



FLORIDA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION



Chris Spencer, *Chair*

Steven Lerner, *Vice Chair*

Florida Emergency Management Assistance Foundation, Inc Board of Directors Meeting

January 09, 2026, at 11:00 AM
Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order

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

II. Roll Call

Iyana Meeks called the roll. Chris Spencer (Chairman), Steven Lerner (Vice Chair Lerner), Javier Marques (Secretary), Taryn Fenske (President), and Brian Mimbs (Treasurer) were all in attendance. A quorum was present.

III. Approval of October 10, 2025, meeting minutes.

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

IV. Approval of Draft Operating Policies and Tax Acknowledgement Letter.

The prior meeting minutes were moved, seconded, and adopted without objection. The board then considered Item 4, approval of the draft operating policies and tax acknowledgment letter. Chris Spencer noted he had reviewed both documents, found them consistent with the board's previously adopted delegation of authority, and had no edits or concerns. Jeremy Smith (DEM) presented the operating policies, explaining they document expense and revenue management, internal controls, reconciliations, banking and credit card accounts, QuickBooks use, and procedures for tracking and safeguarding funds, as well as the tax acknowledgment letter to be provided to donors for tax purposes. Chris Spencer emphasized that adopting these documented policies represents an important step in enterprise risk management and aligns with best practices for organizations managing significant funds. Chair Spencer called for a motion to approve the operating policies; a motion was made and, with no objections, the operating policies were unanimously adopted. Chair Spencer then



FLORIDA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION



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called for a separate motion to approve the tax acknowledgment letter, which was also approved by unanimous consent and adopted.

V. Updates

a. Financial Update

Jeremy Smith reported year-to-date revenues of approximately \$2.7 million and expenses of \$788,000, noting that while expenses are expected to increase with upcoming events such as EM Day and Florida's Training for Emergency Management, overall spending remains on track at approximately 36% of the total budget and 40% of the training budget, with revenues already exceeding projections due to strong fundraising.

The board discussed the distinction between general fundraising and sponsorships, noting that sponsorships often involve defined benefits or naming opportunities tied to specific programs, events, or facilities, while fundraising encompasses broader donation efforts. Board members discussed the potential for creative sponsorship opportunities, including naming rights and other long-term commitments, and emphasized the importance of ensuring such opportunities are tied to clearly defined proposals or projects. Chair Spencer asked the DEM team to consider and develop ideas before the next quarter to further diversify revenue streams through sponsorships and other fundraising activities.

Jeremy Smith then reviewed the balance sheet. He noted the establishment of a money market account, which now holds significant funds and generates modest interest for the foundation. He also highlighted the reinstatement of reporting for the foundation's credit card balances and explained that all purchases, even those within the previously approved delegated authority, are reconciled monthly. Additionally, courtesy emails are sent to ensure the chair is aware of any expenses for situational awareness purposes. He emphasized that upcoming events—EM Day, Florida's Training for Emergency Management, and the HurriGains 5K Run—present opportunities to increase awareness of the foundation and expand fundraising. While sponsorships remain a significant revenue source, he noted that the foundation continues to explore additional revenue opportunities and innovative fundraising ideas. Reflecting on the foundation's growth in its second year, Jeremy highlighted the marked increase in both awareness and support and expressed



FLORIDA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION



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optimism about prospects. He then invited any further questions before moving on to the next agenda item.

b. Sponsorships

Jeremy Smith provided an update on sponsorships, reporting that the foundation currently has over 40 sponsors committed to 2026 events, including the HurriGains 5K, EM Day, the FDEM Conference, and additional FDEM-related events such as the Gala and golf tournament. Total sponsorship commitments exceed \$2.8 million, with \$2.4 million already received and the remaining \$400,000 expected in the coming months. He noted the focus on ensuring successful HurriGains 5K and EM Day events, with the latter being held at the new SEOC, and mentioned that Stephanie would provide further details on event-specific sponsorships later in the agenda. Chris Spencer confirmed the gala date as June 4th, 2026, and reminded attendees to mark their calendars. With no questions from the board on sponsorship, the discussion moved on to the student incentive program.

c. Student Investment Program

Lela Whitfield provided an update on the Student Incentive Program, noting that it has been successful to date. Approximately six students have participated so far, and enrollment for the upcoming fall semester is currently being planned. The program includes opportunities for students to work on projects for FDEM and participate in the HurriGains event, providing them with practical experience and helping to develop their soft skills during this initial phase.

VI. Discussion on Pending Business Items

No pending business items to discuss.

VII. Upcoming Activities

Stephanie Hartman provided an update on upcoming events for the foundation. The first activity of the year, the HurriGains 5K, is scheduled for two weeks from the meeting date, with 190 participants currently registered and additional spots still available. Registration fees contribute to fundraising efforts, and participants will receive T-shirts and challenge coins, with sponsors present to support the event. Following the 5K, Cohort 6 of the Mid-Level Leader program with the McChrystal Group will take place in Jacksonville on January 26–27, with attendees and hotel arrangements already confirmed; this is expected to be the final cohort under the current program format. In February, the EM Day kickoff



FLORIDA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION



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reception will occur on February 24 at the foundation's new EOC, combined with a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new building. The following day, full EM Day programming will begin at the Turnbull Center for morning sessions, continue at the Capitol for daytime activities, and conclude with the Adams Street block party in the evening. Stephanie emphasized that planning is going smoothly and invited board members to attend the events. Chris Spencer confirmed his attendance at EM Day activities and encouraged others to join, while board members expressed appreciation for the team's efforts in organizing these events.

VIII. Public Comment

No public comment made.

IX. Adjournment

Chair Spencer adjourned the meeting at 11:27 AM.