

House Select Committee on Homeland Security

Minutes of Meeting
2017 Regular Session
April 12, 2017

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Franklin J. Foil, chairman of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. in Room 1, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Cedric B. Glover
Representative Walt Leger, III

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Representative J. Rogers Pope
Senator Mack "Bodi" White
Beverly Vincent, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION

Post-disaster relief, rescue, and recovery efforts related to the Floods of 2016

Mr. James B. Waskom, director, Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), 7667 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 925-7345, spoke for information only. He narrated a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Louisiana Natural Disasters", Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records. He highlighted details of the new Shelter at Home program. Mr. Waskom indicated that individual assistance programs should now be complete, 169 families were still in temporary hotel housing, and 4500 families were placed in manufactured housing units.

Mr. Mark Riley, GOHSEP, (no address provided), (225) 573-0027, spoke for information only, stating that there was no way to track those persons who had not applied for assistance as many had proceeded with gutting and repair of their homes, purchased their own campers and trailers, or were living with family and friends. He said the disaster recovery cost share for the state would be 10%, except for a portion of the individual assistance programs where the state match would be 25%. Mr. Riley said the final cost to the state could be as much as \$40-\$50 million total for both the spring and August flood events.

Mr. Pat Forbes, executive director, Governor's Office of Community Development, (no address provided), spoke for information only. He narrated a PowerPoint presentation entitled "OCD-DRU Update", Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records. He encouraged all homeowners to complete the online survey, regardless of the amount of damage sustained to their residence, although at this time payments were being made only to those who had major damage and did not have flood insurance. Mr. Forbes stressed that those parameters could be expanded to include more homeowners as money from the federal government became available.

Commissioner Jay Dardenne, Division of Administration, Claiborne Building, (225) 342-7000, spoke for information only. He explained the procedure for drawing down the federal government's line of credit for the state's expenditures related to the floods, and the "Notice of Intent", to be advertised shortly, for the selection of a program manager.

Mr. Mark Harrell, Livingston Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, (no address provided), (225) 686-3066, spoke for information only about the official response to the August flood in Livingston Parish.

Mr. Lawrence E. Callender, emergency manager, Village of French Settlement, 16015 LA Highway 16, French Settlement, LA 70733, (225) 698-6100, spoke for information only on the lack of maintenance and subsequent silt build-up on the Amite River and Amite River Diversion Canal.

Comite River Diversion Canal project and related issues

Mr. Dietmar Rietschier, executive director, Amite River Basin Commission, 3535 S. Sherwood Forest Boulevard, Suite 135, Baton Rouge, LA 70815, (225) 296-4900, spoke for information only on the financial status of the still unfinished diversion canal, and the five to six years necessary to complete the project.

Mr. Christopher Knotts, Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), 1201 Capitol Access Road, N514, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 379-3000, spoke for information only. He narrated several slides contained in a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Comite Diversion Canal Project Update", Exhibit C, which is included in the committee records. He said that DOTD had also contracted with a consultant to develop a drainage model of the entire Amite River Basin in order to provide water surface and inundation maps and study the impact of proposed developments in the basin.

Col. Ben Babin, retired, Amite River Basin Commission, 3535 S. Sherwood Forest Boulevard, Suite 135, Baton Rouge, LA 70815, (225) 296-4900, spoke for information only on the financial status of the diversion canal and the need for federal funds to finish the largest and most expensive portion of the project.

Capitol building security

Representative Foil made a motion to move the committee into an executive session at 5:24 p.m. to discuss capitol building security. Without objection the committee moved into executive session by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Those voting yea were Representatives Foil, Anders, Chad Brown, Coussan, Cox, Emerson, Lance Harris, Hazel, Hodges, Ivey, Lyons, Jim Morris, Schroder, and Zeringue.

Mr. Clarence Russ, sergeant-at-arms, LA House of Representatives, spoke for information only. He updated the committee on building security.

Representative Foil made a motion to move the committee out of the executive session at 5:48 p.m. Without objection the committee moved out of executive session by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Those voting yea were Representatives Foil, Anders, Chad Brown, Coussan, Cox, Emerson, Lance Harris, Hazel, Hodges, Ivey, Lyons, Jim Morris, Schroder, and Zeringue.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Franklin J. Foil
House Select Committee on Homeland Security

Date adopted: