



FLORIDA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION



Chris Spencer, Chair

Steven Lerner, Vice Chair

Florida Emergency Management Assistance Foundation, Inc Board of Directors Meeting

**July 11, 2025, at 11:00 AM
Meeting Minutes**

I. Call to Order

Chair Spencer called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM

II. Roll Call

Chair Spencer called the roll. Steven Lerner (Vice Chair Lerner) and Brian Mimbs (Chairman) were present. Taryn Fenske (President) and Javier Marques (Secretary) joined later. A quorum was present.

III. Approval of the June 13, 2025, meeting minutes.

Chair Spencer called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Chairman Mimbs called for a motion to approve; Vice Chair Lerner seconded the motion. All present board members were in favor of the motion and the minutes were adopted.

IV. Approval of Compliance of Certification and Proposed Bylaw Amendments

William Spicola presented the Certification of Compliance, a statutory requirement confirming that the foundation remains in alignment with its service contract and mission. Director Guthrie determined that the foundation is in full compliance, and the board was asked to formally recognize and adopt the certification as part of the official record. Chair Chris Spencer entertained a motion for approval. Javier Marques moved for adoption, with seconds from Steven Lerner and Brian Mimbs. With no objections, the motion was adopted unanimously.

William Spicola presented proposed revisions to the foundation's bylaws, highlighting two primary changes. First, the requirement to appoint a foundation president was amended to make the position discretionary rather than mandatory, acknowledging that the foundation has operated successfully without a president since its inception. Second, updates were made to the non-discrimination policy to remove language originally included as a formality during the initial filing and approval process.



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Chair Chris Spencer expressed support for the changes, noting they reflect the foundation's current operational structure, which relies on the professional staff of the Division of Emergency Management (DEM). He also emphasized that, while a future need for a president may arise as the organization grows, the current delegation model has been effective. Following discussion, Javier Marques moved to approve the bylaw revisions, and Taryn seconded. With no objections, the motion was adopted unanimously.

V. Delegation Policy

Chair Chris Spencer introduced the Delegation of Authority Policy, aimed at streamlining operations delegating day-to-day expenditure approvals to the Division of Emergency Management's (DEM) Chief of Staff, currently Jake Felder. This change would apply to expenditures that fall within the board-approved annual operating budget, removing the need for the board chair to approve every transaction. For unbudgeted expenditures, the policy sets thresholds, requiring board approval for larger amounts and quarterly updates for smaller, de minimis transactions.

Chair Spencer noted that large expenditures over \$100,000, even if budgeted, should still be reviewed by the chair for final approval. The policy also introduces formal reporting for any unbudgeted spending and maintains board oversight for any multi-year financial obligations or potential acquisition/disposition of real property. The goal is to enhance efficiency, maintain strong fiscal controls, and align the foundation's practices with typical corporate governance standards. Following discussion, Steven Lerner moved for approval of the policy, seconded by Brian Mimbs and Taryn. With no objections, the motion was adopted unanimously.

VI. Directors & Officers Insurance

William Spicola provided an update on efforts to secure Directors & Officers insurance for the foundation. Although quotes had not yet been received due to delays, Spicola has submitted applications and expects responses shortly. He recommended that the board authorize professional staff to obtain at least three quotes, and that the board delegate authority to the chair to select and approve the best policy based on coverage and value.

Chair Spencer supported the approach, emphasizing the importance of acting quickly rather than waiting for the next board meeting. He requested a formal board action authorizing him to review the



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quotes and, provided they are reasonable and not cost-prohibitive, approve and execute the policy on behalf of the board.

Steven Lerner moved to authorize the chair to select and approve the D&O insurance policy, with Brian Mimbs seconding. There were no objections, and the motion was adopted unanimously. Chair Spencer committed to providing a written update to the board once the policy is finalized.

VII. Updates

a. Finance

Jeremy Smith provided an overview of the organization's financial close-out for the previous fiscal year. The year ended with a total equity of \$1.49 million, which includes \$540,000 in retained earnings and \$951,000 in net income. Jeremy confirmed that the board-approved budget for the new fiscal year is now in effect.

Major revenue sources for the prior year included \$1.589 million from FTEM sponsorships, \$385,000 from EM Day, \$218,000 from the golf tournament, and \$60,000 from the 10K run held during storm season. Jeremy expressed optimism that the organization is on track to meet or exceed those revenue figures in the current fiscal year, with new opportunities to be presented later in the meeting.

Thanks to continued fundraising efforts, the well-received "Dinner with Director Guthrie" event assisted in the organization's current cash on hand has increased to just over \$1.6 million. This strong financial position allows us to support upcoming scheduled events, including EM Day and FTEM 2026.

Jeremy also noted that the final version of the delegation policy is ready for board review and is consistent with the previously circulated draft. Additionally, a small number of outstanding bills from the close of the fiscal year and early July will be finalized shortly, totaling just over \$200,000. These include previously approved expenses, such as audiovisual costs.

b. FTEM

On behalf of Stephanie, Mary Thomas provided an update on the success of FTEM 2025, which drew over 1,100 attendees, including both in-person and virtual participants. The event featured over 60 workshops, a new logistics fair, and more than 32 sponsors, all contributing to a highly successful conference. The inaugural gala event was also well received and will continue as part of



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future programming. Planning is already underway for FTEM 2026, which will be held at the same venue. The foundation has secured exclusive use of the venue, allowing for improved logistics such as parking and more room blocks. New sponsorship tiers are being developed to help fund expanded offerings, including the gala, with a goal of increasing sponsor-driven support. Early registration for FTEM 2026 is expected to open around the time of EM Day in February 2026, pending finalization of the session lineup later this year. However, no specific dates have been set. Board members praised the team's work, particularly highlighting Stephanie's fundraising success and the quality of the event experience.

c. Student Investment Program Kickoff

Mary Thomas reported on the launch of the Student Investment Program, noting that applications are due by July 31st. Registration has begun, and promotional efforts have included outreach via LinkedIn, the foundation's website, and direct contact with universities. FSU has already circulated the opportunity to its Emergency Management students. The program has received \$10,000 in confirmed sponsorships and verbal commitments totaling an additional \$50,000, which would fully fund the pilot cohort. Sponsorships are expected to cover coursework, in-person event participation, and travel costs. The inaugural class is expected to graduate at FTEM 2026. Board members encouraged continued outreach to state colleges and universities through the DOE and Board of Governors. Several board members, including Taryn and Javier, offered support to push the program through their university channels to help boost applications and visibility.

d. Golf Tournament Fundraiser Event

Mary Thomas reported that the golf tournament held during FTEM featured over 18 teams and successfully raised more than \$300,000. The event was well-received, with good food and satisfied sponsors who felt they gained value from participating. Although Mary did not golf herself, she noted the tournament's enjoyable atmosphere and competitive spirit.

VIII. Discussion on Pending Business Items

a. FDEM Disaster Grocery Employee Program

Jeremy Smith introduced a proposed Grocery Program Policy designed to support Division of Emergency Management personnel who experience food loss during a governor-declared emergency. The policy would provide up to \$175 in grocery assistance per eligible individual,



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focused solely on grocery items. Dependents under the age of 21 would also be covered in the same household. The team is exploring partnerships with vendors, such as Publix or Walmart, to issue restricted-use cards for qualified purchases.

The program includes an Employee Resilience Program Information Form, which applicants must complete to detail the circumstances of their loss, including the date, location, cause, and number of affected household members. Each employee would be limited to one application per emergency declaration to ensure fair access and prevent misuse of funds.

In response to questions from the board, Jeremy clarified that \$50,000 is currently allocated in the fiscal year budget for the grocery program, with a separate \$50,000 earmarked for the upcoming Student Investment Program. He noted that the amount was chosen conservatively and could be revised by the board if needed, depending on the level of impact from future events. The FTEM team, including financial and communications staff, will oversee implementation and daily operations, keeping the board informed of activity and applications.

Chair Chris Spencer and other board members expressed support for the policy, noting that the built-in controls, such as spending limits and single use per event, satisfy earlier requests for program safeguards. Following discussion, Steven Lerner moved for approval, Javier Marques seconded, and with no objections, the motion was adopted unanimously.

IX. Upcoming Activities

a. Annual Report – July 31, 2025

Will Currie and Chris Spencer discussed the upcoming submission of the annual report, which consolidates previously seen reports and fulfills a statutory filing requirement. The report will be uploaded to ensure compliance. Additionally, as part of the sunset review process for renewing the organization's DSO (Direct Support Organization) status, the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) will submit a cover letter with the final report recommending continuation of the foundation to relevant authorities by August 15, 2025. No action is required currently; the team is simply acknowledging and tracking these statutory compliance tasks.

X. Public Comment

No public comment made.

XI. Adjournment



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Chair Spencer adjourned the meeting at 11:35 AM.