



**RICHLAND COUNTY BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 11, 2016  
2:00 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chair	Torrey Rush
Vice Chair	Greg Pearce
Member	Marie Stallworth
Member	Erich Miarka
Member	Carol Kososki
Member	Bernice G. Scott
Member	Elaine Dubose
Member	Rachel Larratt
Member	Robert Brown
Member	Malcolm Gordge
Member	Jill Stewart
Member	Carol Roberts
Member	Ben Duncan
Member	Mac Bennett
Member	Anita Floyd
Member	Tanya Rodriguez-Hodges

**OTHERS PRESENT** – Kevin Bronson, Tony McDonald, Andrea Bolling, Warren Harley, Quinton Epps, Roxanne Ancheta, Valeria Jackson, Tracy Hegler, and Michelle Onley

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:03 p.m.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

All in attendance introduced themselves.

**PURPOSE OF THE BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE**

- The purpose of the Blue Ribbon Committee is to address the fallout of the 2015 flood and to identify ways to recover from the flood.
- The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery Program (CDBG-DR) were discussed.
- Staff developed recommendations and requested input from the committee members on these recommendations.

- Lexington County was more successful in attracting Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD's) because they passed an ordinance waiving business license fees and building permit fees associated with flood recovery.
- County Council has given First Reading to an ordinance similar to Lexington County.
- 179 Homes in the Flood Plain Substantially Damaged with Amount of \$17,641,123.27
- DHEC identified 365 wells that tested positive for contamination
- County has been unable to confirm that 31 of the 365 have been decontaminated
- Well testing kit are available; DHEC will test the sample for free
- There are 3 phases of recovery: Short Term (Days); Intermediate (Weeks/Months); and Long-Term (Months/Years); Recovery could last for 2-3 years
- Recovery Concept of Operations: Richland County Council → Blue Ribbon Committee → Richland County Disaster Recovery Working Group → Community Planning and Capacity Building (Economic, Health and Social Services, Housing, Infrastructure Systems, and Natural and Cultural Resources) → Recovery Goal
- United Way is facilitating the Long-Term Recovery Group. They have been able to bring together all the VOADs, the City of Columbia, Lexington County, and Richland County.
- Approximately 4,000 unmet needs have been received through the Ombudsman's Office
- FEMA has received approximately 21,000 requests
- Resource Providers include the VOADs; Local, State and Federal Agencies; County Departments; Businesses; Non-Governmental Agencies and the Public.

#### **INTRODUCE THE TWO MAJOR FEDERAL FUNDING PROGRAMS**

- a. **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) – The purpose of the HMGP program is to help communities implement hazard mitigation measures following a Presidential major disaster declaration.**

**Hazard mitigation is any action taken to reduce or eliminate long term risk to people and property from natural hazards. The HMGP is authorized under Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.**

**States, territories, or federally-recognized tribal governments administer the HMGP program and prioritize projects. Because HMGP funding is limited, they must make difficult decisions as to the most effective use of grant funds. After reviewing project applications to determine if they meet the program's requirements, the states,**

**territories, or federally-recognized tribal governments forward the applications to FEMA for review and approval.**

**FEMA awards the HMGP funds to the Applicant, which disburses those funds to its subapplicants, generally the local governments. Homeowners may start their projects once notified by their local/tribal/state government official. Work started prior to FEMA review and approval is ineligible for funding.**

**Please contact your State Hazard Mitigation Officer, or federally-recognized tribal/local government official to obtain information on the HMGP application process.**

- Estimated amount of Statewide funding - \$36 million
- Applications for funding must be submitted by April 5, 2016
- Richland County is competing with other jurisdictions in the State for this funding

- b. Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) – HUD provides flexible grants to help cities, counties, and States recover from Presidentially declared disasters, especially in low-income areas, subject to availability of supplemental appropriations. In response to Presidentially declared disasters, Congress may appropriate additional funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program as Disaster Recovery grants to rebuild the affected areas and provide crucial seed money to start the recovery process. Since CDBG Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) assistance may fund a broad range of recovery activities, HUD can help communities and neighborhoods that otherwise might not recover due to limited resources.**

- \$300 million of funding available
- To be divided by HUD among 18 states with major floods in 2015
- South Carolina and Texas expected to receive funding
- 51% of funds must be spent on projects benefiting low to moderate income (LMI) households
- The County must provide a 25% match; could be used to match the State funding
- Federal Legislation is specific that funding must go to the State or local government
- Richland County is an entitlement community, which allows the County to get a direct allocation \$1.3 million in CDBG Funds annually
- The County will pursue funding on behalf of the municipalities; the City of Columbia will be applying on their own

#### **HMGP SELECTION CRITERIA**

- a. Richland County Disaster Recovery Working Group Recommendation**

1. Residential Property Acquisition/Buyouts
2. Storm Water Drainage Management
3. Housing Reconstruction/Rehabilitation

4. Non-Residential Property Acquisition/Buyouts
5. Data/Offsite IT Infrastructure
6. Flood Studies
7. Mitigation of Flood Damage to Fire Suppression Water Capacity Systems
8. Conservation Easements
9. Public Outreach
10. Replacing County Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

The committee is being requested to decide the priority for funding the buyouts. (i.e. Should there be 2 or 3 properties next to each other?; Should it have an income threshold?; Should it have a loss threshold?; Should it be related to its proximity to the floodplain/floodway?)

Mr. Pearce inquired if any of the criteria recommendations that would mitigate future flood damage.

Mr. Bronson stated the Storm Water Drainage Management, as well as, the Flood Studies would address future flooding.

Mr. King stated if there is a recommendation for dam mitigation, Richland County could facilitate it but the County cannot own the dams.

Mr. King stated Storm Water Drainage Management is a recommendation from the Public Works Department to attempt to mitigate the flooding issues the County has.

HMGP Funding can only be utilized for mitigation; therefore the funding cannot be used to repair housing. The funding could be utilized to elevate a structure.

The committee suggested adding dam improvements to the selection criteria.

If funding were received, the HOA or individual(s) would be responsible for 25% of the dam improvements.

Ms. Scott stated everyone needs to pull together to assist the residents of Richland County.

#### **b. State of South Carolina Funding Recommendation**

- Housing – 25% (30 Day Estimate: \$9,073,236)
  - Substantially damaged homes in Richland County = \$6 million
  - Projects involving the acquisition and demolition or elevation of severely or repetitively damaged or otherwise flood-prone properties.
- Dams – 25% (30 Day Estimate: \$9,073, 236)
- Planning/Initiative – 5% (30 Day Estimate: \$1,814,647)

- Other – 45% (30 Day Estimate: \$16,331,825)
- 4241 is the federal designation for flood event

**c. Requested Action: Consider HMGP Selection Criteria**

Mr. Bronson stated staff does not believe the County would be able to go passed Item #4 on the criteria list due to the limited amount of funding.

Ms. Scott requested a map of Richland County detailing the areas that were hit the hardest, the drainage flow, etc. She also suggested educating the residents about the buyout plan.

The committee suggested adding the dams as a subcategory under Storm Water Drainage Management.

The committee unanimously approved the HMGP selection criteria.

**NOTICE OF VOLUNTARY INTEREST FORM**

**SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA (SFHA):**

- Land that has a 1% chance of being inundated by a flood event in any given year
- Includes the floodway and flood fringe
- Floodplain management regulations must be enforced in the area where the mandatory purchase of flood insurance applies

**FLOODWAY:** Channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the flow of water.

**FLOOD FRINGE:** Area adjacent to the floodway that is designated for the overflow of flood waters that cannot be contained within the limits of the floodway.

**SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE:** A specific term that applies to a damaged structure located in the Special Flood Hazard Area for which the total cost of repairs of the structure is 50% or more of the structure's value before the disaster occurred, regardless of the cause of damage.

Ms. Bolling stated County and FEMA staff inspected structures. The information from the inspection is put into a FEMA worksheet, which calculates the percentage of damage. The resident has the ability to appeal FEMA's determination.

Any intrusion in manufactured and/or mobile homes over 2 feet equated to a total loss.

Ms. Scott stated the residents of Lower Richland are frustrated with not being able to locate services.

The Disaster Recovery Group will be a one-stop shop to address resident's needs. There are 47 volunteer organizations, the City of Columbia, Lexington County, Richland County, FEMA, and SCEMD involved in this group. The needs of the residents will be input into a case management system.

**a. Introduce Home Buy-Out Program under HMGP**

**RICHLAND COUNTY RECOMMENDED PROPERTY ACQUISITION FUNDING PRIORITIES:**

- Substantially damaged residential structures located in the floodway of the special flood hazard area and adjacent properties that create a large contiguous open space area;
- Substantially damaged residential structures located in the flood fringe of the special flood hazard area;
- Substantially damaged non-residential structures located in the floodway of the special flood hazard area; and
- Substantially damaged non-residential structures located in the flood fringe of the special flood hazard area.
- All buyouts are 100% voluntary

**b. Introduce Recommended Form and Cover Letter** – Staff has prepared a letter that will be forwarded to 68 residential and 15 non-residential owners informing them they could be eligible for buyout. Their interest does not obligate them in the future.

Ms. Scott stated she is willing to assist with informing residents in the Lower Richland area instead of mailing the citizens a letter.

Mr. Pearce suggested including a phone number for citizens to call if they have concerns.

Other suggestions included an email address and having a Q & A Sheet for citizens.

**c. Requested Action: Consider Notice of Voluntary Interest Form, Cover Letter, and Form Recipient**

**NEXT STEPS**

- a. Future Agenda Items**
- b. Next Meeting Date and Time**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:10 p.m.