

FINAL  
VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)  
Board Meeting  
Tuesday December 6, 2022/ 1:00 P.M.  
VIMS Director's Conference Room  
Waterman's Hall  
Gloucester Point, VA



**CALL TO ORDER:** Mike Oesterling called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. eight board members were present which represents a quorum.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ann Gallivan  
J.C. Hudgins  
Daniel Knott  
Trey Sowers  
Beverly Ludford  
Mike Oesterling  
Jonathan van Senten  
Nathan Bussels

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mike Congrove  
Monica Schenemann  
Taylor Deihl

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Mike Hutt, VMPB  
Owen Hynson, VMPB

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Melissa Ball, VDACS  
Sarah Borsetti, VIMS  
Alexi McCarthy, VIMS

**INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME:**

**Introduction of attendance at meeting.**

**MINUTES:**

Ann Gallivan made a motion to approve the minutes from August 31, 2022, Trey Sowers seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Economic Impact Study, VA Tech:** Jonathan van Senten gave the board an update on unveiling the impact study. They are currently in the process of finalizing a video to highlight the key points of the impact study which they would like to have completed before the end of the no cost extension in January. Some important figures are the total economic impact of the commercial seafood industry at over 1.1 billion dollars, providing over 7,000 jobs in the state, and contributing over 400 million dollars towards Virginia's GDP. Jonathan had asked Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson to look through their files for any drone footage they can use for the video. The board suggested a few changes to make on the video, first to make it very clear that this figure does not include any retail or restaurant sales, this figure is only counting economic impact in the state of Virginia and doesn't include any out of state sales or expenses, and that the video might want to be lengthen slightly so the flow of the video will not sound rushed with the information of most importance front loaded to emphasize the impact.

**Keith Lanpher Photoshoot:** Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson have sent him their finale selection of photos to touch up and enhance and they should be receiving his edits soon for approval.

**Virginia Tech Sea Lab Grand Opening Hampton, VA:** The event was well attended, and it helped showcase the importance of the sea lab has in the Virginia Commercial Seafood Industry. Jonathan van Senten mentioned that the lab is fully up and running and any interested board members just schedule a time for a tour of the facility.

**Undercurrentnews Activity Report:** As of the end of November 2022, the total number of advertisement impressions on Undercurrentnews is 448,697 and the total number of clicks is 1318.

**Seafood Source April Ad Report:** The results included a bonus placement in the Weekly Global Newsletter. Through the end of October 2022, the total number of impressions was 577,526 impressions, with 950 unique clicks, and a .16% click through rate in the regular add and a total number of impressions of 32,318, with 42 unique clicks, and a .13% click through rate in the Weekly Global Newsletter.

**2022 Billboard Ads:**

- **Lamar:** From a reporting period between 10/3/2022 to 11/27/2022 Lamar delivered 81,161 plays and made 1,866,631 impressions. The audited impressions per week are 231,831, per day 33,118, per play 23, and each play had about 10 seconds of screen time.
  
- **Adams:** The impressions from October had 37,629 total play counts delivered and the total number of impressions delivered was 908,462.

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**Virginia Waterman's Heritage Tourism Program:** Dan Knott gave the board an update on the program, SeaGrant paid for the domain, Virginianwaterheritagetours.com, so the website is up and running again. Dan Knott has met with VDACS commissioner Joe Guthrie and he is very interested in helping to support this program where possible. Dan is now looking into securing more funding and drawing up a plan for the long-term future of the program.

**NBC 12 Activity Reports:** Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson shared with the board impact figures provided by NBC 12 News of the VMPB ad campaign on the channel. The numbers listed cover the date 10/14/2022 through 12/4/2022. The numbers include a total of 959,245 total ads' view, 887 website leads, 14,271 likes, shares, and comments on social media, 192,249 people reached on social media, and 734 Facebook page leads. Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson also stated to the board they would reach out to NBC 12 and ask for a breakdown of the statistics in each geographic area they cover. NBC 12 also informed Mike Hutt that we've received multiple extra ads slots at no cost to the VMPB.

**Oyster FIP:** The progress rating on the Oyster FIP remains an A. It is in compliance with Environmental reporting requirements and in compliance with Social reporting requirements.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**VMPB Department of Labor Wage Surveys:** The VMPB has completed and turned in to the U.S. Department of Labor wage surveys for Crab Picking, Seafood Processing, and Fish: Baitfish & Shellfish packing, these will then need to be reviewed and approved by the Department of Labor. The VMPB has sent copies of their completed surveys to companies that had taken part in their respective sector.

**Delegate Keith Hodges Catfish Processing:** J.C. Hudgins, Dan Knott, and Mike Hutt have met with delegate Hodges and a few other state legislators on increasing catfish processing. Delegate Hodges and Senator Richard Stuart are introducing legislation to increase catfish processing through various initiatives. As of now Wild Blue Catfish processing is still under USDA inspection at the federal level there is language in the 2023 U.S. Farm Bill that will return the inspection back to the FDA if passed. Delegate Hodges is also looking to bring in money to the VMPB to promote and market Wild Blue Catfish.

**VDACS Commissioner Joe Guthrie Omega Protein Tour September 21, 2022:** Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson of the VMPB took VDACS Commissioner Joe Guthrie on a tour of Omega Protein. He learned more about how many sectors of the seafood industry they are involved in, the history of the company, and its importance to the local communities past, present, and future. He also asked some questions about the company to get a more complete perspective on some of the challenges facing the Menhaden industry today.

**Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matt Lohr/Deputy Secretary Beth Green Omega Protein Tour October 31, 2022:** Mike Hutt of the VMPB took Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matt Lohr and Deputy Secretary Beth Green on a tour of Omega Protein to learn more about the company and its role in the Virginia commercial seafood industry. Both stated they learned a lot during the tour and are interested in touring other seafood facilities.

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**ABC 13 News Three Minute Segment November 3, 2022:** Mike Hutt went to Amory's dock to shoot on the water with a commercial trawler in the background. Mike Hutt has gotten a lot of positive feedback from the segment and did a good job informing the public on the Virginia commercial seafood industry and some steps they can take to make sure they're purchasing Virginia Seafood.

**NBC 12 Live Promotion and Display November 16, 2022:** The board discussed Mike Hutt's recent interview with NBC 12 last month and mentioned he did a great job and that it will reflect well on the seafood industry. Mike Hutt informed the board that he will be returning to NBC 12 in the spring of 2023 to do a live cooking segment featuring Wild Blue Catfish

**Virginia Agribusiness Virginia's Finest Reception January 12, 2023:** Mike Hutt informed the board that he and Owen Hynson will have a display set up again at the 2023, Agribusiness Virginia's Finest Reception in January. It will be held January 12, 2023 at the old train station in Shockoe Bottom, Richmond and they will be contracting out shuckers as they will be serving half-shell Oysters at the event.

**Legislative Seafood Luncheon on January 18, 2023:** Mike Hutt, Owen Hynson, Mike Oesterling, J.C. Hudgins, Dan Knott, and members of the Virginia Waterman's Association will be serving lunches for members of the legislature, the Governor and his cabinet members, and various employees at VDACS on January 18. J.C. Hudgins, Mike Hutt, Mike Oesterling, and members of the Waterman's Association will distribute tickets on January 16, 2023. Graham & Rollins/Hampton Seafood Market will be catering the seafood meal for the event. In the VMPB FY 2022-2023 Budget \$7,000 dollars was approved for the event. The proposal came in at \$7,750 dollars and after discussion, Beverly Ludford made a motion to increase the amount from \$7,000 to \$7,750 to cover the increase. Dan seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Seafood Expo North America Boston, Massachusetts March 12-14, 2023:** In the VMPB FY 2022-2023 Budget \$7,000 dollars was approved for the travel of three people to Seafood Expo North America 2023. Mike Hutt, Owen Hynson, and Mike Oesterling will be traveling representing the board. Dan Knott made a motion approving Mike Oesterling traveling to Boston, Ann Gallivan seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held.

- Ann Gallivan-Aye
- J.C. Hudgins-Aye
- Dan Knott-Aye
- Trey Sowers-Aye
- Beverly Ludford-Aye
- Mike Oesterling-Abstained
- Jonathan van Senten-Aye
- Nathan Bussels-Aye

Seven Ayes, Mike Oesterling abstained from voting, and the motion passed.

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**Seafood Expo Global Barcelona, Spain April 25-27, 2023:** Mike Hutt reported to the board that three companies in the SUSTA region have already registered. FAS and NOAA will not be in the SUSTA pavilion in 2023. WUSATA has doubled their floor space in the SUSTA pavilion for 2023 and the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute has been approved for 18 square meters in the SUSTA pavilion to be used as a meeting area only. Rappahannock Oyster Company has registered to exhibit, Amory Seafood is interested in exhibiting and will be making a decision later in December, and True Chesapeake Oyster Company will be exhibiting and sampling Wild Blue Catfish.

**Lamar 2023 Billboard Proposal:** This proposal is to continue advertising at our current location for a three week period between the dates of 4/3/2023-6/25/2023 for a total amount of \$14,400 dollars. Ann Gallivan made a motion to continue with the 2023 Lamar Billboard Proposal, Trey Sowers seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held.

- Ann Gallivan-Aye
- J.C. Hudgins-Aye
- Dan Knott-Aye
- Trey Sowers-Aye
- Beverly Ludford-Aye
- Mike Oesterling-Aye
- Jonathan van Senten-Aye
- Nathan Bussels-Aye

Eight Ayes, motion carries unanimously.

**Adams 2023 Billboard Proposal:** This proposal is to continue advertising at our current location for an eight week period between the dates of 5/8/2023-7/2/2023 for a total amount of \$9,000 dollars. Beverly Ludford made a motion to continue with the 2023 Adams Billboard Proposal, Dan Knott seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held.

- Ann Gallivan-Aye
- J.C. Hudgins-Aye
- Dan Knott-Aye
- Trey Sowers-Aye
- Beverly Ludford-Aye
- Mike Oesterling-Aye
- Jonathan van Senten-Aye
- Nathan Bussels-Aye

Eight Ayes, motion carries unanimously.

## **INTERESTED PARTY REPORTS**

**VIMS** – Alexi McCarthy reported the Aquaculture conference is in City Center, Newport News from November 10-11, 2023. Sarah Borsetti announced that the Fishery resource grant is open, the due date to apply is January 13, 2023. A young fishermen workforce development program will be held on February 25, 2023, at the Brock Environmental Center in Virginia Beach.

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**Virginia Tech** – Jonathan van Senten reiterated that the Sea Lab open house was a success and Virginia Tech will be taking a larger role in running the Eat More Fish initiative.

**VMRC** – No report

**Virginia Seafood Council** – No report.

**Virginia Waterman's Association** – J.C. Hudgins reported the Oyster season is looking good this year. The price per bushel is up from last year, production is good, and there has been good harvests so far this year. The Waterman's Association shucked and roasted Oysters for the Oyster Roast event at the Reedville Waterman Museum. Now that more regions have opened up the fleet has started to split up to cover more ground and lessen competition.

**Shellfish Growers of Virginia** – Mike Oesterling reported they are getting ready for the legislative session. One bill they are lobbying for will eliminate public comment on the transfer of an existing lease, the bill will also reduce fees on existing leases, and reduce fees on new lease applications. Delegate Robert Bloxom and Senator Richard Stuart are sponsoring this bill. The ISSC 2023 meeting will be in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on March 19-23, 2023.

**Omega Protein** – No report.

**Cooperative Programs**

**VDACS** – No report.

**Financial Report**

Mike Hutt reported a carry over for FY 2022-2023 of \$631,282.27 and a balance of \$522,696.24 as of October 31, 2022.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

**TRAVEL** – The Board may request travel reimbursement.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Mike Hutt  
Executive Director

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Mike Oesterling  
Chair