for information only.

**V. CLOSING REMARKS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Representative Foil asked staff to prepare a letter on behalf of the committee requesting support from the congressional delegation.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The committee adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Franklin J. Foil  
House Select Committee on Homeland Security

Date adopted: