

MINUTES OF
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-EAST
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON OCTOBER 8, 2008

PRESENT: Louis Wittie, Chair
Timothy Doody, Committee Member
Larry McKee, Committee Member
Jason McCrossen, Lake Borgne Basin Levee District
Gerry Gillen, Orleans Levee District
Fran Campbell, East Jefferson Levee District
Jerry Colletti, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Steve Tassin, Dept. of Transportation and Development

The Operations Committee met on October 8, 2008 in the Second Floor Hall of the Lake Vista Community Center, 6500 Spanish Fort Blvd., New Orleans, LA. Chairman Wittie called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

Opening Comments: None.

Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was adopted as presented.

Public Comments: None.

New Business:

1. Discussion of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) letter regarding Public Law 84-99 Rehabilitation Assistance.

Mr. Colletti explained that a total of 61 letters were sent to levee districts, parishes and various agencies advising them to submit a letter through the CPRA should they wish to determine whether PL 84-99 or any other type of federal assistance is potentially available for any damages sustained from the recent storm events. He explained that PL 84-99 deals with flood control and coastal emergencies and is the USACE's statutory authority for emergency response, advance measures such as emergency water, and rehabilitation of federally authorized projects and non-federal projects that are in the Rehabilitation and Inspection Program. Federally authorized levees remain in the Inspection of Completed Works Program. If a federally authorized project is under construction, the USACE will first go to the project's funding for repairs; otherwise, PL 84-99 is the fall back. A formal request and approval is required for PL 84-99 funding. There is a sixty day limitation for the submission of requests after an event. He noted the upcoming October 24th deadline for submission of requests and clarified that letters must be sent to the CPRA. The CPRA will forward requests to the USACE's Emergency Operations Center (E.O.C.). The USACE E.O.C. will determine whether requests are eligible for Federal assistance under PL 84-99 or any other appropriation.

The Committee discussed the removal of debris due to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. Mr. Colletti recommended that each levee district file a notification letter through the CPRA before the October 24th deadline, in addition to working with the USACE project managers and FEMA, for possible assistance on debris removal.

Mr. Wittie requested that the levee districts file any request letters as discussed.

2. Discussion of operations and maintenance issues.

There was a general discussion concerning grass growth and grass maintenance issues. The LSU Ag Center is still working with the USACE on grass issues. The importance of good grass growth before a project is taken over by a levee district was stressed. Mr. Wittie pointed out that the USACE's new specifications may need to be reviewed regarding the measurement used for grass growth.

Mr. Colletti advised that he could bring items of concern of the Committee to the attention of the appropriate division of the USACE for resolution; however, the levee districts should follow the chain of command for lodging complaints. He offered to be the conduit for bringing the appropriate USACE personnel to Committee meetings in order to discuss issues of concern, however, advance notification of those issues is needed.

The delays caused by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in the levee districts' grass cutting operations and scheduled inspection reports were discussed.

The post hurricane debriefing meeting held on October 2, 2008 was discussed. The following topics were addressed at the debriefing meeting:

- Lessons learned pre-storm, during the storm and post-storm
- Communications between the State, the levee districts and the USACE
- The need for a single individual to act as a liaison in Baton Rouge
- The State's pre-approved vendor list
- Holding a meeting to review emergency operations manuals for consistency
- Conducting an actual hurricane drill
- Pre-positioning equipment and sandbags
- NIMS training
- Coordination of information disseminated from surge models
- The need for additional radios
- Web E.O.C.
- The levee safety program and the smart levee database
- Levee district representatives and the USACE's local government liaisons assigned to various E.O.C.s

The Committee discussed the surge models disseminated by various sources and the surge predictions during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. The increasing number of times over the years that the Bayou Bienvenue Control Structure has had to be closed due to high water levels and the associated wear and tear on the structure was discussed.

Mr. Colletti commented that the National Levee Data Base is a huge undertaking and, if brought up to speed and maintained, will be a very useful tool. However, the USACE does not have funding for this program until 2010.

The Committee discussed the limited roll and responsibility of local government liaisons (LGLs). Mr. Colletti explained that LGLs are volunteers assigned by the USACE to assist local governing authorities, however, LGLs cannot make decisions on behalf of the USACE. The decision process must still proceed through the State to the USACE's E.O.C. Various problems and issues regarding the use of LGLs during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike were discussed.

LEVEE DISTRICT REPORTS:

East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD):

Ms. Fran Campbell, EJLD Executive Director, reviewed the EJLD Hurricane Protection System Monthly Status Report and levee district activities (copy appended).

Orleans Levee District (O.L.D.):

Mr. Gerry Gillen, O.L.D. Chief Engineer, reviewed the O.L.D. Monthly Status of Activities and O.L.D. Hurricane Protection System Monthly Status Report (copy appended). In addition, he noted that the contract for the replacement of the center section roof on the O.L.D. Franklin Warehouse has been signed and that O.L.D. forces are in the process of re-stocking filled sand bags.

Lake Borgne Basin Levee District (LBBLD):

Mr. Jason McCrossen, LBBLD Executive Director, reviewed the LBBLD Hurricane Protection System Monthly Status Report (copy appended). In addition, he noted that the recommended alternative for 100 year protection from Bayou Bienvenue to Caernarvon appears to be the construction of a T-wall on top of the existing levee. This will alleviate issues dealing with borrow materials and right-of-way acquisition. The construction of wave wash protection and the installation of dolphins or other design features to protect against possible barge impact along this anticipated stretch of MRGO levee/T-wall were discussed.

Mr. Doody pointed out that at this time the levee districts do not have safe houses and that the LBBLD does not have storm proofed pump stations. He recommended that the levee districts be proactive and proceed with preliminary work in order to obtain cost estimates.

The Committee concurred with recommending to the Board that the levee district Executive Directors be directed to commence preliminary investigation on locations, costs and design work for safe houses.

Mr. Doody advised that Mr. Robert Turner was selected as a member of the National Levee Safety Committee, which was established by Congress in accordance with WRDA 2007. Mr. Colletti added that Mr. Turner is representing the entire Mississippi Valley Division on the Committee.

Mr. Wittie announce that today's meeting is the last Operations Committee meeting that would attended by Mr. McKee. Mr. Doody thanked Mr. McKee for all his hard work and his guidance of the Committee and the Board.

There was no further business, therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 12:22 p.m.