

FINAL  
VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)  
VIMS  
Gloucester Point, VA  
5/19/2022



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

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mike Oesterling  
J.C. Hudgins  
Daniel Knott  
Trey Sowers  
Monica Schenemann  
Beverly Ludford  
Mike Congrove

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Hannah Kellum  
Ann Gallivan  
Mike Schwarz  
Andy Hall

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Mike Hutt, VMPB  
Owen Hynson, VMPB

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Melissa Ball, VDACS

**INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME:**

**Introduction of attendance at meeting.**

**MINUTES:**

JC Hudgins moved to approve the minutes from January 27, 2022 and Mike Congrove seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Economic Impact Study, VA Tech:** Mike Schwarz was not in attendance so Mike Hutt gathered some information from Fernando to share at the board meeting. The information Fernando has gathered is invaluable for lobbying on behalf of the seafood industry and it is on schedule to be released by mid-summer to fall.

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

**Seafood Expo North America 2022:** S.E.N.A. was held March 13-15 in Boston, Massachusetts. The show was very successful for the V.M.P.B. with nearly 130 trade leads gathered for the industry. While the number in attendance was lower than the number the last pre-Covid year, the quality of the people in attendance was better, making for more serious conversations and leading to better leads. Mike Oesterling was a tremendous help to Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson, and a valuable resource to have when needed. We had a lot of interest in Blue Catfish from different areas of the country as well as some foreign buyers.

**Virginia Tech Sea Lab Grand Opening Hampton, VA:** Postponed until the fall.

**Virginia Food and Beverage Expo:** The Virginia Food and Beverage Expo was held March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at the Richmond Convention Center. The V.M.P.B. gathered 30 leads at the one day show. Many of the leads we gathered were from people in the valley looking for a consistent source of seafood products. If some Virginia companies can find a way to make it profitable shipping out there it is an untapped market. The governor stopped by the booth talked to Mike and Owen and ate a raw oyster for the media. The governor's aides came by the booth afterwards and told us it was a mutually beneficial stop for them and us.

**Seafood Expo Global 2022:** S.E.G. was held April 26-28 in Barcelona, Spain. The show was very successful for the V.M.P.B. with nearly 90 trade leads gathered. There is a lot of interest in Blue Catfish in many countries. Most of the overseas buyers tried the Blue Catfish and were impressed in the taste and fillet quality, are looking for sample bags, and are very serious about finding steady quantities. We've also gathered a lot of leads from European countries looking for Oysters, Clams, and Mussels when the E.U. ban gets lifted, and had a lot of interest in Sea Scallops and Soft Shell Crabs.

**Industry Tours for New Administration Appointments:** Now that both seafood expos are over and the weather is warming up Mike Hutt is lining up some industry tours for the new administration.

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**NEW BUSINESS**

**Undercurrent News February, March, and April 2022 Ads Activity Report:** Through the end of April total advertisement impressions were 146,949 and total clicks are 391, and the Click Thru Rate for the three months is .27%.

**Seafood Source News February, March, and April 2022 Ads Activity Report:** The February results include a bonus placement in the Weekly Global Newsletter which is sent to 30,000 subscribers mainly in Europe and Asia. SeafoodSource News-526,664 ad impressions with 1,259 direct clicks and a .24% click through rate, and Weekly Global Newsletter-25,857 ad impressions with 48 direct clicks and a .19% click thru rate. The March results include a bonus placement in the Weekly Global Newsletter as well with 29, 425 ad impressions with 55 direct clicks and a .19% click thru rate. The April results are 566,259 impressions with 1,063 unique clicks and a .19% click thru rate on SeafoodSource News.

**April 2022 Billboard Ads Activity reports:** Lamar- From the time period of 4/4/2022-5/1/2022 we were guaranteed 37,296 plays and were delivered 40,280 plays, and averaged around 1,400 plays a day. Adams- Activity report mentions 36,058 total play counts and 3,858,566.58 total impressions.

**Seafood Expo Asia:** Seafood Expo Asia will be held September 14-16, 2022 in Singapore. Mike will be co-activity manager and we are still looking for interested Virginia companies.

**Adams Billboards Advertising Proposal 2022:** Mike Congrove made a motion to approve the Adams 2022 billboard advertising proposal at a cost of \$9,000.00 dollars for an eight week period starting on 9/3/2022-10/27/2022, Daniel Knott seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Lamar Billboard Advertising Proposal 2022:** J.C. Hudgins made a motion to approve the Lamar 2022 billboard advertising proposal at a cost of \$9,600.00 for an eight week period on starting on 10/10/2022-11/27/2022, Trey Sowers seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Seafood Expo North America 2023:** V.D.A.C.S. pays half of the \$9,000 renewal cost for V.M.P.B.'s booth space. The deadline for the first half of the payment installment had passed before the board meeting so V.D.A.C.S. has already paid its amount. The board moves to approve the expedition of funds for renewal. Beverly Ludford made a motion to approve the expedition of funds, Monica Schenemann seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Melissa Ball:** Two members of the board will need to be replaced, (Mike Schwarz, Hannah Kellum) Hannah has already proposed a replacement to Melissa, need to hear back from Mike Schwarz.

**Beverly Ludford:** Brought up discussion about the dwindling amount of enthusiasm from younger people in the seafood industry. The board discussed many different solutions to combat this, after school programs, seeing if the board should form a committee to come up with solutions, it was decided the best solution for the time being is to remain in an auxiliary role and to partner with programs that encourage participation from youth and people not traditionally familiar to the seafood industry.

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**INTERESTED PARTY REPORTS**

**VIMS** -- No report.

**Virginia Tech** – Mike Hutt gave the update earlier on the economic impact study.

**VMRC** – Four new members have been added to the board, still no new commissioner yet.

**Virginia Seafood Council** – No report.

**Virginia Waterman’s Association** – (Hudgins). Patent Tong bill passed, allows Patent Tong fishing up to March 31<sup>st</sup>. Crab season survey came back and the numbers look worse than last year so far. (Knott). Crab pot buyback program was started, the pots will be repurposed, looking to set up disposable bins in the Northern Neck, Gloucester, Poquoson, Virginia Beach, and on the Eastern Shore to make it easier to participate. (Schenemann). The association is working up around the Colonial Beach area with the Potomac Commission on establishing public oyster grounds on the Virginia side of the river to make it easier on our waterman and take some of the stress off the Rappahannock oyster grounds.

**Shellfish Growers of Virginia** – (Oesterling). Demand of shellfish currently exceeds supply. They have successfully made sure that whenever VMRC gives out any water born permit, shellfish culture was added to the code of items to be considered, this is the first step in getting a right to Aquaculture bill, like right to farm passed. Need to get in contact with Tommy Kellum about the progress of the Oyster FIP.

**Omega Protein** -- (Hall). No report.

**Cooperative Programs**

**VDACS** – Virtual meetings may be available again, any sales records from companies produced at current or future board meeting would be public record.

**Financial Report**

Mike Hutt reported a carry over for FY 2020-2021 of \$693,292.40 and a balance of \$583,943.30 as of October 31, 2021.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 3:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Mike Hutt  
Executive Director

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Mike Oesterling  
Chair