

FINAL  
**VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)**  
**ONLINE MEETING THROUGH WEBEX**  
**12/8/20**



**CALL TO ORDER:** Mike Oesterling called the meeting to order at 1:01 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, December 8, 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.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ann Gallivan  
Kim Huskey  
Mike Oesterling  
Mike Schwarz  
J.C. Hudgins  
Daniel Knott  
Andy Hall

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Wayne France  
Rick Barlow  
Brian Terry  
Hannah Kellum

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Dylan Mills, VMPB  
Mike Hutt, VMPB

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Melissa Ball- VDACS  
Tommy Kellum- Kellum Seafood

**MINUTES:**

Mike Schwarz moved to approve the minutes from September 15, 2020 and Ann Gallivan seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

Roll Call:

Ann Gallivan: **yes**  
Kim Huskey: **yes**  
Mike Oesterling: **yes**  
Mike Schwarz: **yes**

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J.C. Hudgins: **yes**  
Daniel Knott: **yes**  
Andy Hall: **yes**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**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.

**VA Waterman’s Legislative Luncheon:** With the current pandemic and everything being virtual at the moment the board has decided that trying to deliver any kind of boxed lunch would not be the best route to take and the board will roll over the funds for this year’s events to next year. On another note, Ann commented that the board should work to develop a one-page brochure highlighting the benefits of the Virginia aquaculture industry; this will be developed once the new 2019 figures are received.

**Oyster FIP Project Update (Tommy Kellum):** After the board voted to provide additional funding for this project MRAG was contacted to let them know we were ready to move forward with a contract. This is a two-phase contract. Currently we are in the first phase which is a pre-assessment, during this phase we have been assigned an auditor name Bob Trumbull. After discussions with Mr. Trumbull we learned that Virginia will be one of the only certifications that include both public and private fisheries. Mr. Trumbull is currently in the pre-assessment process and contacting VMRC. The pre-assessment is expected to be completed in early to mid-January.

**Seafood Expo North America July 11-13, 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 2021 event. The date for 2021 is July 11-13. Marine Products Board staff plans to move forward with planning for the event once the manual is released after the first of the year.

**Seafood Expo Global September 7-9, 2021**

This is a SUSTA event held in Barcelona for which Mike Hutt is a co-activity manager. Diversified recently announced that they will be postponing the event from April to September 7-9, 2021. SUSTA plans to have a pavilion there and the board will begin recruitment for this event after the first of the year.

**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.

**Economic Impact Study (Mike Schwarz):** VT has been doing some behind the scenes collection of data from seafood producers. A major challenge VT has run into has been filling the post-doc position. The position has been reposted as a “research scientist” and currently two strong candidates have presented themselves. An offer letter will be sent out to the lead candidate and should be on track for a hire date of January 10<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup>.

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**Billboard Campaign- October/November 2020:** The billboard campaigns showed great results for both the Adams and Lamar boards. Adams guaranteed 215,409 impressions a week while it is estimated that 242,307 impressions per week were provided and Lamar guaranteed 1,597,815.4 impressions and delivered 3,461,296.36 impressions.

**Oyster Website Update-Stratum**

Jean Goodwyn recently provided a sample design of what the homepage will look like. This home page was designed to mirror the look of the [virginiaseafood.org](http://virginiaseafood.org) site in order to provide a more unified brand.

**COVID-19 Update**

Mike has started to hear about foodservice companies beginning to struggle again as they did at the beginning of the pandemic due to the new restrictions being announced across the country. J.C. announced that watermen have begun to receive their checks from the payroll protection program yesterday and most have received more money than originally expected. 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**

**CSG Consulting Webinar on Holiday Sales- September 29, 2020**

This was a webinar hosted by Kimberly Rueter. There were 12-15 participants and from that Kim offered 1-on-1 consulting sessions. There was an overall positive reception of the webinar with many companies saying that the strategies learned in the webinar have helped increase sales.

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

The SeafoodSource Ad from October generated 425,263 impressions with 1,287 clicks and a 30% click thru rate which is well above the industry average.

**Updating Oyster Growers Directory**

Mike and Dylan have begun the work of updating the Oyster Directory by receiving a contact list of all certified growers in Virginia and either emailing or hard copy mailing a letter along with the registration form. There have been some issues with response rate, which may be due to the holidays. A second mailing will be sent out after the first of the year.

**Conference Call with Senator Warner and Kane's Office- Seafood Purchases through FDA**

Mike had a conference call with Senator Kane and Warner's offices regarding the seafood purchasing programs through USDA to learn of some products that may be readily available for purchase by the USDA. Mike expressed concerns that Virginia can provide products for these programs however they are not being considered. Senator Kane and Warner will be contacting USDA regarding this issue.

**"Virginia is for Oyster Lovers" Bumper Stickers:** Mike and Dylan had 5,000 bumper stickers printed and will be distributed to the industry to help promote awareness of the Virginia Oyster business. If you would like to receive some stickers please contact Dylan Mills.

**Oyster Trail Updates:** The Virginia Oyster Trail has started having weekly calls with guest speakers such as Secretary of Natural Resources Matt Strickler. These calls are open to both members and non-members.

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**Undercurrent News Advertisement:** Karen Thomas with Undercurrent News has reached out to Mike Hutt in regards to the board advertising in their newsletters. She offered us 6 months of free advertising in the daily editions if we pay for 6 months of advertising in the weekly newsletter in the banner 5 section at a rate of \$1,550/month. After discussion, Ann moved to approve funding for the advertisement as presented and Kim seconded.

**Vote:**

Ann Gallivan: Yes  
Kim Huskey: Yes  
Mike Oesterling: Yes  
Mike Schwarz: Yes  
J.C. Hudgins: Yes  
Daniel Knott: Yes  
Andy Hall: Yes

**VA Aquarium Sensible Seafood Interview Filming- December 17, 2020:** Mike was contacted by the Aquarium regarding a film they are making to be used in the aquarium. They would like to interview Mike about the Virginia Sensible Seafood card and why it was made.

**2021 Billboard Plans**

**Lamar:** Dylan presented the billboard proposal from Lamar for the months of May, June, October, and November at a rate of \$4,425.00 per 4-week period for a total cost of \$17,700.00. After discussion, J.C. moved to approve the billboard proposal as presented and Mike Schwarz seconded. **Vote:**

- **Ann Gallivan: Yes**
- **Kim Huskey: Yes**
- **Mike Oesterling: Yes**
- **Mike Schwarz: Yes**
- **J.C. Hudgins: Yes**
- **Daniel Knott: Yes**
- **Andy Hall: Yes**

**Adams:** Dylan presented the billboard proposal from Adams for the months of May, June, October, and November at a rate of \$18,000 for total cost. After discussion, Mike Schwarz moved to approve the proposal as presented and Dan Knott seconded. **Vote:**

- **Ann Gallivan: Yes**
- **Kim Huskey: Yes**
- **Mike Oesterling: Yes**
- **Mike Schwarz: Yes**
- **J.C. Hudgins: Yes**
- **Daniel Knott: Yes**
- **Andy Hall: Yes**

**Banner Advertisements on Google and other Site:** Ann brought up how she sees banner ads on various websites and would like the board to look into the cost of doing these. Mike and Dylan agreed this would be a good idea and will look into it and have more info at the next board meeting. Ann will be sending Mike & Dylan some examples for reference on their research.

**Maine Seafood Holiday Advertising:** Kim Huskey brought up the idea of doing a “Give the Gift of Virginia Seafood” campaign next year that is similar to a campaign that was done by Maine this year. This campaign will focus on online stores as well as Virginia Seafood companies providing other direct-to-

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consumer options during the holidays. Mike and Dylan agreed that this would be a good idea and will look into this for next year.

**INTERESTED PARTY REPORTS**

**VIMS** -\_No report.

**Virginia Tech** -\_Mike Schwarz spoke on behalf of Virginia Tech saying they are hiring a VSAREC dedicated communications specialist. They are continuing to work on the recirculation aquaculture system and its applications in the early stages of Oyster hatcheries.

**VMRC** -No report.

**Virginia Seafood Council** – No report.

**Virginia Waterman’s Association** –\_J.C. talked about how the association partnered with Mainline Brewing Co. in Richmond, VA for an event where the association received roughly \$1,700 from t-shirt and ticket sales. There are now 6 boats in the Virginia Shrimp fishery, currently they have caught 74,000 pounds which is up from the 52,000 pounds caught last year.

**Shellfish Growers of Virginia** – Mike O. echoes everything spoken about in the COVID-19 update.

**Cooperative Programs**

**VDACS** -No report.

**Financial Report**

We had a carryover balance of \$709,909.59 for FY 2019-2020. With a balance of \$674,920.19 as October 31, 2020.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 3:27 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Mike Hutt  
Executive Director

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Mike Oesterling  
Chair