



FEMA

FEMA National Advisory Council

March 5, 2015

Fleming Hall Building 1101, Jackson Barracks, New Orleans, Louisiana

MEETING NOTES

NAC MEMBER ATTENDANCE

NAME	DISCIPLINE	PRESENT	ABSENT
Jim Featherstone, Chair	Emergency Management (Rep)	X	
Teresa Scott, Vice Chair	FEMA Administrator Selection (SGE)	X	
James Akerelrea	Elected Tribal Government Officials (Rep)		X
Beth Armstrong	Standards Setting and Accrediting (Rep)		X
Meloyde Batten-Mickens	FEMA Administrator Selection (SGE)	X	
Joseph Bolkcom	Elected State Government Officials (Rep)		X
Sarita Chung	In-Patient Medical Providers (SGE)	X	
Mark Cooper	Emergency Management (Rep)		X
Jeanne-Aimee De Marrais	FEMA Administrator Selection (SGE)	X	
Jerry Demings	Elected Local Government Officials (Rep)	X	
Gerard Dio	Emergency Response Providers (Rep)	X	
Nancy Dragani	Non-Elected State Government Officials (Rep)	X	
Scott Field	Non-Elected Local Government Officials (Rep)	X	
Lee Feldman	FEMA Administrator Selection (SGE)	X	
Jeffrey Hansen	Non-Elected Tribal Government Officials (Rep)	X	
Chris Howell	FEMA Administrator Selection (SGE)	X	
June Kailes	Access and Functional Needs (SGE)	X	
Emily Kidd	Emergency Medical Providers (SGE)	X	
Nim Kidd	FEMA Administrator Selection (SGE)	X	
Anne Kronenberg	Emergency Response Providers (SGE)	X	
Linda Langston	FEMA Administrator Selection (SGE)	X	
Christopher Littlewood	Disabilities (SGE)	X	
Suzet McKinney	Public Health (SGE)	X	
Gerald Parker	Health Scientists (SGE)		X
Samantha Phillips	Emergency Management (Rep)	X	
Thomas Powers	Cyber Security (SGE)		X
Richard Reed	FEMA Administrator Selection (SGE)		X
Robert Salesses	U.S. Department of Defense—Ex Officio		X
Pat Santos	Emergency Response Providers (Rep)	X	
Christopher Smith	Communications (SGE)	X	
Guy Swan	FEMA Administrator Selection (SGE)	X	
Fritz Wilson	Standards Setting and Accrediting (Rep)	X	
Phil Zarlengo	FEMA Administrator Selection (SGE)	X	
Daniel Zarrilli	Infrastructure Protection (SGE)	X	

**Rep-Representative; SGE-Special Government Employee



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NAME	TITLE
Julie Bradford	Louisiana Recovery Office
Jenny Campora	Louisiana Recovery Office
Amy Connolly	Louisiana Recovery Office
Michael Delman	Attorney Advisor, Office of Chief Counsel
Lynette Fontenot	Louisiana Recovery Office
Craig Fugate	Administrator
Michael George	Advisor to the Administrator
Jonathan Hoyes	Director, National Disaster Recovery Planning Division
Keith LaFoucade	Security Specialist
Ryan Mast	Louisiana Recovery Office
Melanie Mitchell	Deputy Director, Louisiana Recovery Office
Joseph Nimmich	Deputy Administrator
Charlotte Hyams Porter	Designated Federal Officer (DFO), National Advisory Council
Rachael Weatherly	Assistant to the Chief of Staff
Avital Wenger	Senior Advisor, Office of the Administrator
Michael Womack	Director, Louisiana Recovery Office
Alexandra Woodruff	Alternate DFO, National Advisory Council

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

NAME	TITLE/ORGANIZATION
Alom Johnson	Black and Veatch
Kenneth Pickering	New Orleans Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
Mark Zeldon	Office of Senator Bill Cassidy

MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am CST by Charlotte Hyams Porter, NAC DFO.

Call to Order and Roll Call

Charlotte Hyams Porter—NAC DFO, FEMA

- The next NAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 15-17, 2015 in Washington, DC.
 - One of the NAC members raised the issue that this date coincides with Rosh Hashanah, so FEMA moved the meeting to September 16 - 18, 2015 in order to avoid the holiday.
- Administrator Fugate will speak on behalf of Dave Miller regarding the Federal Insurance and Mitigation (FIMA) update.

Remarks from the NAC Chair and Vice Chair

Jim Featherstone—NAC Chair

- Thanked all the NAC members for participating in the discussion, providing their perspectives, and showing their commitment to the issues presented.
- Some key phrases from the meeting included “frenzy of indifference,” “build a bridge and get over it,” and “live forward and learn backwards.”



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Teresa Scott—NAC Vice Chair

- Thanked everyone for their hard work and progress on the issues in the subcommittees.

Discussion with FEMA Deputy Administrator

Joseph Nimmich—Deputy Administrator, FEMA

- Deputy Administrator Nimmich shared that he has been with FEMA for nearly two years. FEMA has been fortunate to have Administrator Fugate remain on board for an additional four years.
- The NAC is one of the places the Administrator looks for FEMA leaders, which indicates how highly he values the opinions of NAC members. The Administrator often makes this remark: “Don’t tell me what I want to hear, tell me what I need to hear.” This is true, even though it can be difficult for FEMA to change direction and makes being a NAC member challenging.
- Interestingly, members are getting to have such respect for one another that they want to carry on conversations beyond meetings.
- In looking at their roles, the Administrator and Deputy Administrator have determined that Administrator Fugate has the outward focus as the public face of FEMA, focusing on how we respond better, getting it right, and protecting survivors. The Deputy Administrator is internally focused and works inside FEMA to ensure all systems are running.
- FEMA is working to ensure FEMA’s systems are sustainable even when there is a change in Administration. The foundation should remain in place.
- Deputy Administrator Nimmich shared some of the Agency’s challenges with workforce readiness, information technology, and human resources.
- **Workforce Readiness:** FEMA leadership is uncomfortable about FEMA’s readiness because over the last three years, there have been fewer disasters, and currently there are only three open JFOs and four open disasters, which are all small. While this is good for the Nation, it is not great for training and maintaining reservist skillsets. Reservists in FEMA are not like reservists in the military who have monthly training and require active experience to maintain their skills. This means that without deployments, the skill sets of the reservist workforce are not improved.
- The workforce model needs to support a response to a big disaster, an event that we never want to have happen. However, this type of response preparation costs money, time, and resources, and the government seldom wants to invest funding into something that is not regularly used. The only exception to this rule is the U.S. military.
- FEMA inquired with the Department of Defense about how they measure their preparedness. Through the SORTS tool, the military knows the level of preparedness of every platoon, including training, experience, equipment, and facilities. FEMA chose to follow this model in its own preparations, developing the Cadre Operational Readiness and Deployability Status (CORDS) report.
- FEMA created this structure to manage its 23 cadres. FEMA is currently at about a D3 level (with regard to large scale, complex disasters) and can handle any level two or three disaster.
- FEMA is incorporating the Administrator’s vision that FEMA should be an expeditionary organization, which means all FEMA employees are prepared for deployment to disaster. FEMA is investing more in training and training facilities in an effort to ensure it is moving toward a workforce that is ready for the worst.
- Funding issues have been one of the Administrator’s biggest challenges. FEMA conducted a review and analysis of its budget and spend plans. Budgets are now defined based on the future end state and goals, instead of a laundry list of funding items. Congress allocated the Disaster Relief Fund, which FEMA defended, and Congress knows that we understand our budget, which gives credibility and support to Administrator Fugate when he speaks about potential shut downs and their impact on FEMA.
- A comment was made about how one region (Region III) has identified an individual who can work with tribes, but the region has no federally recognized tribes, while another region (Region VI) has 68 federally recognized tribes but only one official tribal liaison. This engendered a brief discussion about how FEMA utilizes its resources. Region VI is hiring another tribal liaison, while Region III uses this individual to address the large amount of historic tribal resources in the region. However, the Agency needs to move beyond checking the box.
- **Information Technology:** FEMA is focused on updating virtually all of its IT systems, investing money to advance to a 2010 system as opposed to a 1978 system, which is when its current Cobalt system was developed. FEMA currently has two or three systems that collect information differently, but we want to make our systems “systems of the future” that can rely on one another.
- It has been said of FEMA, “When you see one region, you’ve seen one region.” Even though regional organizations differ, such as in how they manage state and local stakeholders, FEMA is trying to ensure all regions have same functions and provide the same level of support.



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- The creation of an automated common operating system for every JFO gives FEMA the ability to manage things such as FCO staffing.
- We are working hard on trying to make sure our systems are capable and rely on each other and are systems of the future that have easy access for utilizing the data since we have never been very good at this. We need to structure our data better in order to give us better information. FEMA is working with data as predictive analysis. Data has been a real focus for FEMA, and we are moving forward to better use our data. Using our data, we have created an automated common operating picture system for the JFO to give FEMA the ability to manage staffing, finance, Public Assistance projects, etc.
- During the Missouri flood, FEMA assessed what was needed for the response based on past data. For the excessive snow and rain in Kentucky, FEMA is using the common operating system to predict areas of flooding, based on the water content of snow and prior data on floods.
- For all grants, FEMA is looking at being able to find the common capability. Most of what is requested in a grant is common, so we can have common data to look at and provide better information to applicants/survivors. We still need to get this through the budget process.

NAC Question: Where is the grant information located?

- The Administrator responded that information about grants is located on the FEMA website, including a data visualization tool to view the type and amount of funding received by jurisdiction and the frequency of disasters in a county. This tool was made available to the public outside of FEMA's firewall in an effort to reduce Freedom of Information Act requests and to share unclassified or personally identifiable information. An increasing amount of FEMA's basic information is publically available. FEMA is working on sharing information about flood insurance and loss data, in addition to ensuring that information is usable and accurate.
- **Human Resources:** FEMA has experienced many challenges related to human resources over the past few years. As a result, the Agency has made some substantial changes in how we do business. We have decided that we are going to have National IMATs that are funded out of the Disaster Relief Fund and that these IMATs are going to be much larger than they were before. We have implemented two years of training. Just this week we are having another hiring fair for the larger regional response teams in order to backfill some of the positions on the national teams.
- That process enabled us to hire about 120 people a year more than we had before. Because of the aforementioned challenges with reservists, we created incident management core positions that go out to every disaster and work.
- FEMA was not considering the "H" in Human Resources. As a result of trying to do things quickly to address challenges we found when dealing with the events in New York after Hurricane Sandy, we unintentionally tripled the number of people we were going to hire in a year but did not bring on any HR specialists or classification specialists, nor did we build capacity in our HR system. The fact that it takes FEMA almost three-quarters of a year to hire for the full-time position means things are not getting done and that we are not doing things as quickly as we should.
- Another initiative is the Public Assistance Program restructuring. FEMA hosted five listening sessions in two regions regarding this initiative. After this week's listening session, the contractor will provide its recommendations about the reengineering effort, and the goal is to have the first JFO operating under that new structure in June.
- As for preparedness, PPD-8, NIMS, and THIRA are all being reviewed for potential improvements to make before a change in Administration.
- For the FEMA Qualification System, FEMA is ensuring the guidance is the same and improving alignment of training with position requirements.

Question and Answer with the Administrator

NAC Question: Has FEMASat been successful?

- Sometimes the data tells us things that we may not like to hear. FEMASat has moved from being a burden to being a requested tool by the program offices. FEMA conducts about 12 FEMASat sessions a year, approximately one a month.

NAC Question: One of the FEMA regions is developing an automated Public Assistance system for things such as Preliminary Damage Assessments; has it launched?

- The tool, while impressive, has not yet launched. We want to make sure that the regions launch a tool that aligns with the Public Assistance Reengineering initiative.
- FEMA is working with Red Cross senior leadership to define what is "major," "minor," and "destroyed." We are also training with Red Cross so that the Red Cross can have immediate input in an effort to expedite the Individual Assistance declaration process. We are trying to use the Red Cross to leverage states that may not have experience with mass care.

NAC Question: How do you ensure that metrics from the Red Cross align with FEMA's metrics?



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- This is where we are going with the Public Assistance reengineering, as 80 percent of disasters are flood related. The idea behind the reengineering is simple: when a road floods, a road floods. Public Assistance requests of fewer than one million dollars will be addressed differently than those over a million dollars.

NAC Question: Is there a virtual Incident management software tool that will replace Web EOC?

- We need to start addressing this from a common frame of reference or terminology versus the specific platform. We need to move to a standard process, where states and locals can go back to vendors and request products that meet common data exchange standards. The market for this is small, but vendors will include the standards in the platform if it is included in the request for quote.
 - Most NAC members self-identified that they use Web EOC or Knowledge Center. The web-based systems are often insecure, which causes other issues.

NAC Question: The number of disaster declarations this past year was low. Are there any other examples of quiet periods?

- When James Lee Witt was Administrator of FEMA, there were only two federally declared disasters: the Great Flood of 1993 and Hurricane Georges.
- The lack of disasters may affect readiness. There is a concern about keeping attention focused on funding needs during periods of slow disasters. However, we have responded to many non-Stafford Act events.
- We need to be prepared not for what we are capable of handling but for the potential impacts. We are at the level D3 and ready to respond to a large disaster. We are using data to support strategically the appropriation requests, such as using the Emergency Management Assistance Compact to meet needs for fire trucks and ambulances. In addition, the THIRA helps with risk profiles and identifying gaps so that grants can fill in those gaps.

Federal Insurance & Mitigation Administration (FIMA) Update and Discussion

Craig Fugate (in lieu of David Miller)—Administrator, FEMA

- One of the issues at hand is how we understand and manage risk. It can be managed in various ways; however, if we do not fully understand the risks as we build and grow, we may not have a good platform from which to view risk (i.e. planners, developers, businesses, and personal choices about where and how we live).
- Mitigation is one of the five areas of focus when it comes to how to be a resilient nation. Mitigation must be ongoing versus something that is considered only during a disaster.
- A whole community approach to mitigation is needed. People must understand that if they wait until someone else is paying (e.g., Federal Government), it will be unsustainable. Unless public and elected leaders see mitigation as worth fighting for, there will always be a gap. The challenge is to move mitigation out of the world of emergency management.
- There are very specific projects and starting places to build a baseline from which to measure the progress of mitigation projects. It is difficult to access dollars without an identified baseline, variables to measure, and the ability to determine whether things improved. We must be able to show the improvements and to what degree the improvements are. The request for 2016 was a substantial improvement but was still less than what is needed.
- A big component of FEMA is the US Fire Administration. While we are doing better at fighting fires, there is not a corresponding decrease in fire fatalities. FEMA is currently considering specifications beyond those required by US Department of Housing and Urban Development, such as the installation of sprinklers.
- With regard to 404 and 406 mitigation, 406 can apply to what is there, but 404 can be utilized for alternative projects; this can be done at the front end of large, complex projects. We do not want to build back to the past structure when the past structure was not adequate, so we want to build to mitigate future risk. For example, public schools will not be built without a safe room for the entire campus, as the cost-benefit analysis is no longer required.
- Building an actuarially, financially sound flood insurance program is a huge challenge. It would be good if technology could make it possible to simply use maps (rather than surveyors) to determine an individual homeowner's elevation. This would be better and easier and would save homeowners money.
- There is a challenge in running NFIP as an insurance company because there would be competing interests that will never be satisfied. On the one hand, the taxpayer must be protected from excessive payouts; on the other hand, the policyholder must be protected to ensure that coverage is available when needed. FEMA has utilized insurance companies to get FEMA funds to insured persons; these companies have often been concerned with not paying out too much, as they are used to protecting shareholders' interests. Disagreements have historically gone to litigation. We want to address fraud, while ensuring we are actuarially and financially sound. The challenge is equal risk to equal reward.



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- Significant personnel changes have been made to be sure that insurers who work with FEMA understand FEMA's priorities and provide information based on FEMA's values and priorities, which means that insured persons are to be paid what they are owed.

Question and Answer

NAC Question: How does liability relate to the NFIP?

- The NFIP is \$24 billion in debt and has between \$1 – 1.5 trillion in open policies.
- An example of liability is Broward County, which has one of the largest concentrations of flood insurance with a very vulnerable coastal area and high density and is very successful in getting people to buy flood insurance. Having a large number of policies in just one county can cause significant problems.
- NFIP is a fee-based program, but it does not include fees for WYO, mapping, or servicing. We have found that there are many things we can do to speed up the process and provide services economically that meet our standings.

NAC Question: Is it possible to break the program into two parts—normal NFIP and catastrophic events—and then treat the catastrophic event more like the Individual Assistance/Public Assistance model?

- No, that was the previous practice. Historically the NFIP paid out more than it took in, and the large events would be forgiven and written off as bad debt. The current decision is not to write off the bad debt and to pay off the money that is borrowed. The NFIP can handle small event but not catastrophic events. However, a significant event on the coast with the current parameters would exceed the borrowing authority.
- The tendency is to build systems around smaller, more manageable events. The only way we could do what we did with Hurricane Sandy was because of Hurricane Katrina, where over 1 billion dollars in Individual Assistance funds were distributed within 35 days.
- Executive Order 13690 established a federal flood risk management standard and a process for further soliciting and considering stakeholder input. FIMA is working on an implementation plan for this Executive Order.

NAC Question: Is FIMA working with the Conference of Mayors on the NFIP?

- Roy Wright is working on outreach to communicate this to stakeholders, including the Conference of Mayors.

NAC Question: Have there been discussions about moving away from the 100-year and 500-year flood elevation maps to a comprehensive system that addresses climate change?

- No, if we wait until a new tool is developed, we will never get there. Thus, we built in a two to three foot requirement, as a 75-80 percent solution about what is known. This removes variability in predictions and uses a range to make best prediction. The two to three feet requirement builds a buffer for the unknown without being draconian in building risk only against highest variables.
- We will also look at habitat, flood bases, and other structural tools to look at other opportunities to mitigate risk.

Recovery from a Local Perspective

Ron Bordelon—Chief Facilities Officer, Louisiana Recovery School District

- Mr. Bordelon provided a presentation on the Louisiana Recovery School District including its history and accomplishments since Hurricane Katrina, focusing on recovery from a local perspective in the frame of education.
- In late August 2005, there were approximately 64,000 students enrolled in public schools in Orleans Parish. They attended 124 campuses spread across 539 individual buildings. Pre-Katrina, the public school portfolio was in a fragile state.
- In partnership with the Orleans Parish School Board, the Recovery School District has worked diligently to be a good steward of the funds received to rebuild our district. They utilized similar building designs more than once and explored other alternative delivery methods to maximize efficiency.
- In addition to adopting more efficient building and design, the Recovery School District identified ways to supplement the grant money with funds and contributions to support and improve recovery efforts. They identified and pursued over \$35 million in market state and local tax credits, pursued partnerships with groups, such as the Global Initiative, the Global Green, and the Laura Bush Library.
- Today, the public school system is nearly 100 percent changed. Only 10 percent of New Orleans' schools are considered failing. Test scores and graduation rates have improved dramatically, making them one of the strongest public school systems in the state.



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America's PrepareAthon! Update

Gwen Camp—Director, Individual and Community Preparedness Division (ICPD), FEMA

- Ms. Camp discussed the research behind America's PrepareAthon! and then shared updates about the program.
- FEMA's Individual and Community Preparedness Division has five parts: CERT, Citizen Corps, Youth Preparedness (National Strategy for Youth Preparedness Organization just released), Research Arm, and America's PrepareAthon!.
- Building muscle memory will save lives, so exercises need to be a normal part of life. There are hazard specific scenarios to provide information on how to prepare for different events based on the region.
- Protective Action Reports will be coming out soon; these reports will provide more stats on what individuals can actually do to be safe. For example, in practicing a tornado drill, what is safer: getting out of the car or staying in the car? The reports will provide statistics to support the safer actions.
- ICPD is also looking at framing preparedness to identify why people are not preparing and what is preventing some people from getting prepared.
- We are trying to make preparedness easy by taking lessons from the *Preparedness in America* report and making them into bit sized pieces, such as through creating one or two pagers on the people who are or are not getting prepared.
- The goal is to move the preparedness meter to have more people being prepared. Currently 14 percent of the population does something regularly to stay prepared. Approximately 40 percent do not have preparedness on their radars. ICPD also looked at demographic data, such as age, income, race, disability, and population density.
- We are not doing blanket messaging. Instead, we are focusing on targeting people who can move toward resiliency.
- As for America's PrepareAthon!, it is all about looking at each individual community. It breaks down by school, college, situation, etc. However, FEMA learned that there were too many documents to make it easy for the general public to digest and thus will be doing an overhaul of the materials in the summer. ICPD took the all-hazards approach and made it easy for college campuses or businesses to customize the documents and provide specific actions. The national PrepareAthon! days are meant to lead participants in the same direction.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm CST by Charlotte Hyams Porter, NAC DFO.

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing executive summary of the National Advisory Council Meeting on March 5, 2015 is accurate and complete.



James Featherstone
Chair
FEMA National Advisory Council



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