

Meeting Minutes - September 8, 2025 CEPD Board Meeting

- **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes and Agenda:** John Wade led the board in approving the minutes from the August meeting and confirmed there were no changes to the current meeting's agenda, with all board members present and in agreement.
 - **Approval of Minutes:** John confirmed that all board members had received and reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting. No changes or adjustments were proposed, and the minutes were unanimously approved.
 - **Agenda Confirmation:** John asked if any board member wanted to propose changes to the agenda. No changes were suggested, and the agenda was confirmed as distributed.
- **Administrative Updates and Staff Changes:** Brighton provided updates on Turner Beach project mobilization, introduced new bookkeeper and office manager Lisa, and discussed her onboarding progress and current work schedule.
 - **Turner Beach Project Mobilization:** Brighton reported that Turner Beach's parking lot was closed for project mobilization, with APTIM and Great Lakes beginning preparations for dredging, which is scheduled to start on September 20th. Weekly coordination meetings with APTIM and Great Lakes are set to begin.
 - **Introduction of New Staff:** Lisa was introduced as the new bookkeeper and office manager. Brighton noted that Lisa has been getting caught up, with her system accesses nearly complete, and she is now almost fully functional in her role.
 - **Staff Work Schedule:** Lisa's current work schedule is Monday through Friday, 9 to 5 PM, with plans to reassess once the workload stabilizes.
- **Bayside Adaptation and Pilot Project Budgeting:** Brighton and the board discussed the \$100,000 budget placeholder for Bayside adaptation pilot projects, the need to focus on implementation rather than further studies, and the timing of project initiation relative to ongoing beach and dune work.
 - **Budget Placeholder Purpose:** Brighton explained that the \$100,000 in the budget is a placeholder for future Bayside adaptation pilot projects, emphasizing that the funds are not for additional studies but for implementation once current beach and dune projects are completed.
 - **Discussion on Project Timing:** Board members agreed that implementation strategies for Bayside adaptation should only be discussed and initiated after the completion of beach and dune projects, with the budget item serving as a placeholder to ensure readiness.
 - **Pilot Project Examples and Challenges:** Rene provided examples of potential pilot projects, such as living seawalls, and discussed challenges related to property ownership, eminent domain, and the need for DEP approval rather than individual homeowner consent.
 - **Community Outreach and Subsidy Program:** The board considered the importance of community outreach and the possibility of a subsidy program to encourage property owners to participate in group resiliency efforts, with the district providing resources and potential subsidies.

- **Action and Decision Process:** It was agreed that before any funds are spent from the placeholder, the board will hold a discussion and vote on the specific pilot project to be implemented.
- **Travel Reimbursement Policy for Commissioners:** Brighton addressed questions about travel reimbursement for Commissioners, reviewed current practices, and discussed the possibility of formalizing a district policy.
 - **Current Reimbursement Practice:** Rene shared that Commissioners have been reimbursed for travel when required for quorum, especially during summer or when a physical presence is necessary for votes.
 - **Policy Formalization Discussion:** The board discussed the potential to create a formal travel reimbursement policy, considering limitations to prevent excessive travel claims and the possibility of adjusting meeting frequency to reduce travel needs.
- **Drone and Survey Equipment Acquisition Discussion:** Brighton presented proposals for contracting drone-based beach imagery and survey services versus purchasing equipment, with board members debating costs, operational needs, and potential uses for the technology.
 - **Contracting vs. Purchasing Equipment:** Brighton outlined two options: contracting Fastabend Land and Aerial for annual or project-based imagery at \$10,000–\$50,000, or purchasing equipment for in-house use, which would require a significant initial investment and ongoing maintenance costs.
 - **Operational Considerations:** Board members discussed the complexity of operating advanced survey drones, the need for specialized training, and the practicality of using simpler drones for basic photography versus advanced mapping.
 - **Potential Uses for Drone Data:** The board identified multiple potential uses for drone imagery, including public communication, monitoring beach changes, supporting Bayside projects, and possibly assisting with turtle nesting inspections or hurricane damage assessments.
 - **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Members debated the value of high-cost, multi-phase imagery versus more limited, cost-effective options, with some advocating for a one-time comprehensive scan and others supporting investment in capital equipment for long-term flexibility.
- **Financial Update and Banking Procedures:** Brighton and Rene provided a financial update, discussed ongoing reconciliation of accounts, vendor payment history, and outlined planned changes to banking relationships and internal controls.
 - **Account Reconciliation Progress:** Lisa is working through reconciling general and capital accounts, ensuring all transactions are properly recorded and accessible for audit and reporting purposes.
 - **Vendor Payment History:** The board discussed reviewing vendor payment histories, addressing gaps in billing, and ensuring compliance with county requirements for service providers.
 - **Banking Relationship Changes:** Brighton outlined a plan to consolidate accounts, moving to two accounts each at Fifth Third and Regions banks, and transferring T-notes to Regions for improved management.

- **Internal Controls and SOPs:** The board discussed implementing standard operating procedures for large reimbursements and check signings, including multi-level approvals and enhanced security for significant transactions.
- **Resolution for Treasurer and Vice Chair Appointments:** The board, with input from attorney David Jackson, debated and approved a resolution appointing Rene as Treasurer and continuing as Vice Chair, with a plan to revisit officer assignments in December.
 - **Dual Officer Role Discussion:** Attorney David Jackson advised caution regarding one person holding both Treasurer and Vice Chair roles, recommending appointing separate individuals or at least confirming legality before making it permanent.
 - **Temporary Appointment and Bank Requirements:** The board agreed to proceed with the dual appointment on a temporary basis to meet bank requirements for check signing authority, with the understanding that the arrangement would be reviewed in December.
 - **Resolution Approval Process:** A formal motion was made and approved to appoint Rene as Treasurer and Vice Chair, with David to provide a revised resolution for bank use.
 - **Check Signing and Financial Controls:** The board reiterated the need for dual controls on check signing and ACH transactions, ensuring no single administrator has unilateral authority over large sums.
- **Beach Renourishment Project Scope and Funding Debate:** Nicole from Great Lakes provided an update on the beach renourishment project, including the need for an additional 400,000 cubic yards of sand due to recent storms, associated costs, and the board debated whether to proceed with the expanded scope given funding challenges.
 - **Project Status and Survey Results:** Nicole reported that equipment mobilization is underway, with dredging scheduled to begin September 20th. Pre-construction surveys indicate a need for 1.2 million cubic yards of sand, up from the original 800,000, due to storm-related erosion.
 - **Cost and Funding Implications:** The additional 400,000 cubic yards would add \$7.66 million to the project, bringing the total to approximately \$34 million. The board discussed the lack of new state appropriations for recent storms and the resulting increased burden on local taxpayers.
 - **Debate on Project Scope:** Board members debated whether to proceed with the full expanded scope, reduce the volume to stay within the original contract, or find a compromise, considering both engineering recommendations and fiscal responsibility.
 - **Template and Visualization Requests:** Nicole agreed to provide cross-section plots and templates to help the board visualize the impact of different sand volumes on beach width and storm protection, with a decision deadline set for around September 20th.
 - **Potential for Additional Funding:** The board discussed ongoing efforts to secure additional funding from county and state sources, including preparing talking points to advocate for equitable treatment compared to other districts.
- **Appointment of New Commissioner:** The board interviewed Bernie Dupree for the open Commissioner position, discussed his background and experience, and voted to appoint him effective after the upcoming budget meeting.

- **Candidate Interview:** Bernie Dupre introduced himself, described his long-term residency, business experience, and community involvement, and answered questions about his qualifications and perspective on the district.
- **Appointment Process:** The board discussed the timing of the appointment, agreeing to make it effective after the next meeting to avoid immediate voting on the budget by a new member, and then voted unanimously to appoint Bernie.