

**CITY OF HARAHAH  
6437 JEFFERSON HIGHWAY, HARAHAH, LOUISIANA  
MAYOR AND HARAHAH CITY COUNCIL  
May 27, 2015**

**The Mayor and the Council met on the above date for a Special Meeting at 5:30 pm.**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Mayor called the Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.**

**ROLL CALL**

**Present: Mayor Miceli, Councilman Baudier, Councilman Benton, Councilman Johnston, Councilman Wheeler, Fire Chief Todd St. Cyr, Chief Walker, Capt. Butch Adam representing Police Chief Tim Walker**

**Absent: Councilman Huete, Municipal Clerk Nicole Lee, City Attorney Thomas Anzelmo, Jr.**

**SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

**Ben Plaia – Emergency Management for Elected Public Officials**

**Attorney for 22 years, Sgt. in Jefferson Parish Police Dept. & in the military. He is discussing an Education Outreach Program – recovery from storm damage is very important. The amount of money available is different for Harahan and Jefferson Parish. A book for elected officials was handed out to the Councilmen and Mayor. It includes preparation all the way through to recovery. Today's focus is recovery. Issues that are important are contained – not to train – but to educate our officials. Training takes about 3 days. Recovery is complicated and things need to be done ahead of time. Awareness is essential. We need to learn how to make emergency management people's job better. The public wants life normalized after a storm as quickly as possible.**

**Public assistance program – FEMA comes in to qualified areas with financial assistance. Recovery is all about “showing me the money”. But – strings are attached. Compliance is essential to get the money back. FEMA will assess damages and make sure it is done correctly. Avoid a second disaster is the mantra that should be adopted. FEMA taking the money back would be a second disaster. If the debris removal bill is astronomical and the paper work is not complete, then FEMA will only pay a certain amount. Must do what is necessary – you have to justify the work. Katrina had many problems and was a great learning experience. Response and recovery is an important relationship. Attention is given to the response and rescue. If a hurricane is threatening our area an evacuation will be called. Gustav and Isaac brought the biggest evacuation ever. Recovery is the stepchild – courses are available on the emergency management website – but only 10% are about recovery. If preparation is not done correctly you risk not being paid for the recovery. The best applicant is St. Tammany Parish. The emergency mgt. director doesn't do anything until he has the recovery director on board. That way they are in compliance. To avoid the second disaster – no repayment you must be familiar with all rules – city attorney or a hired contractor should be in charge. They must study and learn the rules now before a storm. Debris contracts and other contracts should be FEMA approved. Pre-event contracts are a necessity. GOSEPH exists to help cities any way they can. The Stafford Act is the law along with a code of federal regulations 44-CFR is for community use. A lot of regulations have to be followed. There are 7 written policies that the city is supposed to follow. The 9500 series is FEMA's idea of finding out what the CFR is. The public assistance guide explains the CFR. There are 8 books that contain all the regulations. He has been studying the regulations on this since Katrina and still does not know it all because the regulations keep changing. Golden rule is - take the most conservative position. Contracts must be procured competitively. Cutting corners will cost the city in the long run. He passed out an exhibit of the life cycle of a disaster. During Katrina – President Bush wanted to send military – but Gov. Blanco didn't want to give up control. She took her time to declare a disaster. The governor must make a declaration before the President can do anything.**

**Before the event - normally the governor will declare a state of emergency – for FEMA purposes this is essential. In La. the Parish President or Mayors can also declare an emergency. This gives them police powers to use private property if necessary. Good for 30 days and can be extended if necessary. The council has oversight – but that has never happened. From a Public Assistance standpoint – it's the infrastructure – must**

meet certain criteria. All parish emergency directors provide estimates to GOSEPH and they verify the damages to make certain they match the criteria. Based on population whether or not the parish qualifies for presidential declaration of emergency. Each parish must qualify on their own. A small disaster is a problem. You have to have enough damage to qualify. Individual assistance does not have an objective criteria – must be major damage or total destruction. Minor damage does not qualify. If insured you get nothing. Minority groups get first priority. The city sets up emergency centers for people. FEMA has mitigation grants for raising houses also. 60 days after the disaster is the deadline for putting in for grants. Request for public assistance is made to FEMA by the city and they will help prepare paperwork. Threat assessments must be done – you must decide what is needed to prevent damage. Hiring a contractor for debris – but must be bid competitively if over \$3,000. Procure a debris contract before the disaster to have them in place.

Councilman Baudier asked if this is a low bid contract.

Mr. Plaia said it is a professional contract and set criteria could be cost, equipment and expertise.

Mayor Miceli asked about advertising for bids for procurement of a contractor.

Mr. Plaia – award to one who scores highest based on criteria. Two bids are necessary over \$150,000 and 3 for under \$150,000.

Councilman Baudier said we should ask for 3 bids as a matter of policy.

Councilman Wheeler asked about a pre event contract – if the lowest bid is \$80,000 for debris removal.

Mr. Plaia said that FEMA has never denied paying a competitively bid contract. Public bid - lowest responsible bid. Professional contract is the best value because debris removal is important and the most expensive activity. A Debris removal plan gets the city a better deal – it prioritizes the recovery. Contractor cannot have complete control – city must have control with a debris monitor. Never get a lump sum debris contract. Must be by cubic yard. Does the city have enough insurance to meet FEMA criteria? Must have enough insurance to cover cost of replacement. Insurance commission certification determines what the city can afford and what's available. There is a brochure on how to apply for insurance commission certification.

Everything has costs – normally the repayment is 75-25%. If the damages reach \$75 million – you get 75%. Gustav is almost to the point where the city will get more money back. Administrative costs can be repaid. Be very careful what contractor is hired. The contractor must be knowledgeable. Documentation is extremely important. Without it there is no reimbursement. GOSEPH has classes in July and the city can send representatives.

Handouts were given to all councilmen. There is a road show in June that anyone can attend. The dates will be forthcoming.

Chief St. Cyr asked the difference between the Stafford Act versus the Fair Standards Act about overtime and how it's paid for first responders.

Mr. Plaia said a written policy must be in effect before the event. Payment will be paid by this policy. Must be used during event and otherwise.

Chief St. Cyr said they must review the policy because of low staffing. For 72 hrs. they pay 100% but after 72 hrs. it changes and he doesn't have the staff to allow the men rest time.

Mr. Plaia said that standby time can be paid, but the bottom line is that we have a written policy that is being exercised now. Records of upkeep about infrastructure are important.

Mayor Miceli stated that the policies and procedures are being updated now.

#### ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

None

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

#### ADJOURN

A motion was offered by Councilman Wheeler and seconded by Councilman Johnston to adjourn at 7:07 pm.

**The Mayor called for a vote. The vote was:**

**YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Johnston, Wheeler**

**NAYS: None**

**ABSENT: Huete**

**MOTION APPROVED**

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**Tina Miceli, Mayor**

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**Nicole Lee, Municipal Clerk**