

Fulton County Long Term Recovery Group

Minutes for August 11th, 2025—10:00 a.m.

A.) Call to Order

Present (Physically): Will Ferguson (Temple Baptist Church); Jessica Sparenberg (Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library); Micah Garnett (Trinity Lutheran Church of Canton); Gayle Blodgett (Spoon River Library District); Richard Proffer (U of I Extension Office); Tara Heath (U of I Extension Office)

Present (Virtually): Chris Helle (Emergency Services Disaster Agency); Matthew Raymond (IEMA); Tiffany Boehler (IEMA)

B.) Approval of Meeting Minutes

Approved Motion: Hearing no objections, the July 14th, 2025, meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote. (Motion: J. Sparenberg; Second: C. Helle)

C.) Public Comments

D.) Communications

Richard Proffer introduced the group to Tara Heath, who joined from University of Illinois Extension office, of the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences. Ms. Heath's area of coverage includes Fulton County, and Mr. Proffer thought her input would be a valuable piece of information to add to the LTRG's network of resources. Ms. Heath introduced herself, and described her background for the group.

Matthew Raymond emphasized the need for a Community Resource Guide to serve not just upcoming recipients, but those were already current clients. He reminded the group that Sarah Nottle, of the Salvation Army 360, had mentioned checking in with clients who were still anticipating relief from previous circumstances. As Ms. Nottle was not in attendance today, it was suggested that Mr. Raymond reach out via email to Ms. Nottle directly, to ascertain client statuses, as group members had not received an update from her.

E.) Agenda Items

1.) Local Resource Guide

Micah Garnett augmented the Google Sheet that is the ongoing template for the Local Resource Guide to reflect names of group members who are augmenting the document, and the date of the augmentation. This will more easily allow members to assess this document going forward, to ensure timeliness of information, and correct contact information. Any additional augmentations to the structure of the Resource Guide itself will be done by Mr. Garnett.

This document is accessible to all LTRG members, but will be used exclusively by LTRG, to protect personal cell phone information, or other private contact information of those who are identified as contacts for townships, agencies, etc. A public-facing, printable PDF will be made available once this list is more fully fleshed-out.

2.) Marketing and Outreach

Group members discussed ways to begin promoting the group, now that a Mission Statement and Bylaws had been established. Jessica Sparenberg stated she would create a preliminary promotional flier, to share the basic concept of what the group is intended for, and the need for additional businesses, religious organizations, and agencies to join this effort.

Ms. Sparenberg suggested that approaching the Canton City Council, and other governing bodies might be a good way to spread the word at the top of organizational structures, and Richard Proffer suggested group members attend the monthly meeting of the Fulton County Social Services group to reach an additional wide audience. This meeting takes place the last Wednesday of each month, with the exception of November and December, when it is moved to the 3rd Wednesday, on account of the holiday season.

Group members discussed the formation of a logo particular to the LTRG, and Mr. Proffer suggested approaching the Marketing and Business departments at Bradley University, as students had previously been tasked with creating a marketing plan for approved businesses and organizations as group projects in the past. This would entail the filling out of an application, and ongoing communication with students. Ms. Sparenberg stated she would look into this process and report back at the next meeting.

Matthew Raymond suggested approaching the Illinois Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), to see if the LTRG could be listed on their website, to provide civilians with contact information for their group in Fulton County. Gayle Blodgett suggested making it explicit in our listing that we are affiliated with Fulton County, Illinois, as there is also Fulton County, Georgia, and the two listings are often confused for one another. Mr. Garnett looked at the website during the meeting, and listed information suggested that there was no fee associated with other LTRG's wishing to have their listing added to the website. Formal membership to the VOAD would be \$100.

3.) Next Steps

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

Exploration of the application process for Bradley University Marketing Program suggested by Richard Proffer.

Jessica Sparenberg volunteered to assist in the formation of an information flier for distribution to potential stakeholders for the LTRG.

Micah Garnett will assist in the creation of an email address for the LTRG, as a point-of-contact for outside entities.

Mr. Garnett will approach the Illinois VOAD for a request to have contact information listed on their site.

Compiling a list of locations, and organizations for Richard Proffer and Jessica Sparenberg to address, when sharing with the community what the mission of the Fulton County LTRG is, and how they may assist the effort.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Approved Motion: Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.
(Motion: R. Proffer; Second: J. Sparenberg)

Attest: _____
Secretary

Date: _____

The next meeting is scheduled for September 8th, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. at the Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library Program Room & Virtually via Microsoft Teams.