

FINAL  
VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)  
VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE (VIMS) WATERMEN'S HALL, DIRECTOR'S  
CONFERENCE ROOM GLOUCESTER POINT., VA  
3/3/20



**Call to Order:** Mike Oesterling called the meeting to order at 1:10 PM. 8 board members were present which represents a quorum. The meeting is being held at VIMS in the Director's Conference Room in Waterman's Hall.

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Rick Barlow  
Ann Gallivan  
Kim Huskey  
Hannah Kellum  
Mike Oesterling  
Mike Schwarz  
J.C. Hudgins  
Daniel Knott

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Wayne France  
Brian Terry  
John Anthony Hall

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Dylan Mills, VMPB  
Mike Hutt, VMPB

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Melissa Ball- VDACS

**Approval of Last Meeting's Minutes**

Mike S. moved to approve the minutes from November 18th, 2019 and Kim Huskey seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Seafood Expo North America 2020/Advertising Banner  
Boston, MA  
March 15-17, 2020**

With the current situation regarding the Coronavirus outbreak spreading to the U.S. we are getting word that a number of key buyers as well as exhibitors are dropping out of the show. Mike and Dylan have also become wary of the health aspect of attending the show as well as the lack of quality attendance making it worth it to attend this show, because of this they would like the board's opinion on possibly not attending the show. Ann Gallivan made a motion to allow Mike and Dylan to make decisions about attendance to all future shows at their own discretion for the foreseeable future regardless of financial loss when health and safety is a concern. Kim Huskey seconded this and the motion passed unanimously. Ann Gallivan as well as the rest of the board suggested that we cancel our advertising banner as well as all contracts regarding serving Catfish for this year.

**Billboards**

Dylan and Mike presented the board with some preliminary designs from both Lamar and Adams. After discussion, they decided they liked the Adams designs more but without the species names on the bottom. Dylan will be sending out the newer versions of the designs by email when he receives them.

**SUSTA Fall Conference  
Baton Rouge, LA  
November 20-22, 2019**

Dylan attended this conference in November and listened to presentations from in-country SUSTA consultants including a new addition of consultants from Mexico.

**Virginia Agribusiness Reception  
Richmond, VA  
January 9, 2020**

This event was a great success as always. The board hired Deborah Pratt and Clemetine Macon to come shuck and we served 900 Oysters in 2 hours. This is a great event to network with the Delegates and Legislators. Mike Hutt would like to thank Kim Huskey, Mike Oesterling, and AJ Erskine for coming and helping out.

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**Legislative Seafood Luncheon  
January 20, 2020**

The luncheon was a huge success again this year. We served just over 500 lunches in 3 hours. The board was asked by Mike Hutt to start thinking about a menu for next year that we can finalize at the next meeting. Mike O. also suggested that we change the time to 11-1.

**Legislative Seafood Reception/VA Sea Grant  
January 25, 2020**

Mike and Dylan attended this reception at the library of Virginia, overall they thought it was a good event but not as well attended this year as it has been in year's past.

**Seafood Expo Global  
Brussels, Belgium  
April 21-23, 2020**

As of now we have completed recruitment and are getting preparations for the booth design and product shipments ready. It is unclear whether Mike or Dylan will be attending, but that will be decided soon. Dylan will be doing all commercial invoices and health certificates like he did in the past. The board is also monitoring the situation in regards to the Coronavirus.

**Seafood Expo Asia  
Hong Kong  
September 3-5, 2019**

Show management is in talks about moving the show to Singapore, however they have not released any official statements regarding a decision on this.

**Website Update-Stratum**

The design phase of the website has been completed and Stratum has passed along the designs to VDACS who is working with a third party hosting company to make the website live. The board hopes it will be ready in the next couple weeks.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Invasive Catfish Workshop  
January 25-26, 2020**

Mike attended this and there was attendees from Maryland and Virginia from both the recreational and commercial side of the fishery. The feeling now is that recreational fisherman feel that the commercial side will hurt their business if they continue to catch more Catfish, especially with electrofishing. We are trying to communicate the fact that we are going after the smaller fish and not the trophy fish that they are going for. In the future,

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we need to work towards a better understanding and working relationship between the recreational and commercial fisheries.

**Keith Lanpher Photoshoot  
Harper's Table  
February 26, 2020**

Last week Mike and Dylan had a photoshoot with Keith Lanpher at Harper's Table in Suffolk. Some great shots of Catfish, Scallops, Striped Bass, and Flounder were captured both in raw and plated form. The board plans to use the images for billboards and the website when they receive the final copies. They will also be setting up future photoshoots to focus on other Virginia species.

**Chef's Symposium Region 6 Oyster Tasting  
VIMS  
March 10, 2020**

Mike and Dylan will be attending the chef's symposium to sample Oysters from region 6 as well as talk to attendees about Virginia Oysters. VIMS has hired Deborah Pratt to come shuck.

**VA Aquarium Sustainable Seafood Reception  
May 7, 2020**

Mike and Dylan will be attending this event and passing out some literature as well as educating attendees about Virginia Seafood.

**Fancy Food Show  
New York, NY  
June 28-30, 2020**

Mike is still in contact with the legal team at the Specialty Food Association about the contract disputes, if this gets settled we will have more information on possibly exhibiting at this show.

**Canada Seafood Show  
Montreal, Canada  
September 15-16, 2020**

The board was contacted by VDACS about this show. VDACS is going to be providing 4 booths at the show with the Virginia Marine Products Board in one of them and 3 Virginia companies in the others. They are still determining if there will be a co-exhibiting fee and what will be provided in the booth. Once this is determined Mike will work to recruit the 3 other companies who are currently exporting to the Canadian market.

**H-2B Visas**

This year to program for H-2B workers was based on a lottery system and as of now there are multiple companies who will not be getting workers and will be closing. This will have

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a massive negative impact on the Virginia economy. Mike is working with others to get meeting with various members of the Governor's office as well as U.S. Senators to try to get the government to release more workers. However, this would just be a temporary fix and we are also working to get the seafood industry exempt from the H-2B program.

**2018 Top Virginia Species**

NOAA finally released their landing figures last week and our new landings have been released with Oysters topping the list. Virginia still remains first on the East Coast in seafood landings and third in the nation.

**Interested Party Reports**

**VA Institute of Marine Science**

No report.

**Virginia Tech**

Mike Schwarz spoke about the work that Jonathan is doing in Maryland regarding economic impact studies and believes this would be very beneficial to the Virginia industry. Mike Hutt and Mike Schwarz will be setting up a meeting in the next couple weeks to discuss how to get this in motion as it is long overdue.

**VMRC**

No report.

**VA Seafood Council**

Hannah Kellum spoke about how 10-12 different Virginia seafood companies met with Senator Mark Warner on the H-2B issue and getting more visas released. Even if the visas are released at this point companies will not get their workers until June or July. Senator Warner said he would sponsor a bill in the senate to exempt the seafood industry from H-2B.

**Virginia Waterman's Association**

J.C. Hudgins gave a report saying the Oyster season had just ended and it was a pretty good year. The James River and the York River were both very good for dredging this year however dredging in the Rappahannock River was below average.

**Shellfish Growers of Virginia**

The market is currently very strong and we are hoping for good weather this year.

**Cooperative Programs**

**VDACS**

No Report

**Reports**

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**Finance**

We had a carryover balance of \$665,875.45 for FY 2018-2019 and a balance of \$585,460.65 as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

**Public Comments**

No Comments

**Expenses for travel to Board Meeting**

If you are interested in getting reimbursed for your travel to this meeting Dylan will email the forms for you to fill out and return to him.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 3:14 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Mike Hutt  
Executive Director

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Mike Oesterling  
Chair