



DRAFT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Center for the Inland Bays
Hybrid: CIB office and via Zoom
December 12, 2025

ATTENDANCE

| <u>Board Members Present</u> | <u>Board Members Absent</u> |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Aimee Isacc (Vice Chair) | Pat Coluzzi |
| Patti Drago (Secretary) | David Baird (SCD, Treasurer) |
| Jerry Esposito (Board-Elected) | Rony Baltazar |
| Nicole Bailey Ashton (Board Director) | |
| Claire Simmers (CAC Chair) | <u>Center for the Inland Bays Staff Present</u> |
| Andrew Wozniak (STAC) | Christophe Tulou |
| Amie Howell (EPA ex officio) | Bryan Ochs |
| Mike Harmer (Sussex Co. Engineer) | Shannon Clark |
| Marlene Saunders (DEIJA Chair) | Meghan Noe Fellows |
| Sec. Greg Patterson (DNREC) | Taylor Hoffman |
| Steve Hohman (EPA) | Nivette Perez-Perez |
| Justin Healy (Board Director) | Bob Collins |
| Steve Williams (DNREC) | Clare Magargal |

CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTION

Aimee Isaac called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM. A. Isaac led the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting attendees introduced themselves.

MEETING AGENDA REVIEW

DRAFT

Patti Drago called for any changes to the meeting agenda. There were none.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Aimee Issac confirmed that the Board members received the minutes from the previous meeting. A. Issac called for comments or changes, and none were heard. J. Esposito made a motion to approve the minutes. Nicole Bailey Ashton seconded. The vote was unanimous.

TREASURER'S REPORT

David Baird was not present. Christophe will follow up with David regarding the report.

OTHER REPORTS

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Claire reported on the panel discussion and plans for next year's theme of resiliency as well as

Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)

Andrew Wozniak shared updates on the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee's activities. The topic of the last meeting presentations on salt marsh issues and upcoming events

DEIJA

Marlene Saunders discussed the Deja committee's name change to Community Pathways Engagement Committee.

Development Committee

J. Esposito resented the development report, highlighting increased revenue and significant donor contributions. The committee is considering options for the "Decked Out" event and will make a decision in a few months. Nicole was recognized for being named one of Delaware Today's 35 best women in business.

Sussex County

M. Harmer discussed ongoing septic elimination efforts and a solar project at Piney Neck wastewater treatment facility, while also providing updates on library renovations and infrastructure repairs in Bethany Beach. The meeting also touched on biosolids management and a comprehensive water monitoring network being developed in Delaware.

DNREC

S. Williams shared progress on beach nourishment projects, including the Indian River Inlet project and future plans for Rehoboth Beach, with a focus on public access requirements.

EPA

Amie Howell

House & Senate

C. Tulou discussed the future of Delaware freshwater wetland protection.

OLD BUSINESS

Federal Funding/Fundraising Status- The meeting covered updates on federal funding, reporting, and advocacy efforts. Kristoff reported that EPA funding remains uncertain but stable for now, with potential for additional certainty through a minibus appropriations bill. The Center is working on finalizing a work plan for the final IIJA funding tranche.

NEW BUSINESS

Staff Presentation- Mini-forest Initiative by Meghan Noe Fellows

Megan presented on the mini-forest planting project, which involves creating small forest patches that naturally expand over time. She explained that 14 communities initially expressed interest, with 10 being selected, including Bishop's Landing, Independence, and the Church of God Prophecy. The project has been successful in getting HOA backing and community buy-in. Megan noted that maintenance costs have been low, with the main challenge being removing invasive species initially. The project aims to demonstrate multiple benefits, including carbon sequestration and supporting local wildlife. The group discussed potential expansion to the west side of the county and the importance of making the project relevant to communities facing survival issues.

Strategic Plan

The meeting focused on a strategic plan for managing the watershed, emphasizing the need for community engagement and collaboration with various stakeholders, including EPA, NRCS, and local communities. Christophe explained the importance of marketing the watershed as a testbed for climate change-related estuary projects and highlighted the need to communicate the benefits to the public. He set a deadline for feedback on the strategic plan by the end of January and discussed potential funding opportunities, including a fee associated with development to support environmental initiatives.

Motion

DEIJA Committee Name Change to “Community Pathways Engagement Committee”:

Motion: M. Saunders ; Second: Claire Simmers

Vote: Passed (ayes, none opposed).

Motion

Finance Operations Change to Bryan Ochs as a financial signer:

Motion: A. Isaac.; Second: J. Esposito

Vote: Passed (ayes, none opposed).

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

J. Esposito made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:40 am. Second by N. Bailey Ashton