

Lee County Recovery Task Force Critical Infrastructure Workshop

Session 3 – Meeting Minutes

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM | JUNE 5, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | 2031 JACKSON STREET, SUITE 100, FORT MYERS, FL 33901 | WATER

Call to Order

On June 5, 2023, the Workshop facilitator, Mike Sprayberry, convened the Critical Infrastructure Workshop: Water at 1:30 PM with the following panelists present:

- Paul Clinghan
- Jeff Pearson
- Pam Keyes
- Mikes Maillakakis
- Richard Moulton
- David Willems
- Dave Kistel
- Mike Sprayberry
- Andy Koebel

The following members were present:

- Commissioner Kevin Ruane
- Stephanie Wardein
- Maya Robert
- Fred Forbes
- Therese Everly
- Dan O'Berski
- Bill Ribble

Workshop Topic Discussion

Mr. Sprayberry asked what key water projects were needed to ensure the area's resilience to a hurricane with even more intense impacts than Hurricane Ian. The following projects and areas of resilience were suggested:

- Increase redundancies and collaboration between utilities;
- Septic to sewer conversion;
- Well water supply to facilities to remain in operation for flooding;
- Ensuring source water is resilient for infrastructure including HVAC cooling systems, sterilization, protections, etc. for hospitals and primary care facilities;
- Sharing systems that interconnect, with the stress on a distribution system for essential communities;
- Knowing potential breaches and leaks ahead of disasters;
- Backups for water and sewer needs;
- Hardening infrastructure, for example, power infrastructure, for key facilities, such as hospitals; and
- Stand by generators and pumps at the state or county levels.

The facilitators asked if there are innovative solutions to “living with water” or designing new infrastructure that can tolerate water intrusion. The panelists suggested the following solutions:

- Raising the control panels or making them waterproof;
- Keeping the power to the wastewater facilities;
- Higher design standards for buildings that house electrical components;
- Rethinking design for the build-back (i.e., staging generators);
- Revisiting elevation codes;
- Funding for redundancy and resilience (looking at alternative funding streams for utilities, such as water that are typically self-sustaining);
- Interconnections with wastewater;
- Looking at the efficiencies and collaborations with water treatment facilities; and
- Utility partnerships to alleviate stress.

The facilitators asked if there were policy changes that could speed up the improvement of water infrastructure across the region and if so, if there are barriers that should be addressed. The panelists pointed out the potential barriers and suggested improvements:

- Municipalities working together to follow procurement processes and procedures;

- Finding ways to keep up with the growing populations;
- Identifying water, sanitary, and power utilities and the populations that are at risk; and
- Identifying grants for wastewater.

The facilitator asked if the Lee County area, across all sectors, has done enough to understand the critical infrastructure that needs to be prioritized for improvements that protect access to clean water.

The panelists believed that building relationships with each other and working with public information officers and communications teams would be a start. Marketing campaigns were also suggested to get the word out and to help get funding for high-ticketed items.

Ms. Everly stated support for the community and hospitals to ensure resilience for water infrastructure functioning for the public.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Mr. Sprayberry thanked the panelists and participants of the Workshop. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM on June 5, 2023.