

FINAL  
**VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)**  
**Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday August 31, 2022/ 1:00 P.M.**  
**VIMS Director's Conference Room**  
**Waterman's Hall**  
**Gloucester Point, VA**



**CALL TO ORDER:** J.C. Hudgins called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM. ten board members were present which represents a quorum.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ann Gallivan  
J.C. Hudgins  
Daniel Knott  
Trey Sowers  
Monica Schenemann  
Beverly Ludford  
Mike Congrove  
Jonathan van Senten  
Nathan Bussels  
Taylor Deihl

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mike Oesterling

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Mike Hutt, VMPB  
Owen Hynson, VMPB

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Kim Husky, Cherrystone  
Karen Hudson, VIMS  
Bill Walton, VIMS  
Sarah Borsetti, VIMS  
Alexi McCarthy, VIMS  
Fernando Goncalves, VT  
Cherrie Foster, ABC 13 News  
Mike Topping, ABC 13 News

**INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME:**

**Introduction of attendance at meeting. Jonathan van Senten, Nathan Bussels, and Taylor Deihl were introduced as new members of the board and were given introductory material to review.**

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**MINUTES:**

Dan Knott made a motion to approve the minutes from May 19, 2022, Monica Schenemann seconded the motion, Ann Gallivan abstained from voting and the motion passed unanimously.

**ABC News Channel 13 Advertising Proposal:** Before the start of unfinished business Mike had this proposal moved to the front of the agenda. Two members of the channel 13 advertising team, Cherrie Foster and Mike Topping, were able to attend the meeting, present their ad proposal to the board, and answer any questions that the board may have. The ad campaign will be 12 weeks long and has the ability to target specific areas, demographics, and then check on what amount of success they have had in getting the targeted groups interested in Virginia seafood. Ann Gallivan made a motion to approve of the package as presented with the stipulation that the dates of the 12 week period be from October 17 2022 to January 9 2023, Dan Knott seconded, the motion passed unanimously. Ann Gallivan made an amendment to the proposal that Mike Hutt has the authority to revert back to the original agreement if the dates can't be changed, Dan Knott seconded, and the amendment passed unanimously.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Economic Impact Study, VA Tech:** Fernando had finished collecting information on the impact study and came to the meeting to share his findings with the board. The information gathered will be invaluable in helping showcase the importance of the seafood industry in the state of Virginia. Without including retail stores, restaurants, and out of state sales the seafood industry has a total economic impact over one billion dollars, provides over seven thousand jobs, and contributes over 26 million dollars in local, state, and federal taxes. Fernando mentioned that they have money left over allocated for the study and recommended the board approve of a no cost extension running through January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. With this extension VT will be able to take the left over funds and create a more accessible fact sheet, a video about the findings, and present the study at different events. Mike Hutt has contacted VDACS about the possibility of a no cost extension and it would just need to be approved by the board. Ann Gallivan made a motion to approve the request of a no cost extension, Monica Schenemann seconded the motion, Jonathan van Senten abstained from voting, and the motion passed unanimously. The board will bring up discussion in the next meeting about doing a smaller condensed version of the study sooner and deciding on a timeline to create a study that includes retail, restaurants, and out of state sales.

**Keith Lanpher Photoshoot:** Photoshoot is close to being finished. Mike Hutt recently went with Keith as he took some photos of pound netting and soft shell crabs. Should be finishing up in the fall or by early spring.

**Virginia Tech Sea Lab Grand Opening Hampton, VA:** The grand opening will be November, 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at the old post office in Hampton, tours of the sea lab will be offered before and after the event.

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**Industry Tours:** Mike Hutt took VDACS Commissioner Joe Guthrie on a two day tour as he was interested in learning more about the industry. On the first day Mike took him to meet with Dan Knotts and J.C. Hudgins. On the second day Mike took him over to the Eastern Shore to see the operation at Cherrystone and Ruby Salt. Commissioner Guthrie was very impressed with what he saw and is looking forward to continuing tours of the industry.

**Undercurrent News Activity Report:** As of the end of July 2022, the total number of advertisement impressions on Undercurrentnews is 296,935 and the total number of clicks is 758.

**SeafoodSource April Ad Report:** Virginia had nice exposure to their audience in April including follow up for buyers from Boston at Seafood Expo North America 2022. Through the end of April 2022, the total number of impressions was 566,259 impressions, with 1,063 unique clicks, and a .19% click through rate.

**2022 Billboard Ads:**

- **Lamar:** From a reporting period between 4/4/2022 to 5/1/2022 Lamar delivered 40,280 plays and made 926,404 impressions. The audited impressions per week are 231,831, per day 33,118, and per play 23. The audited plays per weeks were 8,056, per day 287, and each play had about 10 seconds of screen time.
  
- **Adams:** The impressions from April had 36,058 total play counts delivered and the total number of impressions delivered was 3,858,566.

**Seafood Expo Asia:** Seafood Expo Asia is an event that the VMPB goes as co-activity managers for SUSTA and splits cost with SUSTA on. SUSTA had to back out of the event due to lack of interest and for this reason the VMPB will not be attending. Mike Hutt did extensive work trying to get companies to commit to the expo but there is a lot of hesitancy due to fears of Covid reemerging and a reluctance to travel to an unfamiliar market in Singapore as the show has previously been held in Hong Kong. There will be one Virginia company displaying at the expo.

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**Oyster FIP:** We have some updates on the Oyster FIP report. 1 Year FIP Review Include the following.

- **Genetic Review** – To determine no significant bio print was being introduced by Triploid oyster aquaculture production in VA.
- **SAV Destruction** - Review to determine mitigation of SAV degradation in oyster production both naturally cultured and aquaculture.
- **Native American Oyster Fishing Rights** - Study engaged to determine if Indigenous Native Virginians had and granted rights to the natural oyster resource in VA.
- Review of work by the newly established VMRC Oyster Task Force, which focused on James River oyster resource and poaching.
- Review of minutes from SMAC and AMAC meetings.
- Review of Commission meeting minutes in regards to oyster subjects.
- **Results:** The Audited Review by Fishery Progress Technical Group moved the VA Oyster Fishery Improvement Project from a C to an A citing Advanced Progress with 22 of 28 cited environmental indicators addressed. Next action to be an effort by the VA Seafood Council to have VMRC establish a Shellfish Sustainability Committee to implement the improvement of both Oyster and Clam resource in a matter to obtain accredited sustainability certification. The next update is due October 2022.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**VA Logging Association Oyster Event:** On May 20, 2022 Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson served oysters at the request of Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matt Lohr. The event was at the Richmond Raceway and was well attended with 300 oysters being served over the course of the afternoon.

**Scallops for the Japanese Embassy:** On June 14, 2022 Mike Hutt delivered scallops to the residence of the Japanese ambassador in Washington D.C. at the request of VDACS.

**Eat More Fish Presentation:** Virginia State University is having an ongoing awareness series on Blue Catfish. Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson created a power point for Mike to use and on June 29, 2022 he gave a presentation on the effects of Blue Catfish in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

**The Fishmonger Filming the VA Seafood Industry:** From July 31 – August 8, 2022 Mike was with Tommy Gomes, The Fishmonger, and his crew filming the seafood industry. Tommy Gomes and crew filmed oysters, crabs, clams, catfish, and menhaden. Tommy Gomes was very knowledgeable and enthusiastic it is very beneficial for the industry that he decided to film here. He filmed at Omega Protein and asked honest questions without any agenda so that will be very beneficial for them to have something to cite against all the attack ads against them recently. Mike Hutt's help was invaluable setting up all of the stops with Tommy Gomes, staying with them the entire time, taking them everywhere for filming, and creating this opportunity from an encounter at Seafood Expo North America 2022 and running with it will pay off immensely for the industry. Airing of the episode will be in March of 2023 and Tommy Gomes has already mentioned that they want to film again in Virginia.

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**VDACS Industry Tours in September:** Mike Hutt is looking at setting up some more industry tours for commissioner Guthrie and Jesse Phillips of VDACS and Owen Hynson of the VMPB. Commissioner Guthrie is very interested in learning more about the industry and it will be valuable for Jesse and Owen being new hires to be able to learn more and become more knowledgeable about the industry as well.

**SeafoodSource 2023 Advertising Proposal:** A proposal to run four months of ads on SeafoodSource in February, April, October, and November 2023 at a cost of \$8,640 was presented to the board. Ann Gallivan made a motion to approve the proposal as presented, Dan Knotts seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Undercurrent News 2023 Advertising Proposal:** A proposal to run six months of ads on Undercurrentnews in March, May, July, September, November 2023, and January 2024 for a total cost of \$9,300 was presented to the board. Michael Congrove made a motion to approve the proposal as presented, Trey Sowers seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Undercurrent News Subscription:** A proposal was made to the board to approve Mike Hutt to use VMPB funds to purchase a standard subscription to Undercurrentnews for \$415. Beverly Ludford made a motion to approve the proposal as presented, Monica Schenemann seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**SeafoodSource Subscription:** A proposal was made to the board to allow Mike Hutt to use VMPB funds to purchase a standard subscription to SeafoodSource for \$275. Ann Gallivan made a motion to approve the proposal as presented, Dan Knott seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Virginia Watermans' Heritage Program:** Dan Knott discussed the goals and impact of the program in setting up Eco Tours as well as helping veterans transition to working in the seafood industry. The program is currently not being run it was originally ran by RCC but several issues forced them to drop focus on it. Mike Hutt discussed the feasibility of the VMPB supporting the program with Commissioner Guthrie. He will need to look into if that would be an option and he will discuss that with Dan when he has more information. Sea Grant has mention they will pay the initial fee to reclaim the URL for the program, which will be around \$3,000, if they can get a guarantee that the program will be kept up through outside grants or some other source of funding. More discussion will need to be had on this topic before any motions are made.

**Proposed Budget for FY 2022-2023:** A proposal was made to the board to approve the budget as presented that Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson had worked on for FY 22-23. Every one of the VMPB overhead expenses, Seafood Expos, and proposals voted on today had been factored into the budget already. Beverly Ludford made a motion to approve the budget as presented, Ann Gallivan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Tour of Omega Protein:** Mike is setting up a tour of Omega Protein for Commissioner Guthrie and Secretary Lohr in September.

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**Catfish Processing Meeting:** Delegate Hodges invited Mike Hutt and J.C. Hudgins to a meeting to discuss the catfish processing issues and to raise awareness about the revision to the processing standards in the 2023 Farm Bill.

**2023 Legislative Luncheon:** Mike has contacted the legislature to set up a date and time. They will get back in touch with him in October and will know by then if they will have the event this year.

**INTERESTED PARTY REPORTS**

**VIMS** – (Karen Hudson) Introduction of two new hires, Sarah Borsetti and Alexi McCarthy. Bill Walton presented a new program where he is educating serves on the different types of Virginia oysters so they can better recommend them to customers.

**Virginia Tech** – (Jonathan van Senten) New building in Hampton is currently open, David Crosby from the Eat More Fish Initiative is retiring so VT is picking up the program, looking to do demonstrations with chefs where they livestream and record the video to be available for future viewing.

**VMRC** – No report

**Virginia Seafood Council** – No report.

**Virginia Waterman's Association** – (J.C. Hudgins) Passed a shellfish management plan, it is looking like a good oyster season so far and it might be extended, and blue crab season started slow but had really picked up in the last month.

**Shellfish Growers of Virginia** – No report.

**Omega Protein** -- (Taylor Deihl) Omega Protein wanted to thank Mike Hutt and Tommy Gomes again for coming to the plant and filming.

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**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 \$631,282.27 as of June 30, 2022.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Mike Hutt  
Executive Director

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