

**State of Oklahoma**  
**Department of Emergency Management (OEM)**  
**QUARTERLY STATE HAZARD MITIGATION TEAM MEETING**  
**State Capitol, Room 419-C**  
**Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**  
**9:00 AM, FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 2014**

**I. Call to Order**

Director Albert Ashwood called the quarterly meeting of the State Hazard Mitigation Team to order at 9:05 AM in Room 419-C of the State Capitol Building.

**II. 63 O.S § 683.6 and Formation of the Hazard Mitigation Team**

Mr. Ashwood noted that this meeting was a *re-boot* of the State Hazard Mitigation Team and explained that this team was set forth under state statute following the 1990 flood and included the administrative directors or their representatives of these agencies:

**A. Introduction of team members:**

Oklahoma Emergency Management – Annie Vest  
Oklahoma Climatological Survey – Kevin Kloesel  
Oklahoma Conservation Commission – Robert Toole  
Oklahoma Corporation Commission – Matt Skinner  
Oklahoma Department of Commerce – Kylah McNabb  
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality – Monty Elder  
Oklahoma Department of Human Services – Molly Green  
Oklahoma Department of Transportation – Luis Maleve  
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife – David Deckard  
Oklahoma Association of County Commissioners – Dale Freeh  
State Fire Marshal – Robert Doke  
Oklahoma Department of Labor – Betsey Kulakowski  
Oklahoma Emergency Management Association – Jamie Ott  
Oklahoma State System of Higher Education – Pam Boatright  
Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education – Donna Sinnes  
U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Bill Tolbert

***Team members absent:***

Oklahoma Water Resources Board  
Oklahoma Department of Health  
Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry  
Oklahoma Historical Society

Oklahoma Insurance Department  
Oklahoma Municipal League  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Mr. Ashwood explained that the statute only allowed for voting by team members. He mentioned the COGS (*councils of government*) and invited their input to amend the statute to allow for additional voting members of the team. He also invited any individual to decline participation if they felt that their contribution was not essential, or to delegate an alternate representative.

### **III. A History of Mitigation**

Mr. Ashwood paused to introduce Annie Vest, the newly-appointed State Hazard Mitigation Officer (“SHMO”) as well as representatives from FEMA Region VI: Tommy Styons, Danielle Rainwater, and Donnie Walsh, whom he identified as a former OWRB staff member.

Mr. Ashwood defined mitigation as “a lessening” of the effects of hazard events, and “the only one that makes any sense” since FEMA’s PA (Public Assistance Program) which helps repair roads and bridges, and VOAD efforts to assist individuals are Band-Aids, while mitigation efforts actually prevent damages from occurring.

#### **A. The Robert T. Stafford Act**

Mr. Ashwood explained that FEMA was created in 1979, and the Stafford Act was passed by Congress in 1988 to provide federal assistance following presidential disasters. He explained that if a bridge were damaged during a disaster and riprap was used to keep the bank from eroding that would be a use of Section 406 mitigation.

#### **B. 44 CFR Subpart N**

Mr. Ashwood noted that this section of the federal law has led to an emerging profession. Section 404 funding comes from 15% of all Public Assistance costs. He humorously noted that “Enhanced Mitigation Plans” that provide 20% were *only for people who don’t have disasters*.

He explained the need for states to need to have a Hazard Mitigation Plan, as well as the need for local governments to have approved plans in order to be eligible for the 15% funding, which is divided into three categories:

7% is for planning activities

5% is for non-traditional activities to increase response time, such as sirens

88% is for projects that meet the 1:1 benefit cost analysis (BCA)

Mr. Ashwood explained that the city of Durant's "Elm Street" was chosen as the first drainage project because it flooded every time it rained, and as a result of their mitigation efforts, the streets no longer flood. Another project he cited was the acquisition of rental properties – all owned by the same landlord - in the city of Miami, where flooding caused college students to lose their belongings. The city of Miami was able to get rid of these houses and lessen their flooding problem.

Mr. Ashwood noted that when OEM started its saferoom program in 1999, the only people who sold shelters were lumber yards. Mr. Ashwood cited his work with President Clinton and the SBA to develop a \$2000 rebate program, but this led to an increase in the cost of shelters. OEM pushed for local support of the shelter program and intended it to be an incentive-based program, not an entitlement program.

Mr. Ashwood noted that in 2007, Oklahoma's nine Presidential declarations set a record. Only Texas and California have had more declarations than Oklahoma. These declarations meant lots of mitigation money but the State had few mitigation projects. In response, the SoonerSafe program was designed to utilize mitigation funds so they didn't have to be returned to FEMA. This program meets the BCA based on the "*cost of life.*"

#### **IV. Responsibilities of the State Hazard Mitigation Team**

Mr. Ashwood stated that responsibilities of the team members are:

- 1) To review and recommend updates
- 2) To review and recommend grant applications
- 3) Perform other duties as assigned

Mr. Ashwood explained that the state is the grantee of FEMA mitigation funds and the SHMO is the person responsible for working with the State Hazard Mitigation Team which will prioritize projects, which will be a later topic of discussion. He invited the current team members to carefully assess their agency's role in the mitigation process. He mentioned that while water resources and conservation agencies are very important, *all* state agencies are eligible for Section 404 funded projects. He invited the team members to consider what could be done at a state level to help local jurisdictions.

Mr. Ashwood said that there is no state match for the 25% non-federal share of mitigation grants, but that in-kind work would be considered, as well as other creative funding mechanisms. He then turned the meeting over to Ms. Vest.

#### **V. Current Status of Open HMGP Grants**

Ms. Vest explained that OEM has four years to administer each grant, and that OEM has one year from the date of the disaster declaration to submit applications to FEMA, followed by two

90-day extension if needed. Mr. Ashwood noted that FEMA had just approved a 90-day extension for DR-4109 (an ice storm) beyond the initial April 8, 2014 deadline.

Ms. Vest said that current funding for DR-4117 (Moore tornado event) is \$11,629,403 and that she has project applications that existed before the disaster event due to the policy of shelving projects until funding was available. She explained that local jurisdictions must have an approved hazard mitigation plan in order to apply for this funding, and the State doesn't want to send any projects to FEMA for final approval until all aspects of the grant application are met. She explained that once FEMA approves a project, the subgrantee has three years to complete the work before OEM closes it out.

#### **VI. Where We Go From Here**

Mr. Ashwood restated his request for team members to commit to the responsibilities of participation on the team, or provide an alternate individual; and if any agency wanted to be omitted, to let him know. He also stated that anyone who desired to participate but was not on the team let him know as he would move forward with legislation to allow for their inclusion.

#### **VII. Next Meeting**

Mr. Ashwood stated that the second Thursday of each quarter would be the designated date for the team meetings, and that July 10, 2014 would be the next meeting date.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

Mr. Ashwood adjourned the meeting at 9:47 AM.

Prepared by:  
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Hazard Mitigation Plan Reviewer