MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA
LOCAL MITIGATION STRATEGY STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES
April 15, 2026

A public hearing of the Marion County Local Mitigation Strategy Committee was held on April 15, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in the Marion County Growth Services Training Room, 2710 E. Silver Springs Boulevard, Ocala, Florida.

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m. Autumn Williams called the roll and confirmed a quorum. Members present creating a quorum were: MCSO Emergency Management – Preston Bowlin, Marion County BCC (Fire) – Ken McCann, City of Belleview - Bob Titterington (arrived immediately after roll call at 10:09 AM), City of Dunnellon – William Ary, City of Ocala – Pat Feagle, Marion County School Board – John Barattini, Ocala Metro Chamber & Economic Partnership (CEP) – Jess Shultz, Salvation Army Corps Officer – Major Jason Smith, and Ocala Marion County Association of Realtors (OMCAR) – Darlene Younce.

Staff members present were: Growth Services Director Chuck Varadin, Transportation Planner Kenneth Odom, Planner Sarah Wells, GIS Analyst Antony Alva, and Administrative Manager Autumn Williams.

LMS Committee Member Ken McCann made a motion to elect Preston Bowlin as Chair Pro Tem to preside over today's meeting in the absence of the board's elected Chair and Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Pat Feagle. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Preston Bowlin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was noted by Autumn Williams that the meeting met the Sunshine Law requirements, and the Posting of Notice can be found on the Marion County Website.

1. ACTION ITEMS:

1.1 Election of New Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Kenneth Odom opened the discussion regarding this item. LMS Committee Members voiced their recommendations and comments regarding this item. The board decided to table this item until the next LMS meeting, July 15, 2026, to elect new chairman and Vice-chairman until the currently elected chair and vice-chair are present to be part of the discussion. The board also requested and agreed that a copy of the by-laws and outline of responsibilities of the chair and vice-chair be provided to the entire board before the next meeting for their review.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

2.1 Five-Year Report Update

Kenneth Odom opened the discussion regarding this item and explains to continue to be an effective representation of the jurisdiction's overall strategy for reducing risk to natural hazards, the updated local mitigation plan must reflect current conditions and progress in mitigation efforts. The 5-year plan update is an opportunity to assess our previous goals and actions, evaluate progress in implementing the action plan, and adjust its actions to address current and potential situations. Staff has nearly completed updating and compiling the Daft Five-Year Plan following the comments we received back and will be ready for re-transmittal to FDEM in Tallahassee by the end of this week.

LMS Committee Members voiced their recommendations and comments regarding the current language. Mr. Odom reminded Committee Members that a draft of the Five-Year Plan is due to the state this month.

3. COMMENTS:

3.1 Steering Committee/Work Group Comments: Board Member Ken McCann outlines the grant writing process, associated costs, and the steps leading to the completion of the project to install the generator at the fire rescue headquarters.

3.2 Public Comments: There was no one in the audience to bring forward any public comments, and the chair closed the public portion of the hearing.

4. OTHER BUSINESS:

4.1 Next scheduled quarterly meeting: Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at 10:00 AM in the Growth Service Building – Training Room

4.2 The Board requested that a calendar invite for the remaining meetings this year be sent to all members to ensure the dates are clearly noted on their calendars. Ken Odom stated that Growth Services staff will arrange this as soon as possible.

4.3 Member Preston Bowlin opened the discussion regarding the member roster and emphasized the importance of maintaining an accurate and up-to-date roster. He requested that the current roster be reviewed and corrected by staff to accurately reflect the existing LMS membership and to clarify who the voting members of the LMS Board are. He also asked that each organization designate both a primary and a backup representative and provide this information to the LMS Liaison as soon as possible for proper recordkeeping. He further noted that having a backup representative helps ensure a quorum and guarantees organizational representation when the primary member is unavailable.

4.4 Board Member Preston Bowlin initiated round-table introductions to welcome and familiarize the group with the new members attending today's meeting. Kenneth Odom then provides a brief overview of LMS, including its purpose as well as several grants and projects the Working Group is currently involved in and hoping to further pursue in the near future. Board Member Preston Bowlin requests that staff provide each board member with a list of all projects, ongoing and upcoming, so the board can determine the appropriate ranking order to make a formal priority list to be provided to the Tallahassee representative.

4.5 Growth Services Director Chuck Varadin explains that Marionfl.org includes an LMS webpage located under the Growth Services section, which provides several useful links regarding the LMS. Kenneth Odom adds further detail regarding recent updates to the webpage, what users can expect from it, and the resources it will offer. The updates are expected to be completed within the next few weeks.

5. <u>MINUTES:</u>

5.1 **October 15, 2025, Minutes:** The board decided to table this item until the next LMS meeting on July 15, 2026.

ADJOURNED: The meeting adjourned at 11:04 AM.

Attest:

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Preston Bowlin, Chair Pro Tem Date

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Autumn Williams, Administrative Manager