

STATE OF LOUISIANA
PARISH LAFOURCHE

A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LAFOURCHE PARISH COUNCIL, PARISH OF LAFOURCHE, STATE OF LOUISIANA, WAS SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2005, AT 6:30 P.M., AT THE LAFOURCHE PARISH COUNCIL BARRIOS CENTER, 1612, HWY. 182, SUITE 100, RACELAND, LOUISIANA.

The Lafourche Parish Council was duly convened as the governing authority of said Parish by Mr. Michael Matherne, Chairman, who then stated that the Lafourche Parish Council was ready for the transaction of business at 6:32 p.m.

Chairman Matherne announced that the invocation would be led by Mr. Michael Matherne. The Council then recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Colonel Arthur Olivier of the Tennessee National Guard. Proceedings of the meeting were called to order with the following:

PRESENT: Mr. Tyrone Williams
Mr. Michael Delatte
Mr. Michael Matherne - Chairman
Ms. Charlotte Randolph, Parish President
Dr. Tommy Lasseigne (*arrived at 6:37 p.m.*)
Mr. Brent Callais (*arrived at 6:37 p.m.*)
Mr. Daniel Lorraine (*arrived at 7:07 p.m.*)

Mr. Lindel Toups
Mr. Phillip Gouaux
Mr. Mark Atzenhoffer - Vice Chairman

ABSENT: None

Chairman Matherne stated that the purpose of the special meeting was to receive information regarding the status of the agencies throughout the Parish and to also put the fears of the public to rest.

Due to technical difficulties with the audio equipment, various parts of the recording were inaudible.

PRESENTATIONS

The first item (1) on the agenda was briefings requested from the following agencies:

a. *Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office*

Major Roland Caillouet advised the Council that since Sunday, August 28, 2005, calls for service numbered approximately 1,600 to 1,700 calls. He went on to say that they had received more emergency calls, approximately 372. Major Caillouet stated that with regards to arrests and citations, approximately twenty (25) people were arrested and twenty-four (24) citations were issued since Sunday, August 28, 2005. He then spoke about the evacuations centers and stated that there had been no problems. Major Caillouet referred to an evacuation center located in the southern part of the parish as having approximately forty (40) National Guardsmen and one (1) officer stationed there. He then reported that there had been no problems at the evacuation center at Nicholls State University, with the exception of one (1) arrest on September 6, 2005. Major Caillouet then reported that officers were taken off the road during the passing of the storm but that they had quickly returned to duty as soon as the winds diminished and driving conditions were safe. He reported that deputies then began assessments of streets and highways and

blockages of same. Major Caillouet said that a separate assessment was made for snapped power poles and power lines. He stated that the Sheriff's Office had formed worked crews with chainsaws in order to clear streets. Major Caillouet reported that they were called upon to provide security to many gas stations with regards to the influx of vehicles when fuel became available. He went on to say that deputies had assisted St. Charles Parish deputies with check points on Louisiana Highway 90 with the return of the Jefferson Parish and St. Charles Parish residents. Major Caillouet further informed the Council that they had assisted other agencies such as Grand Isle. He stated that they had been very fortunate to have received help from deputies from Alabama. He reported one (1) arrest for looting in Grand Isle. Major Caillouet advised that they had assisted Jefferson Parish residents and also assisted in airport security and evacuations. He reported that they had assisted the New Orleans Sheriff's Department and further that deputies had driven buses evacuating approximately 113 people. Major Caillouet said that five (5) deputies had been taken off of duty due to illness or injury, three (3) suffered from heat stroke and (2) from minor vehicular accidents.

b. *Area Parish Hospitals*

Hospital Service District No. 1:

Mr. Brent Callais stated that a representative from Our Lady of the Sea Hospital was not able to attend the meeting. He went on to report that everything was back to normal and that patients were back in the hospital.

Hospital Service District No. 2:

Mr. Milton Bourgeois, CEO of St. Anne General Hospital next addressed the Council. He began by stating that due to communication difficulties St. Anne General Hospital was not able to evacuate in time before the storm. He went on to say that Acadian Ambulance & Air Med Services had been contacted early in the morning on Sunday, August 29, 2005 and that St. Anne General Hospital was put on a waiting list. Mr. Bourgeois said that St. Anne General Hospital activated its Disaster Plan on Saturday, August 28, 2005 and on Sunday, August 29, 2005 a command center had been set up. He then said that the hospital had been locked down on the evening of Sunday, August 29, 2005. He said that their security force had been tripled. Mr. Bourgeois then said that during the storm, staff, physicians, and critical staff had been housed in the hospital. He said that patients had been accepted from Meadow Crest Hospital, Ochsner Hospital, Lady of the Sea Hospital, Methodist Hospital, West Jefferson Hospital and further that the St. Anne Rehabilitation Hospital patients had also been housed inside of St. Anne General Hospital. Mr. Bourgeois said in addition to the previously stated patients housed in St. Anne General Hospital, walk-ins from the New Orleans area were also received. He stated that the emergency room staff was tripled in order to take care of the patients who showed up. He then said that normally St. Anne General Hospital did not house special need patients, but due to the storm ten (10) to twelve (12) special needs patients were received. Mr. Bourgeois then said that the St. Anne OB Clinic had been relocated to the second floor of the hospital and further that numerous walk-in OB patients were received and that babies subsequently were delivered. He then said that the interim medicine clinic of the hospital had served as a back-up to the emergency room and performed triage to the less critical patients. Mr. Bourgeois said that food, water, beverages, ice and supplies were supplied to all evacuees stopping at the facility. He reported that Thibodaux Regional Medical Center had accepted three (3) critical patients that St. Anne General Hospital was unable to care for. He said that St. Anne General Hospital had made an emergency agreement with Lafayette Hospital who delivered their blood needs. He then said that individuals began arriving at the hospital with prescriptions that needed to be filled. He went on to say that because there were no pharmacy open in the area, that the hospital had provided three (3) day critical prescriptions at no charge. He then said that the hospital had supplied vaccines for S.W.A.T. teams, the State Police, FEMA personnel and the Sheriff's Office. Mr. Bourgeois

reported that they had recently sent approximately 170 doses of vaccines to Grand Isle. He praised the employees and divisions of the hospital by stating that they had gone “way above and beyond the call of duty”. He reported that the hospital employees had provided housing for evacuees in their own homes, along with money and food. He reported that the dietary workers of the hospital had an ongoing relief fund to help individuals affected by the disaster. Mr. Bourgeois reported that he had some of his friends come and cook and that free meals had been served to the employees of the hospital, as well as the families of the patients in the hospital. Mr. Bourgeois reported a shortage of medications, but said that Lady of the Sea Hospital supplied them with the same, along with a local pharmacist who had returned to the area. Mr. Bourgeois happily reported that Chevron had offered a helicopter which the hospital used to bring drinking water to West Jefferson Hospital. He reported that the damage to the hospital had been minor, with damage only being to the flashing on the roof, water coming in on walls and two (2) sky lights that were lost. Mr. Bourgeois said that there had been two (2) problem areas, the obtaining of pharmaceuticals and re-agents and confusion with the parish curfew. He went on to say that no one from the Parish or the Sheriff’s Office could verify that medical personnel with identification badges would be able to get through after the curfew. He said that he believed that problem had been caused by mis-communication.

Dr. Lasseigne inquired as to whether a prescription needing to be refilled on the day of the hurricane or shortly thereafter could have been filled at the hospital. Mr. Bourgeois stated that St. Anne General Hospital was not a retail pharmacy, but that they had given three (3) day critical prescription refills if the had medication was available. He said that once pharmacists returned to the area they had provided the needed service.

Chairman Matherne asked Mr. Bourgeois if there were any parish resources needed, to which Mr. Bourgeois responded that they were doing okay.

Hospital Service District No. 3:

Chairman of the Hospital Service District No. 3 Board, Mr. Jacob Giardina addressed the Council by stating that he had three (3) individuals who would speak about the status and activities of Thibodaux Regional Medical Center and also about their interaction with Nicholls State University.

Mr. Greg Stock, CEO of Thibodaux Regional Medical Center then addressed the Council by sharing a few facts and figures regarding the hospital. He reported that approximately 163 people were seen for emergencies, most of which were in concentrated groups and came into the facility unannounced and without transportation. He went on to say that the hospital had admitted approximately 50 inpatients, along with caring for approximately 33 OB patients and performing six (6) heart catheterizations. He went on to say that elective surgeries had been postponed. Mr. Stock said that the hospital had also worked with shelter at Nicholls State University. He reported that emergency power had been used to energize the hospital the majority of time, as over the years, Thibodaux Regional Medical Center had built up enough generator power to be able to supply lighting and air conditioning to the hospital. He said that there had been sufficient staff in the hospital and that there had been great cooperation in departments, between departments and between the hospital and physicians. He reported that the hospital had physically come through the storm in fairly good shape, with the exception of taking in a tiny amount of water in some places and some other small amounts of damage. Dr. Stock said that there had been a good working relationship with Dr. Takeisha Davis and other persons at the shelter at Nicholls State University. He advised that communication plans had been set up with Nicholls State University before the storm began. Mr. Stock said that Nicholls State University, like Thibodaux Regional Medical Center, had patients showing up without advance warning. He reported that they had received calls reporting that a volume of patients would be showing up and then they would not show up. He said patients had also showed up with no medical charts or medical histories. Mr. Stock then spoke of patients who had undergone major procedures and who’s health had deteriorated before being able to be received at the hospital and that it was critical to get them into the hospital.

Dr. Lasseigne inquired as to whether a list of people on oxygen concentrators in the parish existed in order that when circumstances of long power outages occurred those people could be checked on. Mr. Stock advised that they had supplied oxygen cylinders to those who needed them, but that to his knowledge, there was no "list". Dr. Lasseigne went on to say that it may be possible to generate such a list as there were not very many companies in the area that supplied oxygen cylinders. Mr. Stock reported that a lot of suppliers were out of the New Orleans area, but that they had not had a real problem because they had been able to re-establish supply lines through the Lafayette area.

Chairman Matherne asked Mr. Stock if there were any parish resources needed. Mr. Stock stated no, but that he wanted to thank everyone that had assisted them.

Next, Dr. Paul Gaudet addressed the Council by saying that the hospital had gone into Disaster Management Plan and that it had carried through very well. He said that he had visited Nicholls State University on either Tuesday, August 30, 2005 or Wednesday, August 31, 2005 and had met with a young physician, Dr. Takeisha Davis, who was running the emergency management system for the medical side of the evacuation center. He said that a lot of physicians from all areas of the parish, along with some physicians from Houma, had shown up at the evacuation center. Dr. Gaudet reported that approximately 30 new dialysis patients had been gained in the area. He then told several stories of the plight of different patients that had been received at the hospital, along with the great efforts of physicians who's home had been flooded. Dr. Gaudet said that he thought the community spirit to be wonderful and that the physicians had participated quite well. He went on to say that the hospital had done a good job. He said that they were somewhat back to normal, but that due to the fullness of the centers, that they were not completely back to normal.

Dr. Takeisha Davis, Regional Medical Director, addressed the Council next and stated that she had been commuting from New Orleans to the area but that her home was under water and that she was now residing at the evacuation center at Nicholls State University. Dr. Davis stated that the evacuation center had opened on Saturday, August 27, 2005 at 8:00 p.m. from a need from the community. She informed Dr. Lasseigne that they did keep a rudimentary list of individuals who had call them regarding needing oxygen or had mobility deficits. She went on to explain that the list could be used for future storms so that those individuals could be checked on. Dr. Davis said that before the storm hit that there were approximately 25 patients in the shelter. She went on to say that at one time there had been a consideration of evacuating those patients due to the uncertainty of the area to be hit by the hurricane. She stated that most of the patients had come from affected areas such as Metairie and New Orleans. She said that the capacity of the Betsy Ayo Hall at Nicholls State University was 207 patients, that they had received up to 215 patients, and that as of September 6, 2005, that number was down to 115 patients. She went on to say that she had a staff of approximately 42 state employees, 38 federal medical team managers and 80 National Guardsmen. She stated that there had been a tremendous amount of support from the community, not just the medical community. She said that for the first 48 to 72 hours the shelter had to stand-up on their own, because there had been no support from anywhere. She went on to say that Thibodaux Regional Medical Center had really been their support system. Dr. Davis said that she had had only three (3) physicians from the Office of Public Health that were trying to take care of approximately 200 patients. Dr. Davis said that Thibodaux Regional Medical Center had really supported them and further that not only had their doctors shown support but that their nurses, respiratory therapist and pharmacists had done so. She said that a lot of the patients had pharmaceutical needs but did not know the name or dosage of their needed medications. Dr. Davis reported that Nicholls State University had also been very gracious. She said that Nicholls State University and Thibodaux Regional Medical Center had provided meals to special needs patients, along with laundering and disposal of bio-hazardous waste. Dr. Davis said that in addition to taking care of these patients, they wanted to make sure that any infectious diseases or risks to the general population were curtailed. She said that she was happy to report that there had been no report of any infectious disease outbreaks in the population, with the exception of three (3) cases of diarrhea, which had been isolated from the general population. She stated that they were continuing to perform preventative health services in order

to assure the Parish, as well as the surrounding parishes, were protected. Dr. Davis stated that federal resources had been received. She said that Nicholls State University's special needs shelter was initially thought to be a temporary medical staging area. Dr. Davis went on to say that they had triaged over 6,000 patients. She went on to say that parish school buses, Council on Aging buses and others, had been used to transport patients who were well enough to other places. Dr. Davis thanked everyone for their help. She concluded by stating that numerous calls had been received regarding immunizations for first responders and that she was advising that they would be supplying the same at the Betsy Ayo Center and also at the public health units.

Mr. Giardina stated that the hospital had performed exceptionally well. He said that there had been no problems and that there had been enough generator capacity to run the entire hospital. Mr. Giardina said that there had been great cooperation between the City of Thibodaux and the Sheriff's Office in getting radios for communications. He stated that they had been no means of communication when cell phones and land line phones had went down. He stated that the Mayor of Thibodaux had supplied a radio that communicated directly to that office and that the Sheriff's Office had supplied a radio in order to communicate with that office. Mr. Giardina said that Mr. Greg Stock had set up a command center which housed both of the radios. He reiterated that there had been excellent cooperation from the two (2) law enforcement bodies. He said that the doctors and hospital staff had performed exceptionally well. He stated that he believed that this disaster had shown the work performed to make Thibodaux Regional Medical Center a first class medical facility. He said that they were continuing to work toward improving it to make it even better.

Chairman Matherne recognized United States Congressman Charlie Melancon as being present. Congressman Melancon advised the Council that he was on his way back from Grand Isle and that he had stopped in hopes of locating President Charlotte A. Randolph in order that he may inquire as to whether there were any problems and what the needs of the Parish were. He went on to say that he would be on the ground throughout the week of September 5, 2005 and that he believed that he would be meeting with Vice President Cheney on September 7, 2005. Congressman Melancon said the he was coming through the area and wanted to stop and let everyone know that his staff was available when they needed him and further inquired as to what President Randolph needed for the Parish.

Chairman Matherne asked Congressman Melancon if he could share anything regarding St. Bernard or Plaquemines Parish. Congressman Melancon stated that it was a disaster and an absolute mess. He went on to say that in Lafourche, as well as Grand Isle and almost every parish that had been affected by the hurricane, the local sheriff's, emergency preparedness people and local parish governments and councils had done a magnificent job. He said that they had done everything that they had ever been taught to do and that they were prepared for the storm. Congressman Melancon said that the only thing that did not happen was that the back-up that was supposed to follow from the federal government had been very slow in coming. He stated that he did not think things could have been done any better than was done by Lafourche Parish, Jefferson Parish, St. Tammany, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Washington Parishes, as well as all the other parishes. Congressman Melancon said that St. Bernard and Plaquemines would be months coming out of the water. He said that Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes had taken the initiative on their own to cut some levees in order to aid in drainage and that they some pumps had been brought back up and running. Congressman Melancon said that the two (2) parishes were getting medical supplies and that the military was present for back up. He said that he had just left people in Grand Isle who had no water and electricity, but that they were anxious to rebuild and move on with their lives. Congressman Melancon said that they had initially asked President Bush for supplemental funding of \$10 billion. He said that he was not excited about that amount and that he thought it should have been more. He went on to say that he was informed September 6, 2005 that an additional request for \$40 billion had been made.

Dr. Lasseigne pointed out that the \$15 billion that was requested for coastal erosion now looked

small in comparison. Congressman Melancon said that he had had that exact conversation with the President on September 5, 2005. He went on to say that with the way things were looking, that it looked more like \$120 to \$150 billion would be needed. Dr. Lasseigne stated that he thought the biggest problems had were with communications and coordination. Congressman Melancon pointed out that the problems with communications had caused the problems with coordination. He said that even on a satellite phone he was having difficulty.

Mr. Phillip Gouaux asked about fuel prices. Congressman Melancon said that he understood there to be a lot of damage to offshore platforms. Mr. Gouaux then asked whether more fuel would be able to be had because of the fact that the artery of the entire country was trying to be reestablished. Congressman Melancon said that everything was moving as quickly as possible, but that there were also refineries in Pascagoula, Mississippi and four (4) refineries in St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes that were not up and running. He went on to say that approximately one-quarter (1/4) of the regions' refining capacity had been lost. Congressman Melancon said that the problem that was being had was not the quantities of oil that was being received but the production rate of gasoline and diesel. He stated that unless something changed, fuel prices would not be getting better soon. He stated that he did not believe the Energy Bill to have solved long term problems.

President Randolph said that she was glad Congressman Melancon had stopped by. She went on to say that money was needed now. She then stated that the electronic food stamp cards were not working and therefore people were unable to get food. She said that vouchers would help. She went on to say that at the present time that fuel could barely be bought with a credit card. President Randolph stated that people who were on fixed incomes truly needed an influx of money. She stated that this applied to the residents of the Parish, as well as guests. She suggested that if the evacuees had money, that they may have the opportunity to go with family members elsewhere. Congressman Melancon said that the same conversation had taken place with the President on September 5, 2005. He said that he had advised the President that all procedures needed to be waived and that it was time to deliver. He stated that the delivery was not received as quickly as it should have been received. Congressman Melancon then said that he thought that they were able to make the President understand the plight and needs of the area people at their meeting of September 5, 2005. He went on to say that he was not aware of the exact reason Vice-President Cheney was visiting the area. Congressman Melancon then spoke of incorrect telephone numbers for aid printed in Baton Rouge. He said that FEMA had merged into Homeland Security and apparently, that was the worse thing that could have been done. He went on to say that he and Senator Landrieu were currently drafting language to provide for a cabinet level office for domestic disasters.

Mr. Gouaux then mentioned the problems incurred by FEMA requesting an address and telephone number from individuals who were requesting assistance. He suggested that maybe computers could be set up at the evacuation centers in order to facilitate with online filing of claims. Congressman Melancon stated that it was his understanding that Red Cross was trying to open new shelters. He stated that every shelter was not a Red Cross shelter. He went on to say that his concern at present was making sure that the towns and parishes had the funds needed to pay staff working 24 hours a days, running equipment, etc., which he added starts getting into the treasury of local governments who do not have that kind of money. Congressman Melancon said that his staff could take care of individual person's problems.

Mr. Toups asked if something could be done about the rising price of fuel. He then voiced concerns over the purchasing price of fuel for the small business owner and the fact that larger business were able to purchase the amount of fuel they wanted. He stated that at the present time he could not get fuel. Congressman Melancon stated that he believed that it was the State who controlled the prices on fuel. Mr. Toups stated that something needed to be done.

Dr. Lasseigne then questioned whether the delay in the busting of the levee in St. Bernard or Plaquemines Parish was a communication/coordination problem or a bureaucracy problem. Congressman Melancon stated that Plaquemines Parish had requested that the Corps bust the levee. He went on to say that after waiting two (2) days and having nothing happen, they took it upon themselves to do something about

it. He said that they took marsh buggies and started digging.

Chairman Matherne thanked Congressman Melancon for being present at the meeting. Before leaving Congressman Melancon stated that if there was anything they could do or any thing that was seen that they should be doing , to please let them know. He advised President Randolph that he had requested that the National Guard that was assigned to Lafourche Parish that was helping in Grand Isle, be given authority to stay in that area to perform the work that needed to be done. He went on to say that some of the officers were concerned because they were assigned to Lafourche Parish and Grand Isle was located in Jefferson Parish.

Mr. Daniel Lorraine entered the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

c. *Area Ambulance Services*

Ambulance Service District No. 1:

Mr. Brady Daigle advised the Council that the majority of requests for transport out of the 10th Ward had been completed the night of August 27, 2005, prior to the storm. He went on to say that everyone who was able to return had been returned to the hospital, nursing homes or their residences. Mr. Daigle said that they had requests regarding transporting special needs patients in the area. He said that at this time the ambulance service was in the “health mode”. He went on to say that they had been contacted by Entergy to provide medical services to their employees and would begin that service September 7, 2005.

Ms. Debra Gautreaux advised the Council that they had been contacted regarding the use of the Veteran Affairs (V.A.) buses as a mode of transportation for evacuees. She went on to say that one (1) of the buses was being used at the Larose Civic Center for individuals who needed medical attention. Ms. Gautreaux explained that there were evacuees who had family out of state that they could stay with, but because of lack of means and/or transportation, they were unable to get to the bus station, airport, etc. She reported that there had been a concerned citizen who paid for an evacuee’s bus ticket to get to New Jersey, but the evacuee was still in need of transportation to Lafayette, Louisiana. She asked what were the Council’s feelings regarding using the V.A. buses to transport evacuees. Mr. Callais asked how large of a demand was there for the use of the V.A. buses. President Randolph interrupted by stating that Head Start vans, Council on Aging vans and Parish School buses were already being used and further that the costs being absorbed to relieve some of the evacuee centers by reducing the number. She said that they had transported evacuees as far away as Monroe, Louisiana, and Houston, Texas, as well as other areas, in order to reconnect them with their families. Mr. Curole reported that several hundred people had been transported and that they were very grateful to be back with their families. He went on to report that FEMA had said to do it, and to keep doing it, because it was the easiest way to get the evacuees out of the shelters. Mr. Curole said that each individual agency would be reimbursed. He then said that they had considered calling Ms. Gautreaux about using the V.A. buses because the buses and vans currently being used were being or would be used by their own agencies. Mr. Curole said that FEMA had said to continue to do what was being done and that they were grateful because people were being taken out of the system.

Mr. Lorraine said that he was able to speak to Ms. Gautreaux a few times regarding this matter and that he had advised her that he did not think that there was veteran that would deny such a request. He went on to say that he had told her to use the vans as she needed to use them. Mr. Curole stated that coordination efforts could be made with Nicholls State University in order that several buses were not transporting a few individuals to the same area. Ms. Gautreaux said that there had been coordination efforts from a Parish social worker at the Larose Civic but that she had to return to her job. Ms. Gautreaux then said that Lady of the Sea Hospital was overloaded with patients and that there were two (2) patients that were being discharged that either needed to be sent back to the shelter or to Lafayette. Ms. Gautreaux stated that they were ready and willing to transport the evacuees, but that she wanted the Council’s approval to do the same.

Discussions ensued regarding the technicalities of whether a vote could be taken on approving the V.A. buses being used as transportation for evacuees. Mr. Daniel Lorraine made a **motion**, seconded by Dr. Tommy Lasseigne, to authorize the Administration to allow the use of the V.A. buses as needed for means of transportation for evacuees, and **carried** by a vote of eight (8) yeas and one (1) nay, that being of Mr. Mark Atzenhoffer.

d. *Entergy*

Mr. Harry Shields began by giving a brief update on the “big energy picture”. He stated that their previous high count for having customers out of power was 270,000. He reported that the current count had reached 1.1 million customers out of power. He stated that 10,000 people had been brought in to help Entergy with restoration of power. Mr. Shields stated that at present, they had restored power to approximately 700,000 individuals, with approximately 400,000 still out of power. He went on to say that Entergy’s entire transmission system in the Bayou area was completely out. He explained that there had been major devastation and that the transmission system was all tied together. Mr. Shields then spoke about the North Lafourche area as initially having approximately 60,000 customers out of power, and that currently that number was down to 30 or 40 customers. He stated that approximately 275 workers were working out the Labadieville Entergy office. Mr. Shields said that safety had been a primary concern.

Ms. Amy Martinez first thanked the Parish for all of their support. She stated that she would be speaking about the area from the Lafourche Crossing to Grand Isle. She reported that when Hurricane Katrina first hit there were approximately 24,000 customers out of power and that at present the number had gone down to 6,700, including Grand Isle and Port Fourchon. She advised that there was over 500 people working in the area. Ms. Martinez stated that some area schools were still without power. She reported that several substations were out. Ms. Martinez said that they had worked with Latelco to keep phone lines open. She informed the Council that a G.E. Generator was being received and that it would be installed by G.E. Employees, in order that LOOP could be up to 100%. She also informed the Council that marsh buggies would be arriving on September 7, 2005 in order to help.

e. *Greater Lafourche Port Commission*

No one was present from the Greater Lafourche Port Commission.

f. *Lafourche Parish Water District No. 1*

Mr. Dirk Barrios, General Manager of the Lafourche Parish Water District No. 1 stated that there had been less damage in the North Lafourche area. He went on to say that Cutoff and Larose were back online. He said that there had been small leaks in the system in the southern end of the parish but that pressure had never been lost. Mr. Barrios reported that a boil advisory had been ordered as a cautionary measure. He reported that a sampling had been done and that the water tested good. He concluded by stating that the biggest problem had was with communications.

g. *Evacuation Centers*

1. **Larose Civic Center**

Mr. Bryan Detiler addressed the Council and stated that there had been great community involvement through donations. He stated that the capacity of the center had not yet been reached and that the population of the center had been averaging approximately 180 to 210 people at night. He stated that the majority of the people at the center were from Grand Isle, and that Bollinger employees who had lost their homes in the New Orleans area were also present. Mr. Detiler reported that the moral of the children at the center was

great. He stated that rumors of the center being held hostage had not been true. He said that there was internet access through Vision Cable at the center in order for evacuees to locate lost family members. Mr. Gouaux asked what was the address for the website for missing persons? Mr. Detiler then named several websites that could be accessed. Chairman Matherne inquired as to the population size of the center, to which Mr. Detiler stated that the population had been varying from 183 to 210, and that the population was larger at night.

Chairman Matherne asked if there was any parish resources that were needed, to which Mr. Detiler said that they had accomplished a good deal at the center.

Mr. Callais asked as to expected length of time that Mr. Detiler thought the center would be used. Mr. Detiler stated that there was no time table given, and that the facility would be there to shelter people as long as possible. Mr. Callais asked if all activities scheduled for the Larose Civic Center had been cancelled until further notice. Mr. Detiler said that all Larose Civic Center functions were temporarily on hiatus until such time as the center was not being used anymore. Chairman Matherne thanked Mr. Detiler for everything he had done at the center.

2. **Nicholls State University**

Mr. Stephen Hulbert, President of Nicholls State University, addressed the Council regarding the status of the evacuation center located at Nicholls State University. He stated that the Betsy Ayo Center had triaged approximately 6000 people and that the evacuation centers had handled approximately 3000 evacuees. He explained that the exact numbers were considerably higher but that problems keeping a correct number were had due to some evacuees being bused to the Betsy Ayo Center and retained there due to medical reasons and also walk-ins into the centers. He stated that center had been, and continued to be, primarily the responsibility of volunteers. Mr. Hulbert advised that Red Cross had been providing considerable direction to the evacuation center, but that the center did not meet the standards of a Red Cross center, and that the centers were not Red Cross centers. He stated that the Department of Health and Hospitals had a contractual relationship with Nicholls State University to take over the Betsy Ayo Center to provide triage activities, which eventually was augmented by FEMA. He said that the Department of Health and Hospitals had arrived with equipment to provide electricity to the building, but had not provided staff to install the equipment nor cabling for connecting the equipment. He said he thought that when the State made arrangements with Nicholls State University to be an evacuation center, that they thought the gymnasiums were larger and equipped like other four (4) year universities in the State. He stated that they had succeeded because of the volunteers from everywhere. He reported that the centers were still operating and that the population was down to 1000. Mr. Hulbert reported that the older gym had been air-conditioned with equipment from FEMA. Mr. Hulbert said that there were initially 40 National Guardsmen who provided and gave humanitarian services. He went on to say that initially the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office, Thibodaux Police Department and the Nicholls State University Police were providing security on the campus. Mr. Hulbert said that at present, the Nicholls State University Police were providing security in the campus buildings outside of those being used for the evacuation center and the triage center in the Betsy Ayo Hall. He continued to say that the Thibodaux Police Department had withdrawn from the campus to return to normal duties, and further that the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Department was still providing security. Mr. Hulbert said that an additional 54 National Guardsmen were providing a combination of humanitarian support, as well as security to the entire campus. He reported that the university would re-open for classes on September 7, 2005, without the use of the Betsy Ayo Hall or either of the gymnasiums. Mr. Hulbert said that the university had taken in at least 200 students from affected universities such as in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast. He said that he expected to gain more students at the university as there were over 71,000 college students affected in the New Orleans area. Mr. Hulbert then reported that he was not aware of the impact that the storm would have on the enrollment and that there were students who were

not able to return. He said that numerous funds had been set up to provide assistance to help these students return to the university.

Chairman Matherne asked Mr. Hulbert to speak of the safety and security of the university. Mr. Hulbert stated that there had been no problems, nor safety issues on the campus. He went on to say that he appreciated that there had been an alcohol ban in the parish as alcohol had to keep being taken away from people. He said that the university continued to do so even if when the ban had been lifted. He reiterated that there had been no incidents of security problems and further that he did not think there would be any problems between the students and the evacuees.

Dr. Lasseigne stated that he had visited the university as he was concerned due to calls he had been receiving. He stated that in visiting the center almost everyday after his first visit, that he saw that things were being brought under control. He stated that it was remarkable what the volunteers had done. He stated that the evacuees were not criminals, but simply people who had lost their homes and needed a place to go. Dr. Lasseigne said that the evacuees seemed to be in good spirits.

Chairman Matherne asked if there were any Parish resources needed by the university, to which Mr. Hulbert responded that he thought the university to be in fine shape. He went on to say that everyday more National Guardsmen and more Red Cross volunteers keep arriving. He stated that a new set of volunteers had been switched to, but that the center was still basically a volunteer-ran center.

Mr. Brent Callais stated that representatives from the Fire District No. 3 were present and that he would like to them to give a briefing on their agency.

Mr. Freddie Guidry, Chief of Fire District No. 3 addressed the Council by stating that they had begun their storm operations on Saturday, August 27, 2005 with an inventory of volunteers who would not be evacuating. He reported that they were shorthanded with regards to volunteers that would be staying. Mr. Guidry said that their fire district was a combination of paid staff and volunteers. He said that a decision was made to have the staff respond first, and then be backed up by volunteers. He reported that they had responded to 78 calls for assistance, eight (8) of which were major structure fires. Mr. Guidry said that his staff had done an excellent job. He said that immediately after the storm had passed, his staff was fighting a fire in gusts of winds that were knocking them down. He said that a team had been sent to aid Grand Isle and that they had stayed there for approximately one (1) week. Mr. Guidry said that the team granted every requests that Grand Isle had for assistance. He then said that two (2) volunteers had been sent to New Orleans to help with evacuations and that he was glad to report that those two (2) volunteers were personally responsible for rescuing 91 people. Mr. Guidry said that most of the recent calls being received were concerning trash fires, even though the Parish had done everything they could to get the word out about the ban on fires. He stated that normal operations had been resumed on Monday, September 5, 2005. Mr. Guidry went on to say that the assistance they received from other departments had been tremendous.

Mr. Atzenhoffer said he wanted to thank the fire departments that assisted when Grand Isle had put out a request for water. He went on to say that not only was Fire District No. 3 present, but that fire departments of St. John, Fire District No. 1, Bayou Blue and another department he could not recall were present. Mr. Guidry added that fire departments from Schriever and St. Mary Parish had also assisted. He said that there had been many departments out of the area who either brought help or offered help.

h. *Lafourche Solid Waste Services*

Mr. Jerome Danos, Lafourche Parish Solid Waste Manager, began discussions with regular household trash collection. He advised that S.W.D.I., Inc. had resumed household garbage collection wherever it was possible to do so. He stated that they were trying to get back to a regular schedule but were presently behind by about one (1) day. He stated that further delays were anticipated due to the increased flow of traffic in the Parish and in Jefferson Parish. Mr. Danos stated that they had asked citizens not to combine household garbage with storm debris because it would have to be separated, thus causing additional

delays. He then spoke of storm debris removal, and stated that they would be utilizing the Corps of Engineer's Storm Debris Removal contractor. He stated that several local contractors were brought on board. Mr. Danos said that 15% of crews had been mobilized and that two (2) more disposal sites were operational, one at the Raceland Landfill and one(1) north of Thibodaux. He said that it was expected that more disposal sites would be brought on-line in the southern part of the Parish. He said that by Friday, September 9, 2005, it was hoped that crews would be close to 100% mobilized. Mr. Danos said that citizens were being asked to exercise extra care when driving in areas where debris removal operations were in progress. He informed the Council that there was a substantial amount of tree debris and smaller amount of construction and demolition debris. He said that several press releases had been issued regarding the preparation of debris at the curbside. He stated that debris would have to be brought to the curbside and that they would not enter private property for debris removal. He said that it was his understanding that under certain circumstances that the National Guard may offer some services to assist in getting the debris to the curbside. Mr. Danos said that his best guess regarding a time frame of debris removal, was that it would be a lengthy process several weeks long, if not longer.

Mr. Toups stated that he had received calls regarding people placing trash in ditches and questioned whether a press release pertaining to the matter should be done. He also stated that he had received several calls regarding trucks for hire to aid in debris removal and then asked who should be contacted. Mr. Danos stated that D&J Enterprise out of Auburn, Alabama was being used. He said that anyone who had dredging equipment or hauling equipment should report to the Raceland landfill and contact Mr. Buck Phillips. Mr. Toups asked why an Alabama contractor was being used, to which Mr. Danos responded because that was the national contractor for this type of event. He stated that this was a pre-determined contract for the region with FEMA through the Corps of Engineers. Mr. Toups questioned why local people were not being used. Mr. Danos advised that some local people were being brought on board. He went on to say that the amount of debris being collected was substantial enough to warrant a contractor who had experience and expertise in the field.

Mr. Gouaux stated that the City of Thibodaux had already began pickup of tree debris. He said that they had started collection with the contractor's crews on Monday, September 5, 2005 in the northern part of the parish due to the location of the disposal sites. He said that they expected to have the two (2) southern sites operational by Friday, September 9, 2005 and that they had started burning debris on Tuesday, September 6, 2005. Mr. Toups then questioned the guarantee of the worker's receiving payment for work done through the contractor. He explained a personal experience he had incurred regarding storm damage in Florida wherein he had sent various pieces of equipment to aid in recovery efforts. He went on to say that he had not been paid for the use of his equipment, nor was his equipment returned or even operational. He stated that he was presently suing for the matter and that he was concerned that the same thing may happen to Lafourche Parish. He stated that someone should check into the matter.

Dr. Lasseigne inquired as to the disposal site in North Lafourche. Mr. Danos said that in North Lafourche they would utilize Thibodaux Lumber Company, which had already been accepted by the Corps of Engineers.

I. *Lafourche Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness*

President Randolph stated that it would take a considerable amount of time to give a report on all of the activities that had occurred. She went on to say that they had been involved with each one of the agencies who had reported to the Council earlier. She stated Parish mechanics had been sent to the Betsy Ayo Center to assist with the generator located there, and further that there were Parish employees who had been working since the day the storm had made landfall. She suggested it maybe easier if the Council would ask them any questions they may have.

Mr. Lorraine stated that he had no questions, but that he thought that everyone had done the best they could.

Dr. Lasseigne asked about food stamps. President Randolph stated that they would like to open one (1) or two (2) more sites because the Thibodaux and Terrebonne offices were being overloaded. Dr. Lasseigne inquired as to whether that implemented the Parish, to which President Randolph stated no, but that the Parish was responsible for finding sites. He then asked if every Lafourche Parish resident was entitled to food stamps. President Randolph stated that she was not sure, but that she thought it would be the same criteria required as she had not heard that there had been any change.

Mr. Gouaux stated that he hoped that it would be possible to construct a master plan for events such as this from the past circumstances and further that the public could be better educated on such events and on what to do and what not to do.

Mr. Toups inquired as to whether Parish employees were required to stay in the area for a storm. President Randolph stated that there were essential employees who could leave but not go very far away. Mr. Curole stated that a list of essential employees, along with divisions of that list had been compiled. He then gave a breakdown of the list. He went on to state that he did not know if an employee who said that they were leaving would be penalized, given the magnitude of the current storm. He said that there was also another group of essential employees who were expected to return to the area as soon as it was safe to do so. Mr. Toups clarified that the reason he was asking was because some pumps in his area had gone unattended during hurricanes. He stated that he had ran five (5) pumps for the present storm. He said that he had spoken to the pumper who had advised him he would be evacuating and that he had said that he would run the pumps. President Randolph stated that the Department of Public Works had a list of employees who have to return quickly after the storm. She said that Department of Public Works employees were assigned to the pumps during storms. Mr. Ray Cheramie, Department of Public Works, advised Mr. Toups that the reason no one was sent to take the pumper's place of running the pumps Mr. Toups' was speaking about, was because they were aware that Mr. Toups had volunteered to do it.

Mr. Tyrone Williams had no questions.

Mr. Atzenhoffer wanted to thank everyone and suggested that once regular Council meetings were returned to and televised, that this should be done again so that employees who were not able to attend the meetings could watch it on television.

Mr. Callais inquired as to whether the distribution center in Golden Meadow would be in effect on September 8, 2005. President Randolph stated that as long as there was no electricity in Golden Meadow and points south of there, the Parish would be there. Mr. Callais then reported that Meals Ready to Eat were running low. President Randolph stated that there were five (5) truckloads of Meals Ready to Eat and that they would definitely bring more to the center. President Randolph stated that they had also delivered Meals Ready to Eat to individuals who were unable to travel to get them. Mr. Callais announced that he wanted to commend the National Guard because they had been doing such a great job and that approximately 142 National Guardsmen had been staying at the Cut Off Youth Center. He stated that they have been being feed extremely well and that on September 7, 2005 they would entertain them with food and music.

Mr. Delatte stated that he thought everyone had done a good job. He stated that he thought that a lot had been learned from what had happened in the Parish, but that there was still a lot to learn. Mr. Delatte said that he thought there had been a lot of communication problems throughout the whole area. He concluded by saying that he hoped that everyone could continuing working as a team.

Mr. Atzenhoffer then introduced Colonel Arthur Olivier with the Tennessee National Guard.

Colonel Olivier extended his heart felt thanks regarding the tremendous hospitality that had been shown to his troops. He stated that there were approximately 300 soldiers in the area that were conducting security and relief operations. He stated that the initial entry in the area was operated by Bruce (inaudible)

and Lieutenant Joe Garner, who operated as liaison between the State Emergency Management and assisted in helping the National Guard get into the parishes. He stated that they had conducted a number of relief missions and some security missions. He then turned the microphone over to his Operations Officer, Major Matt Buyer who then gave a briefing on the Guards' missions. He reported that approximately 40 personnel were providing security for the evacuees at Nicholls State University. Major Buyer reported that in the Raceland area approximately 20 personnel were assisting with tree removal at homes and also humanitarian type relief with food, water and ice. In the Larose area, he stated that there were approximately 20 personnel that were performing security at the Larose Civic Center. He also stated that there was a very small team providing security for the Ragun' Cajun radio station. Major Buyer advised that they had received a new mission in Galliano regarding 12 personnel providing twenty-four security to LOOP. He went on to say that there were two (2) personnel stationed at the Golden Meadow Power Station and also that humanitarian effort had been given at the Prompt Succor Church in the distribution of food, water and ice. Major Buyer stated that they had provided management to traffic control areas in Leeville. He concluded by saying that 106 personnel were located in Grand Isle and had assisted in removal of debris and the patching of roofs of churches. He stated that they would continue to respond to the various requests as they would come in. He stated that assistance had been requested at the food stamp distribution center in Thibodaux, Louisiana.

The Council thanked the National Guardsmen for their efforts and Chairman Matherne concluded by stating that he thought that the community had been changed forever within the past week and that residents of Orleans and Jefferson Parish would be becoming a part of our community.

Mr. Atzenhoffer stated that there had been a lot to be proud of in the Parish. He stated that when the National Guardsmen showed up that there was not enough food to feed them, but that the community had provided it in great abundance. He stated that Mr. Daniel Callais had opened the Cut Off Youth Center in order to house 140 National Guardsmen and within a days time, had ten (10) days worth of food lined up to feed them.

ADJOURNMENT

On **motion** by Mr. Mark Atzenhoffer, seconded by Mr. Phillip Gouaux, and with no further business, the Lafourche Parish Council Meeting of September 6, 2005 **adjourned** at 8:33 p.m.

**MICHAEL MATHERNE, CHAIRMAN
LAFOURCHE PARISH COUNCIL**

**SHEILA B. BOUDREAUX, COUNCIL CLERK
LAFOURCHE PARISH COUNCIL**