

CITY OF HOLLY HILL, FLORIDA

CITY COMMISSION

AGENDA • SEPTEMBER 23, 2025

Large Conference Room

Work Session

5:00 PM

CITY HALL
1065 RIDGEWOOD AVENUE
HOLLY HILL, FL 32117

City Clerk's office: (386) 248-9441 - Fax: (386) 248-9448



Large Conference Room
City Hall
1065 Ridgewood Avenue
Holly Hill, FL 32117

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mayor
John Penny

District 1 - Commissioner
Debra Snow

District 3 - Commissioner
Jeffrey DeLanoy

District 2 - Commissioner
Penny Currie

District 4 - Commissioner
Roy Johnson

CITY MANAGER
Joseph Forte

CITY CLERK
Valerie Manning

1. CALL TO ORDER

- a. Roll Call

2. FEMA FIRST APPEAL RESPONSE - REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT OF ROSS POINT PIER

- 1. FEMA First Appeal Response - Repair & Replacement of the Ross Point Pier
(Requested by Valerie Manning, City Clerk)

3. ADJOURNMENT

Website Address – www.hollyhillfl.org (City Clerk)

NOTICE – If any person decides to appeal any decision of the City Commission at this meeting, he/she will need a record of the proceedings and, for that purpose, he/she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. The City does not prepare or provide such a record.



For special accommodations, please notify the City Clerk's Office at least 72 hours in advance. (386) 248-9441



Help for the hearing impaired is available through the Assistive Listening System. Receivers can be obtained from the City Clerk's Office.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), persons needing a special accommodation to participate in the Commission proceedings should contact the City Clerk's Office no later than three (3) days prior to the proceedings.



City Commission

1065 Ridgewood Ave
Holly Hill, FL 32117

SCHEDULED

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION (ID # 5016)

2.1

Meeting: 09/23/25 05:00 PM
Department: City Clerk
Category: Workshop Item
Prepared By: Valerie Manning
Initiator: Valerie Manning
Sponsors:

DOC ID: 5016

FEMA First Appeal Response - Repair & Replacement of the Ross Point Pier

Below is the recap of anticipated costs should the city opt to take on the repair/replacement:

6' Embedment of Pilings

This estimate is for returning the pier to pre-disaster condition, which calls for 6' embedment of the pilings. This is not recommended.

Construction: \$1,025,475
Engineering/Design/CEI @ 10%: \$102,547.50
Permitting, etc: \$5,000
Total Cost: \$1,133,022.50

Full Embedment of Wooden Pilings

This estimate is to use the same materials and footprint of the pre-disaster pier, but include pilings that are driven to refusal. It is possible that if we win our appeal with FEMA, we can pay the difference for the upgrade ourselves, but still get reimbursement for the 6' embedment quote.

Construction: \$1,092,355
Engineering/Design/CEI @ 10%: \$109,235.50
Permitting, etc: \$5,000
Total Cost: \$1,206,590.50

Hardening of Pier

This option would be to model the Ross Point Pier after the Riverside Park Pier with concrete pilings to refusal, aluminum hardware and composite decking.

Construction: \$1,677,555.00
Engineering/Design/CEI @ 10%: \$167,755.50
Permitting, etc.: \$5,000
Total Cost: \$1,699,330.50

U. S. Department of Homeland Security
Region 4
3005 Chamblee Tucker Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30341



FEMA

Kevin Guthrie
Director
Florida Division of Emergency Management
2555 Shumard Oaks Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2100

Steve Juengst
Deputy Public Works Director
City of Holly Hill
1065 Ridgewood Avenue
Holly Hill, Florida 32117

Reference: FEMA-4673-DR-FL
City of Holly Hill
PA ID: 127-31350-00
First Appeal, Grants Manager Project (GMP) 705969/Project Worksheet (PW)
4331

Dear Director Guthrie and Steve Juengst:

This is in response to a letter from the Florida Division of Emergency Management (Recipient) dated June 18, 2025, which transmitted the referenced first appeal on behalf of the City of Holly Hill (Applicant). The Applicant is appealing the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) denial of funding in the amount of \$290,870.31 for repairs to the Ross Point Pier. The appeal is denied as explained below and in the enclosed analysis.

The Applicant did not provide sufficient documentation demonstrating that the pier repair work was required as a direct result of the disaster rather than pre-existing deficiencies and/or deferred maintenance. This letter constitutes the official notification of this determination to the Applicant.

Under Section 423(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) and applicable regulations, the Applicant may elect to appeal this decision.¹ If the Applicant submits a second appeal, it must: 1) contain documented justification supporting the Applicant's position, 2) specify the amount in dispute, and 3) specify the provisions in federal law, regulation, or policy with which the Applicant believes the initial action was inconsistent.

The Applicant must submit the second appeal electronically to the Recipient within 60 calendar days from the date FEMA electronically transmits this first appeal decision. The Recipient must forward the Applicant's appeal, with its recommendation, to the Assistant Administrator for the

¹ See Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act § 423, Title 42, United States Code § 5189a (2018); Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations § 206.206 (2021); and *FEMA Public Assistance Appeals and Arbitration Policy*, FP 104-22-0001 (Feb. 24, 2022) for a full description of appeal rights and requirements.

Recovery Directorate electronically via FEMA's Grants Manager/Grants Portal system within 120 calendar days from the date of this first appeal decision.

Alternatively, in lieu of a second appeal, an arbitration process is available to any applicant meeting the statutory criteria pursuant to Section 423(d) of the Stafford Act. Please consult Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) § 206.206(b)(3) and 48 C.F.R. part 6106 for arbitration eligibility and procedural requirements.

If the Applicant or Recipient does not submit a timely second appeal or request for arbitration, this is the final agency determination on the matter, and the Applicant will no longer be able to appeal or arbitrate the matter.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Ashe
Acting Regional Administrator

Enclosures:

Appeal Analysis: FEMA-4673-DR-FL, *City of Holly Hill*, GMP 705969/PW 4331

FIRST APPEAL ANALYSIS
FEMA-4673-DR-FL
City of Holly Hill, PA ID: 127-31350-00
Grants Manager Project 705969/Project Worksheet 4331
Result of Declared Incident

Background

Hurricane Ian made landfall on the west coast of Florida with 155 mile per hour winds, catastrophic storm surge, and more than 20 inches of rain that caused major flooding. The storm spent many hours crossing Florida before it emerged off the east coast. The President declared the event a major disaster, FEMA-4673-DR-FL, on September 29, 2022, with an incident period of September 23 to November 4, 2022.

Following the event, the City of Holly Hill (Applicant) reported disaster-related damage to the Ross Point Pier (Facility). The pier consists of 115 feet of wood-framed boardwalk along the shoreline, 365 feet of wooden-framed pier with a shelter roof, and a concrete sidewalk. The Applicant's engineering firm, Tetra Tech, conducted a site inspection on February 16, 2023, providing photos¹ and a site inspection report identifying storm damage to Facility.² The Applicant's report cited damage to timber piles, cross braces, walkway decking, etc.³ The Applicant and FEMA also conducted site inspections on March 13, 2023,⁴ and on October 31, 2023,⁵ to record Facility damage. FEMA prepared Grants Manager Project (GMP) 705969 to document the reported damage and capture repair costs.⁶ Subsequently, the Applicant also hired Nelson Forensics, LLC, to evaluate damage to the Facility and to provide a report of their findings.⁷ The Nelson Forensics report stated its "opinion that the structural distress to the wood framing components of the pier at the [Facility] is consistent with wave action and uplift buoyancy of the wood structure during full or partial submersion during the elevated river level associated with the reported storm surge during Hurricane Ian."⁸ Further, the report also observes that several bolts were missing at cross-bracing and joist connections, describes the boardwalk section of the pier as "weathered," and notes that there is no wind-related distress to the boardwalk or to adjacent picnic shelters at the parking lot.⁹

On May 13, 2024, FEMA issued a formal Request for Information (RFI) seeking further information on the claimed damage to pilings, which appeared from site inspections to have no visible damage, and documentation on the predisaster condition of wood and hardware, which

¹ Grants Manager Project (GMP) 705969, FEMA-4673-DR-FL, City of Holly Hill (127-31350-00) [hereinafter *GMP 705969*], Documents, *1290224-DR4673FL-Holly Hill-Ross Point Pier-Photo Log* (uploaded to Grants Portal/Grants Manager [GM] July 12, 2023) [hereinafter *Tetra Tech Photos*].

² *GMP 705969*, Documents, *1290224-DR4673FL-Holly Hill-Ross Point Pier-PE Stamped Site Inspection Report* (uploaded to GM July 12, 2023) [hereinafter *Tetra Tech Report*].

³ *Id.* at 3-27.

⁴ Site Inspection Report (SIR), City of Holly Hill, Work Order #83504, Damage #1290224 (Mar. 13, 2023).

⁵ Site Inspection Report (SIR), City of Holly Hill, Work Order #95117, Damage #1290224 (Oct. 31, 2023).

⁶ *GMP 705969*.

⁷ *GMP 705969*, Documents, *DR4673FL - 705969 - Nelson Forensics Report* (uploaded to GM Dec. 17, 2024) [hereinafter *Nelson Report*].

⁸ *Id.* at 19.

⁹ *Nelson Report*, at 9.

appeared from site inspections to be weathered and rusted.¹⁰ On June 10, 2024, the Applicant responded that the damage to pilings was typically from hardware being ripped from them, but that all pilings are in place and did not significantly defect. Also, the Applicant stated they did not have close-up photos of pilings and other pier elements prior to the disaster, but they did provide a two-minute walk-through video of the pier recorded on September 26, 2022.¹¹ The Applicant also provided work orders for decking replacements to prove maintenance of the pier, covering the last 9 years of the pier's 27-year age at the time of the event.¹² The maintenance activities performed were mainly repairs to secure loose deck boards and handrails.¹³

On October 16, 2024, the Applicant provided a cost estimate in the amount of \$294,775.35 for work to the pier.¹⁴ On February 7, 2025, FEMA's Critical Infrastructure (CI) Team provided an inspection report of the pier and found severe disrepair and erosion of major pier components, including long term age-related deterioration of support components such as pilings, timbers; and most importantly, connectors that were missing or rusted due to erosion.¹⁵

On March 14, 2025, FEMA issued a Determination Memorandum (DM) for GMP 705969,¹⁶ denying \$290,870.31 in ineligible scope and allowing \$3,905.04 for repairs to the pavilion roof and concrete sidewalk. The DM noted that photographs taken in March of 2023 depicted deterioration and deferred maintenance issues such as rusted through and/or missing bolts, corroded and missing fasteners, deterioration of wooden structures, and no evidence that exposed wooden components were re-sealed. Additionally, the DM noted that the overall pier substructure has been severely racked due to excessive movement at joints no longer tight due to the corroded or missing bolts.¹⁷

First Appeal

In a letter dated May 7, 2025, the Applicant submitted its first appeal to Florida Division of Emergency Management (Recipient) requesting \$290,870.31 in pier repair costs denied in the DM.¹⁸ The Applicant asserts:

- the Nelson report contributes the post-storm structural issues of the pier to sustained high winds, wind gusts, rainfall, and storm surge;¹⁹

¹⁰ GMP 705969, RFI-PRJ-103360, Line Items 272416 and 272419 (May 13, 2024).

¹¹ GMP 705969, Documents, *Ross Point Pier Video 09-26-2022* (uploaded to GM June 10, 2024).

¹² GMP 705969, Documents, *705969 - Ross Point Pier Work Orders* (uploaded to GM Oct. 18, 2023) [hereinafter *Work Orders*].

¹³ *Work Orders*.

¹⁴ GMP 705969, Documents, *DR4673FL - 705969- Ross Point PierRepair CE_CEF_Rev #2* (uploaded to GM Oct. 16, 2024).

¹⁵ GMP 705969, Documents, *4673DR-705969_Ross Point PierCI Team Report_2025-02-07* (uploaded to GM Feb. 11, 2025) [hereinafter *CI Report*].

¹⁶ Determination Memorandum from FEMA, Public Assistance Management, to Facilities Supervisor, City of Holly Hill, and Director, Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM), at 7 (signed Mar. 14, 2025, issued Mar. 17, 2025) [hereinafter *DM 705969*].

¹⁷ *DM*, at 5.

¹⁸ First Appeal Letter (GMP 705969) from Deputy Public Works Director, City of Holly Hill, to Programmatic Reviewer, Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM), at 1 (May 7, 2025) [hereinafter *First Appeal*].

¹⁹ *Id.*

- the Tetra Tech site inspection report attributes damage to the pier are due to storm surge uplift, wind gusts, rainfall, and surge swells;²⁰
- FEMA does not provide a technical report certified or stamped by a licensed engineer that rebuts Nelson or Tetra Tech's reports;²¹
- the CI Team report offers opinions without qualifications or quantification; and²²
- maintenance records are used to establish active use and working order prior to the disaster and the pier was both; further, even if the pier was new, the uplift and load factors caused by the storm would have occurred.²³

The Applicant did not provide any new documentation to support its appeal. The Recipient forwarded the Applicant's appeal to FEMA in a letter dated June 18, 2025, recommending approval.²⁴

Discussion

Result of the Declared Incident

Section 406(a)(1)(A) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) authorizes FEMA to provide assistance for the repair, restoration, reconstruction, or replacement of facilities damaged by a major disaster.²⁵ Implementing Stafford Act § 406, Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations § 206.223(a)(1) states that to be eligible for financial assistance, an item of work must be required as the result of an emergency or major disaster event.²⁶ The applicant must demonstrate that damage was caused directly by the declared incident.²⁷ FEMA does not provide Public Assistance (PA) funding for repair due to deterioration, deferred maintenance, the applicant's failure to protect its facility from further damage, or negligence.²⁸ When necessary to validate damage, the applicant may be required to provide: pre-incident photographs of the impacted site or facility and/or documentation supporting predisaster condition of the facility (e.g., facility maintenance records, inspection/safety reports).²⁹ If a facility was functioning prior to the disaster and the disaster caused damage that rendered the facility non-functional, the facility may be eligible, provided the predisaster condition was not a significant contributing factor in the cause of failure.³⁰ If the applicant does not provide sufficient documentation to support its claim as eligible, FEMA cannot provide PA funding for the work.³¹

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ *First Appeal*, at 1.

²⁴ Recipient Transmittal Letter (GMP 705969) from Bureau Chief of Recovery, FDEM, to Regional Administrator, FEMA Region 4 (June 18, 2025).

²⁵ Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, *as amended*, § 406, 42 U.S.C. § 5172 (2021).

²⁶ Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations § 206.223(a)(1) (2021).

²⁷ *Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide*, FP 104-009-2, at 52 (June 1, 2020).

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.* at 64.

Here, the Applicant claims the Facility was damaged by sustained high winds, wind gusts, rainfall, and storm surge. The Applicant references the Nelson report, which states sections of the pier decking and cross-bracing were missing after the storm; however, the report also observes that several bolts were missing at cross-bracing and joist connections, describes the boardwalk section of the pier as “weathered,” and notes that there is no wind-related distress to the boardwalk or to adjacent picnic shelters at the parking lot.³² The Nelson report does not mention the condition of the pier or its connections prior to the storm, but states if the lateral forces imposed on the structure by wind and/or water are greater than the capacity of the structural system, failure will occur.³³ The Nelson report does not mention the corroded or missing washers, which would significantly contribute to bolts pulling through the piles.

The Tetra Tech site inspection report provides damage descriptions and dimensions for the pier and states damage was caused by wind gusts and storm surge.³⁴ The report also states bolts and washers attached to the timber piles have deformed due to the pressure of the storm surge.³⁵ However, the Tetra Tech report does not mention the condition of the pier or its connections prior to the storm. The photos provided in the photo log show no significant pile deflection and all the bolts remaining are extremely rusted with missing or corroded washers,³⁶ which would significantly contribute to bolts pulling through the piles. Also, damage could be the result of any significant storm prior to Hurricane Ian. Neither the Nelson nor Tetra Tech report addresses whether or not pre-existing damage or deferred maintenance significantly contributed to the claimed damage.

FEMA’s CI Team report identifies a high proportion of primary support components of the pier, such as pilings, timbers, and steel connectors, that were long deteriorated from age and not the event. The CI Team report also states the connectors are either missing or nearly missing due to erosion and timbers were split and loosened due to the condition of the connectors and heavy weathering.³⁷ Missing washers would significantly contribute to bolt movement and pulling through the piles.³⁸

While the Applicant has performed simple maintenance repairs primarily to loosened deck boards and handrails, nothing has been provided either in documentation or in physical evidence that shows any preventive maintenance of the structure as a whole on a regular basis or since its construction 27 years prior to the event. There appears to be no evidence of maintenance to any of the substructure components as would be expected for the cleaning and re-sealing of wood components, replacing corroded or missing fasteners, and applying or reapplying the bitumastic coating.³⁹

Finally, as per the CI Team report: “The pier appears to have suffered weathering, splitting of components, and the severe rusting of primary structural fasteners to the extent that many are

³² *Nelson Report*, at 9.

³³ *Nelson Report*, at 17.

³⁴ *Tetra Tech Report*, at 3.

³⁵ *Id.* at 22.

³⁶ *Tetra Tech Photos*, at 1-24.

³⁷ *CI Report*, at 1.

³⁸ *CI Report*, at 21.

³⁹ *Id.* at 3.

missing due to either having fallen away or rusted away.”⁴⁰ FEMA does not provide PA funding for repair of damage caused by deterioration or deferred maintenance. Therefore, the Facility repair costs totaling \$290,870.31 on GMP 705969 remain ineligible for reimbursement through the PA program.

Conclusion

The Applicant did not provide sufficient documentation demonstrating that the pier repair work was required as a direct result of the disaster rather than pre-existing deficiencies and/or deferred maintenance. Therefore, FEMA reimbursement is limited to the eligible damage amount of \$3,905.04. Accordingly, the Applicant’s first appeal for GMP 705969 is denied.

⁴⁰ *Id.* at 5.