

Draft  
**VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)**  
**ONLINE MEETING THROUGH WEBEX**  
**9/15/20**



**CALL TO ORDER:** Mike Oesterling called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM. Seven board members were present which represents a quorum. The meeting was held online through WebEx.

The Virginia Marine Products Board, established within the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services pursuant to Va. Code § 3.2-1200 et seq., is holding an electronic meeting via WebEx on Tuesday, June 16, 2020 at 1 pm. This meeting is being held during the Governor’s declared state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic making it unsafe for the public body to assemble in a single location. VDACS staff was unable to record the meeting via WebEx due a system error between Verizon and WebEx that has since been resolved.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ann Gallivan  
Kim Huskey  
Mike Oesterling  
Mike Schwarz  
J.C. Hudgins  
Daniel Knott  
Hannah Kellum

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Wayne France  
Rick Barlow  
Brian Terry

Andy Hall

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Dylan Mills, VMPB  
Mike Hutt, VMPB

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Melissa Ball- VDACS  
Tommy Kellum- Kellum Seafood  
A.J. Erskine- Bevans Oyster Co./Cowart Seafood

**MINUTES:**

Kim Huskey moved to approve the minutes from June 16, 2020 and Ann Gallivan seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

Roll Call:

Ann Gallivan: **yes**

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Kim Huskey: **yes**  
Mike Oesterling: **yes**  
Mike Schwarz: **yes**  
J.C. Hudgins: **yes**  
Daniel Knott: **yes**  
Hannah Kellum: **yes**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Seafood Council Proposal on Fishery Improvement Project (FIP)FIP Oyster Project**

On behalf of the Virginia Seafood Council, Tommy Kellum and A.J. Erskine proposed the FIP Oyster project requesting \$75,000 in VMPB funding in order to finalize state certification on oysters. Initial investments have already been made by private industry as well as the Seafood Council and Sea Grant for a pre-assessment that has been conducted by Dave Rudders at Sea Grant as well as an initial consultation. This certification is accredited by the World Wildlife Federation and would help to keep Virginia Oysters competitive with West Coast and Texas Oysters which are already certified as sustainable. This sustainability certification is being required by many major companies such as Kroger, Whole Foods, and US Foods in order to continue to do business. After initial discussions with the industry, it was determined that these programs account for 18% of business for seafood companies in Virginia. Losing this business would be devastating. Mike Oesterling requested that language be inserted into the agreement clarifying that this certification would be owned by the entire Oyster industry in Virginia. Ann Gallivan made a motion to approve funding up to \$80,000 based on the approval of a formal proposal by VDACS's procurement office and Mike Hutt. J.C. Hudgins seconded the motion. The motion passed with six (6) yes's and one abstention.

Roll Call:

Ann Gallivan: **yes**  
Kim Huskey: **abstain**  
Mike Oesterling: **yes**  
Mike Schwarz: **yes**  
J.C. Hudgins: **yes**  
Daniel Knott: **yes**  
Hannah Kellum: **yes**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Economic Impact Study**

Due to budgeting issues, Jonathan requested that the board approve a motion to reallocate funds for the project to \$78,883.00 for year 1 and \$76,117.00 for year 2. The original total budget of \$155,000.00 will not change. Kim Huskey moved to amend the vote to reflect the above statement and Dan Knott seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Roll Call:

Ann Gallivan: **yes**  
Kim Huskey: **yes**  
Mike Oesterling: **yes**  
Mike Schwarz: **yes**  
J.C. Hudgins: **yes**

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Daniel Knott: yes  
Hannah Kellum: yes

**Keith Lanpher Photoshoot:** Mike and Dylan are still waiting for COVID restrictions on travel to be lifted so they can schedule another photoshoot with Keith.

**Seafood Expo Asia 2020:** Due to the Coronavirus, this show was cancelled for its original date for 2020, however it will be moving from Hong Kong to Singapore next year.

**Canadian Seafood Show 2020:** Due to Coronavirus, this show was cancelled.

**VA Agribusiness Legislative Reception:** Due to coronavirus, this event has been cancelled for 2021.

**VA Waterman's Legislative Luncheon**

Due to Coronavirus, the board will not be able to hold this event next year. In substitution of this event, J.C. proposed the idea of delivering a box of a variety of frozen seafood to all delegates and senators. Mike and Dylan will be looking into the possibility of this with VDACS and the board will discuss in further detail next meeting.

**Seafood Expo North America 2021**

Due to the Coronavirus, this show was cancelled last March. The board already paid for booth space in 2020 and the booth fee will be rolled over to the March 2021 event. This is an ever-evolving situation and Mike and Dylan are proceeding with preparations under the assumption that they will attend the show.

**Seafood Expo Global 2021**

This is a SUSTA event held in Barcelona for which Mike Hutt is a co-activity manager. SUSTA plans to have a pavilion there and the board has Virginia companies interested in exhibiting.

**National Restaurant Association Show 2021**

Dylan walked this show last year to gauge if it would be a good fit for us. He felt that the number of attendees and the quality of attendees would make this a worthwhile show. If we exhibit at the show we will try to get into the USA pavilion. However, after discussion with the show directors Mike and Dylan were informed that if they reserve booth space and they are unable to travel due to state travel restrictions they would not be refunded their fees. The board has decided to monitor the situation and discuss this at the next board meeting.

**Billboard Campaign-October/November 2020**

Originally the board had planned to have new photos for the October and November campaign however due to coronavirus Mike and Dylan were unable to schedule more photoshoots with Keith Lanpher, because of this the board has agreed to run the same campaign for October and an Oyster campaign for November.

**Oyster Website Update-Stratum**

Jean Goodwyn has provided Mike and Dylan with a site-planning layout which has been approved and she is now working on the actual design of the website. Once this site is completed it will look similar to the Virginia Seafood site in order create a better brand.

**Misc. in-state events**

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As of now, there have not been any in-state events scheduled due to coronavirus.

**COVID-19 Update**

Mike and Dylan have continued to email updates on the situation and different programs that are available to the industry. They are also encouraging the board to provide any feedback or suggestions they may have for things Mike and Dylan can do to better help the industry.

**NEW BUSINESS - Continued**

**Seafood Source Ad Results (August 2020)**

When reviewing the results for the campaign Mike and Dylan found a discrepancy in the results between their tracking results and Seafood Source's, the reason for this is stated below:

SeafoodSource records ad impression (the number of times your ad is seen) and the number of unique clicks received per newsletter for the month of August

- *August SeafoodSource News*
  - *430,327 ad impressions/view*
  - *1,487 clicks on your ad*

*The click count for each newsletter is a unique event, so if someone clicked on your ad for example on Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup> - once in the morning edition and again in the afternoon edition and then one more time during the month we would count it as three unique clicks.*

*Google Analytics records unique users during the month*

- *user number 221 coming through the SeafoodSource redirect*
- *possible undercount due to*
- *users may block google analytics*
- *user left the website before they were counted*
- *a user is only counted once no matter how many times a person comes to the website in the month*

Mike and Dylan presented a new version of the ad with better wording and a call-to-action. After discussion, the board decided to use this new ad for November 2020 and February 2021.

**Billboard Campaign in Collaboration with VIMS**

Karen Hudson has some grant money through the Sea Grant program at VIMS and approached Mike and Dylan about using some of this funding to extend the board's billboard campaign for one month on 2 billboards. Also under this grant Kim Reuter will be providing another free seminar to the industry regarding holiday sales. After discussion the board decided to use the billboard next spring.

**Wage Surveys**

The Seafood Processor Prevailing wage survey has been completed and the results have been sent out to the participants. The Fish, Baitfish, and Shellfish Packing survey will be completed by the end of the week. There were 3 respondents for each survey.

**INTERESTED PARTY REPORTS**

**VIMS** - No report.

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**Virginia Tech** - Mike Schwarz spoke on behalf of Virginia Tech saying they hope to break ground next month on the new building. VT has released 6 COVID fact sheet publications for the industry called “Strategies to Prevent the Spread of COVID at Seafood Processing Plants.”

**VMRC** -No report.

**Virginia Seafood Council** - Hannah Kellum spoke on behalf of the Seafood Council saying a big focus has been the Oyster FIP project that was discussed earlier as well as some H2B issues of workers being held at the border.

**Virginia Waterman’s Association** - Dan and J.C. spoke on behalf of the association. A big topic of interest is the financial relief package for watermen. As of now they are waiting for NOAA to approve the grant and \$3.9 million will be given out and people should be able to start applying online in October.

**Shellfish Growers of Virginia** - Mike O. spoke on behalf of the Shellfish Growers of Virginia stating that like everybody else they have been busy forwarding information to their members regarding COVID-19 relief programs. They have also been monitoring new legislation and how it may affect shellfish businesses.

**Cooperative Programs**

**VDACS** -No report.

**Financial Report**

We had a carryover balance of \$709,909.59 for FY 2019-2020.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 3:18 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Hutt  
Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Oesterling  
Chair