

FINAL
VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)
VIMS
Gloucester Point, VA
1/27/2022



CALL TO ORDER: Mike Oesterling called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM. nine board members were present which represents a quorum.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mike Oesterling
J.C. Hudgins
Daniel Knott
Hannah Kellum
Andy Hall
Mike Schwarz
Monica Schenemann
Beverly Ludford
Mike Congrove

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Trey Sowers
Ann Gallivan (Joined
meeting over phone
for information
purposes.)

STAFF PRESENT:

Mike Hutt, VMPB
Owen Hynson, VMPB

GUESTS PRESENT:

Jimmy Hudgins

INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME:

Introduction of New Staff: Owen Hynson (Seafood Marketing Specialist)

Introduction of New Board Members: Mike Congrove, Monica Schenemann, Trey Sowers, and Beverly Ludford

MINUTES:

JC Hudgins moved to approve the minutes from September 21, 2021 and Mike Schwarz seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

COVID-19 Updates: J.C. Hudgins reported that he was seeing a bounce back in the seafood industry from the effects of COVID, quantities and prices are starting to stabilize.

Economic Impact Study, VA Tech: Mike Schwarz reported that the impact study is coming together nicely and should be finished by the end of the year, but could be extended if needed. J.C. and Daniel have both noted that Fernando has been a pleasure to work with and the study has been a valuable resource to the industry.

Keith Lanpher Photoshoot: Photoshoot is close to being finished, waiting for the spring/summer to get some crabbing pictures and pound net fishing to finish shoot.

Seafood Expo North America 2022: The Seafood Expo North America will be held from March 13-15 in Boston, MA. Mike Hutt suggested to the board to have Chairman Mike Oesterling travel to Boston to help at the VMPB booth on behalf of the VMPB. Funds for his travel with an estimated cost of \$1,800.00 dollars to be paid by the board. Beverly Ludford made a motion to have Mike Oesterling travel to Boston on behalf of the board at an estimated cost of \$1,800.00, J.C. seconded the motion and it passed near unanimously, Mike Oesterling abstained from voting.

Seafood Expo Global 2022: The Seafood Expo Global will be held from April 26-28 in Barcelona, Spain. SUSTA is currently willing to let Mike and Owen both travel as co-activity managers with SUSTA funds if the Florida Department of Agriculture representatives are unable to attend. If they are able to attend, Mike Hutt suggested to the board paying for Owen's travel to the show as it would be a great learning experience. Mike Congrove made a motion to have the VMPB funds used to pay for Owen's travel, Daniel seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

VA Watermen's & VMPB Legislative Seafood Luncheon: Jay Braxton, Deputy Director of the house, notified the VMPB that all events for 2022 Legislative Session have been cancelled.

NEW BUSINESS

Undercurrent News November 2021 Ads Activity Report: This the first time the VMPB is participating in digital news advertisement and the 15% click rate is above the national average suggesting that the ads are having a positive impact especially after hearing people in the industry and people new to seafood both mentioning seeing them so it appears they have a broad reach.

Seafood Source News November 2021 Ads Activity Report: For November the total number of ad impressions was 430,089, with 1,110 direct clicks, and a 26% click rate. The December numbers are 466,493 ad impressions, 1,071 direct clicks, and a 23% click rate. Both very strong numbers and the small dip in December is mostly likely due to natural factors such as people already having orders in for the holidays. If in an attractive spot and cost is within reason, board recommends moving the banner up to a more favorable position.

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October and November 2021 Billboard Ads Activity reports: Lamar- The total average play times we could expect for the Lamar board was 511 plays per day. The reach of the ads is very promising reaching about 23 people on average per play. Adams-From the playlist between 10/4/2021-11/28/2021 we averaged about 350 plays per day and so far this year during the 1/3/2022-1/18/2022 we averaged 1,300 plays.

Virginia Agribusiness Legislative Reception January 13, 2022: Mike and Owen participated in the event with VDACS supplying 900 oysters from the middle bay and seaside. The VMPB contracted with Deborah Pratt and Clementine Macon to shuck the oysters. Mike and Owen were presenting them on the half shell engaging with guests and informing them on the type of oyster they were eating. While the event was less heavily attended as in years past it led to valuable engagements with multiple people who had never ate raw oysters before, but tried these and enjoyed them.

Virginia Tech Virginia Seafood AREC Grand Opening Hampton, VA, March 25, 2022: Mike and Owen will be attending the event on behalf of VMPB to highlight our continuing relationship with the VSAREC.

Virginia Food & Beverage Expo, Richmond, VA, March 30, 2022: Mike and Owen will be attending and setting a booth up to inform and engage with possible clients.

Seafood Expo Asia: The Seafood Expo Asia will be held September 14-16, 2022 in Singapore. As of right now the shows participation and cancellation is still up in the air with it already being moved out of Hong Kong. Mike and Owen will know more about the show status and their attendance in the coming months.

Industry Tours for the New Administration: Mike and Owen are looking into setting industry tours up with the new administration. This would be a good opportunity to educate and inform the administration about the importance of the seafood industry in Virginia.

Adams Billboards Advertising Proposal 2022: Board recommended looking towards expanding locations of billboard placements, and asking for more information about Geofencing. Mike Schwarz made a motion to approve the Adams 2022 billboard advertising proposal at a cost of \$13,500.00 dollars for a three month period on 4/4/22-6/26/22, Hannah seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Lamar Billboard Advertising Proposal 2022: Board recommended promoting Oyster Fest on billboard in November. Daniel Knott made a motion to approve the Lamar 2022 billboard advertising proposal at a cost of \$14,400.00 for a three month period on 4/4/22-6/26/22, J.C. Hudgins seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

NBC12 Advertising Proposal 2022: We advertised in 2021 with NBC 12 on the following platforms: streaming, behaviorally targeted social/television ads, and on the NBC 12 weather app. Board asks for Mike to get clarification on the dates of the ad campaign and if different than last year to approve at his discretion. Michael Schwarz made a motion to approve the NBC12 2022 proposal at a cost of \$15,000.00 dollars for the same period of time as in 2021 and if the time is different from 2021 for Mike Hutt to use his discretion for the dates, Daniel Knott seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

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INTERESTED PARTY REPORTS

VIMS -- No report.

Virginia Tech – (Schwarz). Virginia Tech is currently looking into automation in various areas of Virginia’s aquaculture industry and currently preparing for the opening of the new VSARCE lab.

VMRC – No report

Virginia Seafood Council – (Kellum). Establishing shellfish commission with the VMRC and Shellfish sustainability committee. Outlook on H2B lotteries in the state does not look good for Virginia companies in 2022. The FIP oyster project is moving along and looking good.

Virginia Waterman’s Association – (Hudgins). The public oyster season is coming to a close, it was a good season and prices were ok. The Virginia Waterman’s Association annual dinner will be held on February 9th at Omega Protein in Reedville, VA. VMRC did not pass a request for a two week extension for oyster dredging on the James River. (Knott). Timeline for climate change study will be 2023 and there is going to be a project done on African American workers from the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, and Eastern Shore, in the seafood industry.

Shellfish Growers of Virginia – (Oesterling). State senator Richard Stuart has proposed many bills helping the sea food industry immensely. One bill in favor of extending oyster patent tong oystering by 30 days and a right to have an Aquaculture amendment in the agriculture permitting process are both expected to pass. One bill addressing the H2B issue is not expected to pass.

Omega Protein -- (Hall). Omega Protein finished the Menhaden season before Thanksgiving. Slow start to the spring but it really caught up after that. Putting together a video on the importance of not only Omega Protein but the entire Menhaden industry in Reedville. Showcasing the multigenerational workers from deck hands to captains and really putting into perspective how important this industry is to Virginian families not only as a source of income but also a source of pride and connecting with your roots.

Cooperative Programs

VDACS -- No report.

Financial Report

Mike Hutt reported a carry over for FY 2020-2021 of \$693,292.40 and a balance of \$505,770.00 as of October 31, 2021.

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PUBLIC COMMENT - None

TRAVEL – The Board may request travel reimbursement.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike Hutt
Executive Director

Mike Oesterling
Chair