

Fulton County Long Term Recovery Group

Minutes for February 10, 2025—10:00 a.m.

A.) Call to Order

Present (Virtually): Chris Helle (Emergency Services Disaster Agency); Jessica Sparenberg (Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library); Matthew Raymond (IEMA); Micah Garnett (Trinity Lutheran Church of Canton); Gayle Blodgett (Spoon River Library District); Will Ferguson (Temple Baptist Church); Sarah Nottle (Salvation Army 360); Tiffany Boehler (IEMA); Michelle Spiva (Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development);

B.) Approval of Meeting Minutes

Approved Motion: Hearing no objections, the January 13, 2025, meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote. (Motion: J. Sparenberg; Second: C. Helle).

C.) Public Comments

Jessica shared that she had received a public comment, in which the person identified the Canton Historical Train Depot as a potential donation collection site, and the Canton Family YMCA as potential shelter area and collection site, in the event of disasters. Group members wished to speak to Matt Sawyer to discuss the potential of this idea.

D.) Communications

E.) Agenda Items

1.) Organizations for 501(c)3 Donation Assistance

Sarah Nottle stated that she had verified that the Salvation Army of Canton and Fulton County was unable to partner with the LTRG, to receive monetary donations on the behalf of the LTRG with regard to natural disaster relief. Group members discussed approaching the Canton Area Chamber of Commerce to talk about promotional efforts, and other ways the Chamber may be able to provide relief to the community in conjunction with the LTRG.

2.) Reviewing Current Local Disaster Procedures

Group members discussed the disaster relief process with Chris Helle. He identified that disasters start with local declarations of disasters through city or town mayors, or in the absence of these officials, by the County Board Chairperson, then expand out to Federal (FEMA) or State (IEMA) aid, and ends with local distribution of relief and supplies. FEMA acts as adjunct support, and sometimes funding does not happen expeditiously. Mr. Helle stated that gaps exist before and after FEMA assistance, with disasters needing to meet certain thresholds to qualify for assistance. Local data collection between assistive agencies is essential to meet these thresholds. Data collected must demonstrate need, including: damage assessment, discussion with

community groups, and individuals impacted, to paint a “picture of need” for petition for FEMA. Group members requested that Chris Helle provide a shortlist of the procedures for clarification at the next meeting in March.

Group members discussed the process of alerting all members to declared disasters. Chris Helle stated that Microsoft Teams meetings had been the preferred method of communication between agencies in previous disasters. Partnership organizations were contacted via Teams, would meet every day during the disaster process, to identify goals, processes, resources.

Chris Helle stated he would be looking into introduction resources, identifying the differences between FEMA and IEMA, and would try to provide links to training. Group members discussed ICS training (incident command system training) for each participant in the LTRG, as this could be very beneficial in making sure all members understand current procedures in place. Matthew Raymond stated he had a list of ICS training available on FEMA, and said he would send to Chris.

Gayle Blodgett asked that a list be compiled of potential contributions from each organization, to help each organization prepare ahead of time to participate in disaster relief, as it occurs.

Group members expressed concern at ensuring that volunteers in disaster relief efforts are vetted, and/or have background checks prior to providing assistance. Several ideas were discussed, including running background checks through partnering organizations, such as the Salvation Army of Fulton County, or the University of Illinois Extension Office. Will Ferguson said his organization runs background checks on volunteers as well. It was also suggested that all members of FCLTRG would be vetted with background check, and have identification badges available to wear at point of disasters.

Chris Helle suggested attending a monthly Mayor’s Meeting after the LTRG had been solidified with by-laws and a mission statement. The purpose would be to discuss the formation and the purpose of the LTRG, and ways area Mayors could to coordinate with the LTRG in disaster situations.

3.) Formation of Mission Statement

Richard Proffer was unable to attend the February meeting, and so will provide his expertise in forming a Mission Statement and discussing by-laws, as observed through other LTRG in the state.

4.) Reviewing Local Resources (Gayle)

Gayle Blodgett is still working to compile a list of local resources, and will hopes to have this information to present at the March meeting.

5.) Next Steps in Group Formation

Group members discussed several steps needed to continue in forming the FCLTRG. These include:

Reaching out to Mark Sawyer to see if the YMCA is capable and interested in serving in the LTRG, and in what capacity (to be done by Jessica Sparenberg).

Discussing the obligations under the Open Meetings Act as pertains to the FCLTRG, in consultation with other Illinois LTRG.

Continuing the discussion of ways the FCLTRG might receive monetary donations for disaster relief.

Forming By-laws and Mission Statement for the FCLTRG (templates to be provided by Richard Proffer).

Obtaining and reviewing current strategies and procedures in place to address natural disasters (to be provided by Chris Helle).

Compiling a list of area resources (in the process of being compiled by Gayle Blodgett, and continuously added to, as other resources become available).

Obtaining online training modules for group members to view as the formation of the group progresses, to include Incident Command System training, and other pertinent modules.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Approved Motion: (Motion: J. Sparenberg; Second: G. Blodgett).

Attest: _____
Secretary

Date: _____

The next meeting is scheduled for March 10th, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. at the Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library Board Room & Virtually via Microsoft Teams.