# NCVOAD Large Logo

# Minutes of Quarterly Meeting

## October 17, 2017

## Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by president Ann Huffman.

## President’s Message

She stated that one year after Hurricane Matthew, there’s now a little bit of hope coming. We’ve seen despair in other groups but partnerships are forming in our long, slow slog toward recovery.

New disasters are pre-empting our volunteers—we have to share; we may get new ones. Tornadoes spun off from Hurricane Nate have affected western North Carolina and Sampson County has been struck by high winds, a state-declared disaster.

We will talk today with organizations which have programs which can help including the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery program, North Carolina Housing Finance Agency programs, and US Department of Agriculture programs. We will learn how to use these resources.

## Invocation

Jon Wallace delivered the invocation.

## Minutes

There was one correction: Vito Bisogno’s name was misspelled. Jere Snyder moved, Anita Cline seconded approval as amended. Motion carried.

## Treasurer’s Report

No dues were received in the last quarter. Receipts from the workshop were $530. Expenses were $817.76. Larry Marks moved approval. Motion carried.

## Old Business

Larry Marks explained the proposed changes to Bylaws Article IV.

**HISTORY**

In the fall of 2016 NC VOAD received a request for membership from the Knights of Columbus. Their concern was that our bylaws state that for voting membership, organizations must be "qualified under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code" and they are a 501(c)(8) non-profit. We proposed to change the bylaws by replacing that phrase with "recognized as non-profit by the Internal Revenue Service."

One member objected with concern that other types of non-profits, including lobbying organizations, could apply for membership. The bylaws committee pointed out that membership is constrained by the preceding paragraph which reads "4.1 Membership is open to organizations that are currently active in disaster relief, have a history of demonstrated disaster experience, and have policies for committing resources to meet the needs of people affected by disaster, without discrimination as to race, creed, gender, or age." The dissenting member was not convinced and the proposal was withdrawn.

**ATTORNEY MEETING**

Two discussions with a tax attorney took place. He addressed the issue from two standpoints.

1. NC VOAD's tax status (i.e., 501(c)(3)) will not be jeopardized by the status of any member organization, for-profit, non-profit, or lobbying.
2. Paragraph 4.1 gives NC VOAD sufficient freedom to admit or decline organizations.

**NEW BYLAWS PROPOSAL**

**Current:**

Voting: Organizations with voluntary membership (local or regional VOADs included) and constituencies, and are not-for-profit; that is, those qualified under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

**Proposed:**

Voting: Organizations with voluntary membership (local or regional VOADs included) and constituencies, and are not-for-profit; that is, those recognized as non-profit by the Internal Revenue Service.

Jere Snyder, also assigned to study this issue, confirmed that this was a fair representation of the status. Larry moved approval. The motion was seconded and it carried.

## New Business

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT-DISASTER RECOVERY**

Ann Huffman exercised the prerogative of the chair and moved Ms. Grant’s presentation to this point in the Agenda because Ms. Grant had a later conflicting engagement .

**Note: These are the notes taken from a rapid-fire presentation by Michele Grant. The attachment takes priority if there are differences. If you have any questions at all, contact Michele Grant at 919-825-2578 or** [**michele.grant@ncdps.gov**](mailto:michele.grant@ncdps.gov)**.**

Michele Grant spoke on funds available via the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR). Her program summary is attached. She gave a status update. The program covers 50 states. In North Carolina the four Tier I counties (Cumberland, Edgecombe, Robeson, and Wayne) are eligible. 80% of the funding comes from HUD, in this case $198 million.

In North Carolina the program has been implemented in the Department of Public Safety, Emergency Management Division, with oversight from the Department of Commerce. There is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two departments and they are working to start the program.

Currently as of September 27, the Tier I counties have award letters for the first 2-year cycle. The program is anticipated to run 5-6 years. Contracts are issued for two years to permit changes. See the attachments for allocations to the four Tier I counties. 80% of the money will be used for housing, both homeowner and multi-family housing.

The program goal is to get families back into housing and expand the amount of affordable housing. The homeowner program has $46 million allocated for homeowner recovery programs and $14.5 million for multi-family housing (see attachment).

Emergency Management is busy doing oversight. Kevin Landers is the assistant director for the CDBG-DR program. They are currently trying to staff positions including a Community Revitalization Housing Manager and a Community Development Specialist. They are making sure everyone adheres to HUD rules. Emergency Management has Construction Managers at Risk (CMRs) who work with local contractors. They are currently looking for local contractors to keep the grant money in the county. Four counties will serve as the lead county entities. They will make sub-grantee agreements with local county agencies and municipalities.

There are also eleven Tier II counties. State DRA Award Letters were mailed October 18 (under review) to Pitt, Harnett, Duplin, Johnson, Pender, Lenoir, Bladen, Columbus and Sampson counties. They award up to $10 million in housing-related activities. The maximum grant is $1 million. Johnston and Bladen have asked for less. Applications from the remaining counties are due October 20. CDBG-DR applications for 46 counties are due October 20.

There are proposed changes for a “new” program.

* It will provide public housing assistance for all counties (formerly Robeson County only)
* It will lower the threshold for low-income people to help more people

Public meetings will be held by the Department of Commerce on these changes. The amendment will be available for public comment. Submit comments in writing by October 30. The collected comments will be submitted to HUD by November 7. HUD could take up to 90 days to respond; NCEM is hoping it will be 45 days.

There is a state-managed homeowners program which includes:

* Housing rehabilitation or reconstruction on the same footprint
* Rehabilitation or reconstruction of MHUs
* Homeowner reimbursement of flood insurance premiums for two years. The homeowner must maintain the payments.

Local county agencies do intake and verify eligibility. NCEM is currently trying to develop a process. The CDBG grant requires a duplication of benefits assessment. Counties may need grant administration to get the funds. Counties must submit documentation to start the grants.

There are two funding sources for some counties. The state program does not require environmental review. Counties applying for the state program could also use CDBG-DR.

Questions should be sent to Michele Grant, [michele.grant@ncdps.gov](mailto:michele.grant@ncdps.gov), who serves as the Senior Advisor for CDBG-DR in NC Emergency Management.

**NC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Emmett Wainwright reported on the Matthew recovery. There are still 131 families in mobile housing units (MHUs) trying to transition to permanent housing. The MHU program ends in April 2018. A sales program is available; residents could purchase the units. Two families remain in the state TSA program, down from an original 3000. The program will close in November. There is some action in western North Carolina in response to tornadoes spawned by Nate. Recovery is closing on the high winds event in Sampson County. The Disaster Case Management Program is active. Bonita McClure has been assigned to administer the Disaster Case Management Program. Contact Emmett Wainwright with any questions at [emmett.wainwright@ncdps.gov](mailto:emmett.wainwright@ncdps.gov).

**GOVERNOR’S OFFICE**

No representative present.

**FEMA**

Faye Stone stated that tomorrow will be a sad day at the JFO. That facility, in Durham, is closing. People will be demobilized. They are opening a coordination center in Tarboro with a small staff. Faye will be assigned to Tarboro.

Faye thanked Gaylon, Cliff, Tommy, and Jason for their efforts in recovery.

Faye described interactions in moving people from MHUs, working with FEMA and with Emmett Wainwright.

* Some people don’t tell the truth
* MHUs are better than any other place some clients have ever lived in. It is difficult to get them to move.
* Faye and Emmett are working to get construction people to help.
* They worked hard to solve early problems.

Faye recognized support for NC VOAD from Libby Turner, the Federal Coordinating Officer. Jon Wallace acknowledged the support he had received on a call. Ann also acknowledged support and mentioned that Christy Grant had listed all available federal programs and showed how they connect.

Faye continued, noting that she was hired as a FEMA reservist, in spite of having turned down prior requests, and was deployed for the Matthew response. She received a full-time, renewable 2-year contract, one of only ten such positions. Faye mentioned that she had met Richard Bradley in Florida in 2004 while responding to Hurricane Charley. Richard was a highly-regarded Donated Goods expert who received another of the ten positions. Richard had just passed away while in St. Croix, USVI on deployment.

**LUTHERAN SERVICES CAROLINAS**

Paul Dunn stated that they have been tasked with 135 residents in MHUs. They are making weekly contact in an effort to help the residents get alternative housing. It is important to get housing now and not let it ride to April 2018.

Lutheran Services is continuing outreach efforts. They have served over 1000 families, supplementing LTRGs. Some LTRGs are still improving their processes. Faye Stone and Phil Triplett are helping. Paul stated that this is an ongoing learning process for everyone and that he appreciates everyone’s efforts.

Bonita McClure had nothing to add to Paul’s report.

## Topics of Interest

**HAZARD MITIGATION PROGRAM**

Emmett Wainwright reported on hazard mitigation. 800 letters have gone out. Decisions are now in local jurisdiction; the counties are working with individual homeowners. Faye asked Emmett whether the Princeville letters had gone out. Emmett responded affirmatively as did Paul. Paul stated that the case managers are getting ready. It was clarified that the acceptance letters have gone out. The denial letters will go out sometime this week. A housing meeting will be held Monday night. Cliff Harvell stated that he had already received six calls from people who had received denial letters.

Emmett described a different program under which more than 3000 homeowners had applied for elevation and 887 were accepted.

**NORTH CAROLINA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY RAPID REBUILD PROGRAM**

Michael Handley distributed two handouts (attached) covering programs funded with federal and state funds, based on the NC Housing Trust Fund. It is a $15 million loan pool for single-family owner-occupied homes. There is a $150,000 placeholder at the start of the program. Up to $9 million of the pool is in play and they are not accepting applications any longer. Michael talked about how to do outreach for this program and get clients in touch with pool “partners.” The partners are listed on the attachment.

Clients can have up to 100% of the median family income, no special needs, and at least $5,000 of Matthew damage. There is a maximum of $40,000 for construction costs. The client must be denied by SBA; that is, SBA cannot have offered a loan which was declined. If the family received FEMA home repair assistance, they must document (via receipts) that the money was used for home repair. Of the 144 units currently in play, 23 have had questions on this. He stressed that documentation is required.

This program is considered to be the “Emergency Room” for housing. Repairs do not have to be cosmetic. The criteria are Life and Safety. For example, you do not have to paint. The purpose of this program is quick, rapid repair. CDBG moves much more slowly, fourteen months from now. Hazard mitigation moves more slowly, nine months from now. Clients can use this program AND also use CDBG and Hazard Mitigation. Clients may be in the flood plain but must have flood insurance.

The program is administered by 36 partners in 43 counties (see attachment). The partners could have higher requirements than the minimums specified above. Selection schemes must be transparent. Some use priority, some are first-come, first-served.

This program is a forgivable loan, not a grant, but it is NOT secured by a lien (can’t be enforced). It is forgiven at a rate of $5,000 per year. The work to be done will be done to a “essential property” standard or “uniform housing” standard, or “make house sound for five years” standard. These are pretty minimal standards. They could also conform to a local minimum standard. They must meet the NC Building Code.

Michael mentioned the Renovating, Remodeling, Painting (RRP) Act passed January 2010. If you are working in a house built prior to 1978, you must be certified. Certification is granted after taking an 8-hour class which costs $300. There is an exclusion for volunteers in the Act, but workers must be certified for work on this program.

Who works under this program? Some members use their own crews but most cities and counties bid this work out to contractors. The work-in-flood-plain decision is left to the “partners.” If work takes place in the flood plain, the client must have flood insurance.

Michael mentioned the default terms of the loan. The house must be owner-occupied. If the owner leaves the home to his children, the loan is assumed. If you sell or rent the house, you must pay back the loan. (Since there is no lien, this isn’t strictly enforceable.)

Each “partner” develops an assistance policy and a procurement distribution policy to show that assistance is fair and equitable.

The $15 million loan pool will be raised to $19.2 million.

Jere Snyder asked whether all states have similar programs. Michael Handley stated that all states have programs but most use banks to administer them, rather than state agencies. North Carolina used to get $20 million for this program but now it’s closer to $14 million. The breakdown is Essential repairs: $8 million, Urgent repairs: $3 million, Displaced resident: $2.5 million, and this program: $15 million.

**US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AND LOANS**

Ann asked whether there were a representative from USDA present. There was not but Michael Handley stated that he could describe the programs and proceeded to do so.

The USDA process takes a while. It is operated by USDA Rural Development. They used to have 18 offices in North Carolina, but have been condensed down to eight. The program is like a loan—like going to a bank. They formerly had talented staff who knew this program but staff has been scaled back. You may have to call around to find someone who knows the program well. It takes a good person to take a homeowner completely through the process.

There are two forms to the program: grants up to $7500 and loans up to whatever the client can pay back. The payments are low, but the client must have credit.

North Carolina uses 502/504 funds. The application takes a lot of work; it is 38 pages long. Sometimes you need work with the homeowner’s children—there are life estate concerns.

The best contact for these programs is Will Kenny. This is not the USDA Weatherization Program. This program is vulnerable to scam because the homeowner gets a check and hires the contractor.

The two different programs are:

* The 504 program. This is a grant to seniors (over 62). It is easy to get. However, the funds are allocated each August and usually depleted by November.
* The 502 program. This is a low-interest, friendly loan. It includes restrictive covenants. It is income-driven and must be rural. (Rural has been re-defined might include suburban areas.)

## Organizational Reports

**NC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Katie Webster had no additional information

**ZAKAT**

Murat Kose stated that he was involved locally with Hurricane Matthew last year. Zakat is based in Chicago. Their efforts start with the disaster and continues. He found that NC VOAD is well-organized and helped Zakat to respond. Zakat is currently working in Houston, Florida, and Puerto Rico.

**NC DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Mandy Tolson stated that their team just returned from Puerto Rico. There are vet clinics in Puerto Rico treating companion animals, but mostly mortality management. The effort has been handed off to a USDA team.

**WESTERN NC CONF. UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Ken Anderson reported that on October 7, a tornado spawned by Hurricane Nate impacted Burke, Caldwell, Ashe, and Wilkes counties. In Caldwell County the tornado was EF1 and destroyed six homes, eleven suffered moderate damage, and eighty suffered light damage. Response efforts by NC Baptist Men and NC DOT were hindered by downed wires. They are currently working with UMC and the Red Cross. They are trying to decide whether to start a formal local VOAD.

**NC VOAD**

George Strunk identified himself as the chairman of the Long-Term Recovery Committee. He is supporting Long-Term Recovery Groups and will support western NC. In his role serving on the national Long-Term Recovery Committee, he is helping to re-write the recovery guide. He has received a request to help in Texas.

**TWIN-COUNTY DISASTER RECOVERY GROUP**

Peter Gilliland reported that the recovery process continues: casework and unmet needs are going smoothly. They have just hired a coordinator. Kim Hickerson, who was a case manager will move to the coordinator role November 1. They are expecting that this will improve consistency.

**NC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Bonita McClure introduced herself as the new program manager for Matthew recovery.

**AMERICAN RED CROSS**

Mary Donny is filling in for Tracie Brown. The Red Cross is monitoring the seven counties which received Red Cross grants and monitoring the LTRGs.

**NC CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Cliff Harvell, Disaster Recovery Superintendent, introduced his staff, Tommy Gilbert and Sam Loy, and his wife Carol. Work continues at five disaster recovery centers: Washington, Windsor, Tarboro, Fayetteville, and Lumberton. They will work in other counties in coordination with the NC Housing Finance Agency. They have been assisted by volunteers from across the US, Canada, and Mexico. They have returned 25 families to repaired homes, with 60 repairs in process. The first new home was started last week. There are 250 homes listed in their system, and many more phone calls have been received to the mitigation denial letters which have been sent. Those families are seeking help. They are doing assessments to distinguish storm damage from deferred maintenance. Volunteers come in peaks and valleys. Right now, numbers will rise until Thanksgiving. They will accept teams from anywhere.

**LUTHERAN SERVICES CAROLINAS**

Paul Dunn had nothing further to report

**CHOWAN COUNTY**

Del Holloway reported no activity in their county. They have sent people to help in western NC.

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Jon Wallace reported that he had met with his supervisor, Dr. Edward Davis, about the UMC need for volunteers. They will direct UCC members to UMC rebuild sites. The UCC has granted $41,000 to Long-Term Recovery Groups doing Matthew recovery. Most of the disbursed funds came from the national level, but a state-level grant will be made to the Twin-County Disaster Recovery Group tomorrow. Gift cards totaling $12,500 were distributed to survivors in Transitional Shelter. Grants are now split 50% to the Lumbees and 50% to Lumberton. They have also met in Clinton where the LTRG is United Way-based and have met with other LTRGs.

**THE SALVATION ARMY**

Anita Cline reported that they are working with some LTRGs as resources and availability permit. Many people have been deployed to Puerto Rico, Texas, and Florida.

**FEMA**

Faye Stone had no additional report.

**ROBESON COUNTY DISASTER RECOVERY COMMITTEE**

Cassandra Campbell reported that the group is moving forward. 315 people attended the spiritual renewal event October 8. The event, on the one-year anniversary of the flooding, was well-received. They are still trying to get people back into their homes. They need to remind people on the long road to an end. They are learning in a coordinated way.

**WAKE INTERFAITH DISASTER TEAM**

Larry Marks reported that Wake Interfaith Disaster Team was recruiting people to help staff the county EOC to do donations management and distribution. They are also working on plans for a MARC with Wake County Emergency Management and the American Red Cross.

Larry also reported on his NC VOAD role, maintaining the website and the Yahoo discussion group.

**NC BAPTIST MEN**

Gaylon Moss reported that on May 5 he announced that it looked like a slow year. Then North Carolina had tornados, Matthew flooding, and high wind events.

NC Baptist Men have teams in Florida at Brevard and Key West, and in Texas at Houston. They have served 550,000 meals from two kitchens. By way of comparison, after Matthew they served 450,000 meals from six kitchens. 200 homes have been cleaned.

In Puerto Rico they are providing water purification, chainsaw work, and tarping. Volunteer levels are surging and falling. Gaylon hopes Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria will mobilize others.

**CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS**

Jere Snyder reported Crisis Cleanup statistics. There were 25,581 work orders from Hurricane Harvey. Calls are now being taken by Texas AmeriCorps. Crisis Cleanup for Irma closed Sunday. There were 14,848 work orders of which 25% are still open.

Jere worked with the NC Coastal Resilience group from UNC and the Rural Center to identify futures for affected towns: Fair Bluff, Lumberton, Seven Springs, Princeville, and Windsor. They have held meetings and workshops.

The five-day workshop in Princeville have included 35 planners, architects, and engineers. After reviews, a master plan for self-recovery was produced, using a Golden Leaf grant. Jere documented the process in a 2-1/2 minute video news release.

## Date/Time of Next Meeting

The annual meeting will be held January 16, 2018.

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55. The group got takeout lunches and returned to the meeting room for a “hot wash” after-action review. The notes from that review are on the NC VOAD website.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Marks

Secretary

NC VOAD