



VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)

Board Meeting

Thursday November 16, 2023/ 1:00 P.M.

Omega Protein Inc.

Reedville, VA

CALL TO ORDER: J.C. Hudgins Oesterling called the meeting to order at 1:12 P.M. nine board members were present which represents a quorum.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mike Oesterling
Trey Sowers

STAFF PRESENT:

Mike Hutt, VMPB
Owen Hynson, VMPB

GUESTS PRESENT:

Jamie Green, Commissioner of VMRC
Ben Stagg, Executive Director of Shellfish Growers Association
Nicole Knott, Commercial Water woman
Karen Hudson, VIMS
Adriane Michaelis, VIMS

INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME:

Introduction of attendance at meeting.

MINUTES:

Beverly Ludford made a motion to approve the minutes from August 17, 2023, Mike Congrove seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Seafood Source News October 2023 Ads Activity Report: The total impressions as of the end of October 2023 were 677,798 impressions, the total clicks were 957 clicks and the click through rate was .14%. Seafood Source also gave us a free placement in their Weekly Global Newsletter the total impressions were 20,855 impressions, the clicks were 31 clicks and the click through rate was .15%.

Undercurrent News September & October 2023 Ads Activity Report: The total number of impressions as of the end of October 2023 were 402,616 impressions, 1911 total clicks and the click through rate is .42%.

2022 Billboard Ads:

- **Adams:** The VMPB has an eight-week run with Adams between 10/9/23-12/3/23 through the period of 10/9/23-11/1/23 we received 33,238 plays and 822,699 impressions.
- **Lamar:** The VMPB Lamar summer ad campaign ran from 6/19/23-9/10/23. We received two reports from Lamar about the VMPB campaign. The first report covers a period from 6/19/23-7/23/23 and shows that we received 81,954 plays and 1,816,069.74 impressions. The latest report covers the period from 7/24/23-9/10/23 and shows that we received 98,990 plays and 2,193,581.08 impressions.

NBC 12 News Ad Campaign: Through the period of 11/7/23-11/14/23 the NBC 12 campaign has received a total of 325,202 ads viewed, 406 website page leads, 210 likes, shares, or comments on social media, 38,760 people reached on social media, 235 Facebook page leads.

ABC 13 News Ad Campaign: Through the period of 11/1/23-11/12/23 the ABC 13 campaign has delivered a total of 626 impressions, 3 clicks, and a .48% click through rate on Site Retargeting, 15,598 impressions, 15 clicks, and a click through rate of .10% on OTT Retargeting, and 44,643 impressions, 19 clicks, and a click through rate of .04% on 13 News Now Display.

VDACS International Market Chef and Media Tour August 30, 2023: Mike Hutt informed the board about this event. He coordinated with Jesse Phillips from VDACS international marketing on a tour of French and Canadian chefs and media personnel and arraigned for them to see various seafood facilities, observe a seafood market in the state, and to sample a variety of Virginia Seafood. Mike Hutt said that a lot of good publicity was generated from this event, the chefs from Cannada and France were all interested in Virginia Seafood, especially scallops, and they are interested in returning to Virginia on a tour of the commercial seafood industry again.

Seafood Expo Asia September 11-13, 2023: Mike Hutt was a co-activity manager for this event. There was only one company from the SUSTA region that was interested in participating in this event. Mike Hutt was unable to travel to this show, one company did not meet SUSTA's minimum requirement for three companies to be able to send the co-activity managers. The one company that traveled was from Virginia so Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson but assisted them however they could before their travel date.

New Kent Winery Agriculture and Forestry Governor's Event September 13, 2023: Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson were going to participate in this event serving ½ shell oysters. This event was cancelled, but they are still interested in holding this event. Mike Hutt has not received any word yet on when the event will take place now.

VA State Fair Black Boots & Tie Event September 22, 2023: Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson served ½ shell oysters at the fairgrounds in Doswell on the first night of the State Fair. Ann Gallivan and her daughter Sophia participated in this event alongside Mike and Owen and were a tremendous help in making it a successful event. Attendance was a little less than the year before last due to weather but there was much engagement from the crowd at the VMPB station. The Governor attended this event and showed his support for the commercial seafood industry by stopping at the booth for an oyster.

Oyster FIP Progress Report September 2023: The Oyster FIP continues to receive A ratings and is in compliance with Environmental & Social reporting requirements. Nathan Bussels informed the board that Tommy Kellum is pleased with the progress so far and that he should have an update on the remaining length of the Oyster FIP at the next VMPB meeting.

River City Shuck & Roll October 21, 2023: Mike Hutt was contacted by Matheson Oyster Co. about attending this event. It was a well-attended event with many vendors and bands participating. Mike Hutt brought pamphlets, mousepads, bumper stickers, and oyster stickers and educated anyone stopping by his booth about Virginia's commercial seafood industry. During the time that Mike was at this event he got engagement from about 15 people. Mike Hutt informed the board it was mostly people attending the event interested in the vendors and bands, but he got some very good engagement from the people that did stop at his booth, and he would participate in this event again if asked.

Virginia Aquaculture Conference November 10-11, 2023: Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson attended this event and brought educational material for anyone interested in learning more about Virginia's commercial seafood industry and sign-up forms for anyone who was interested in being added to the VMPB's Aquaculture Oyster Directory. The event was very well attended, we had a lot of traffic at the VMPB booth, and we got some engagement on sign up for the Aquaculture Oyster Directory. Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson both sat in on various lectures during the conference and expanded their knowledge of the seafood industry.

2024 Legislative Seafood Luncheon January 2024: Mike Hutt has not been told an exact date yet, but he will probably know by the end of the month and has been informed that it will be the first Wednesday of the first full week of the next legislative session. The board had discussion on what the menu for the luncheon should be and decided that it should include catfish chowder, a crab cake, steamed clams, mac & cheese, collards, and a piece of cornbread. The board has already approved funding for this event when the FY 23-24 budget was passed so Mike Hutt was given discretion to work with the caterer of this event on the menu within the budget approved for the event.

2024 Virginia Agribusiness Legislative Reception January 11, 2024: This event will be held at the Old Train Station in Richmond on January 11, 2023. Mike Hutt told the board that he would like to have Bayside and Seaside Oysters for this event but has not picked a company to purchase oysters from yet. Mike Hutt has also informed the board that he has a conflict that evening and will not be able to attend, Owen Hynson will be able to attend the event. Mike Hutt will be doing the prep work with Owen for this event. J.C. Hudgins, Dan Knott, and another member from the Virginia Waterman's Association will be there to shuck oysters for this event. Kim Husky, A.J. Erskine, Ben Stagg, and Monica Schenemann have informed Mike that they will participate in this event to help Owen.

Seafood Expo North America 2024 March 10-12, 2024: Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson will be attending this event. Mike Hutt will try to contract with Maritime Seafood for catering at this event again this year. The VMPB is not able to directly contract the services of the caterer through the state because of their strikes on the contract. Mike Hutt also informed the board that hopefully a Virginia company will be freighting their products up to the show again this year so that we could split costs as opposed to spending a lot more on shipping ourselves. Mike Hutt also informed the board that Mike and Owen have had a third person attending the event to help manage trade leads, samples, and engaging with attendees. Beverly Ludford made a motion for the board to approve paying for travel, lodging, and per diem for one board member, or if they cannot be found one member of the seafood industry, who volunteers to participate in the event with Mike and Owen. Johnathan van Senten seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. Ben Stagg informed the board that if no member was able to participate, he would volunteer.

Virginia Food & Beverage Show March 27, 2023: Mike and Owen will be participating in this event. This is a smaller one-day show that happens every other year. VDACS pays for the VMPB's booth space at this event. Mike and Owen will be gathering trade leads, serving samples of Virginia Seafood, and educating the public on the commercial seafood industry at this event.

Seafood Expo Global 2024 April 23-25, 2024: Mike Hutt is a co-activity manager on this event. He has received interest verbally from four SUSTA region companies, two of which are from Virginia. If the co-activity manager from Florida is allowed to travel for this event and Owen Hynson is unable to travel under SUSTA funds as the replacement co-activity manager Mike Hutt reminded the board that Owen is approved to travel on VMPB funds for this event under the passed FY 23-24 budget and he thinks that it be important to have extra help and for Owen to gain more experience on international shows.

NEW BUSINESS

Home Grown Harvest Festival, Franklin, VA October 7, 2023: Beverly Ludford informed the board that this event turned out very successful. The VMPB provided 100 pounds of Blue Catfish and nutritional information sheets on Blue Catfish for this event. Mike Hutt received a letter of thanks and was told that the Blue Catfish was a huge hit.

Conference Call with Congressman Andy Harris October 19, 2023: This call was arranged by Congressman Andy Harris, 1st District Maryland, and was led by the USDA. This was an educational meeting discussing the seriousness of the problem posed by Blue Catfish in the Chesapeake Bay and what steps are being taken on this problem. Also discussed are the USDA low interest loans on Blue Catfish being administered through Congressman Harris office and how to participate.

VDACS Catfish Grant 2023: Appropriation & Finance cut the original bill co-sponsored by Delegate Keith Hodges and Senator Richard Stuart from \$4 million to \$2 million dollars, and when the state budget was passed and signed by the governor that total was reduced to \$250,000. Mike Hutt has heard back from four companies that are going to apply before the November 20th deadline. These grants will be administered by VDACS and will require no matching funds from counties. If there is a lot of engagement on this grant it might lead to larger amounts of money being available on future grants.

VT-VDACS-VMPB Media Tour December 6, 2023: Mike Hutt informed the board that the invite for this event went out on 11/15/23. Mike Hutt, Tommy Kellum, and Mike Schwarz will each be interviewed during this event. There will be eight to ten media people on this event as well as a handful of people from the commercial seafood industry. They will be leaving Kellum Seafood on a VMRC boat to observe oyster harvesting. There are plans for another tour in spring and again in the fall.

SUSTA Winter Conference, Charleston, South Carolina December 11-14, 2023: Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson will be attending this to learn anything new that they will need to be aware of in their roles as co-activity managers on SUSTA events. SUSTA is provided all expenses for travel, hotel, and per diem for Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson for this event.

Sea Grant Legislative Reception February 28, 2024: Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson will be at this event in Richmond as guests engaging with members of the seafood industry and legislators on behalf of the VMPB. The VMPB will also be providing their display boats to be used at the ½ shell oyster station.

Southern Association of State Department of Agriculture (VDACS Hosting) June 2024: Mike Hutt informed the board that VDACS will serve as the host of this event next year. The event will be held in Williamsburg in June of 2024, VDACS commissioner Joe Guthrie is interested in setting up a tour of an oyster facility for this event, and the VMPB will probably be providing ½ oysters for this event.

Seafood Expo Asia 2024 September 4-6, 2024: Mike Hutt informed the board that if there is enough interest from companies in this event next year for SUSTA to be able to send him he will travel for this event.

INTERESTED PARTY REPORTS

VIMS – Karen Hudson informed the board that Sustainability Grant Applications are due January 12th, 2024. Adrienne Michaels is a new member at VIMS and introduced herself to the board at the meeting.

Virginia Tech – Jonathan informed the other members of the board that the Seafood AREC is looking at expanding the Eat More Fish program next year, they are organizing a symposium with catfish processors, and are looking into Summer Flounder and lost opportunities in that fishery due to fluctuations in the quotas.

VMRC – Jamie Green informed the board that the VMRC will be co-hosting Environment Virginia April 9-11 this year at VMI. Jamie informed the board that the SeaFab board met, it has nine members, and Ben Johnson is the chair. The SeaFab board is looking into how to support the Spiny Dogfish and Conch/Whelk fisheries at the moment. Jamie also informed the board that the VMRC will be doing an in-depth impact study of the seafood that will include both the commercial and recreational industries, will be kept up to date year by year, and will be able to be broken down by each individual fishery.

Virginia Seafood Council – No report.

Virginia Waterman's Association – JC Hudgins informed the board that the fleet is currently in the James, York, and Rappahannock rivers, Tangier, and will be moving into the Great Wicomico in December. Oyster prices are ok, they are seeing dead loss, which might be due to higher salinity, and it is mostly affecting larger oysters. The oyster season has been extended in Lynnhaven and the dredge season begins around Tangier and Castle Rock in December. He also informed the board that the Blue Crab season is winding down.

Shellfish Growers of Virginia – Ben Stagg informed the board that he held his first meeting as Directory of Shellfish Growers of Virginia. The board is unchanged except for Ann Gallivan being replaced by Tom Gallivan, Kim Husky elected as the Board of Directors Chairperson, Treasurer Leanne Flick stepped down being replaced by Devin Smith, and Bruce McLaughlin was made assistant secretary. The SGA is currently not supporting having any new legislation being put forward and is ready to battle any controversial legislation created that does not support the industry.

Omega Protein – Taylor Deihl informed the board that Omega Protein was happy to accommodate the board for the meeting and was glad to be able to provide the opportunity for a tour.

Cooperative Programs

VDACS – Melissa Ball informed the board that VDACS is currently working on filling expiring VMPB board appointments.

Financial Report

Mike Hutt reported a carry over for FY 2023-2024 of \$592,308.42 and a balance of \$541,943.87 as of September 30th, 2023.

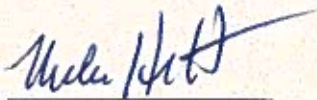
PUBLIC COMMENT - None

TRAVEL – The Board may request travel reimbursement.

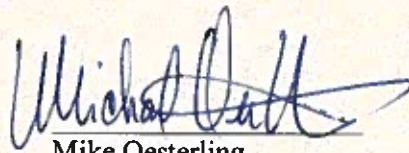
ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Hutt", written over a horizontal line.

Mike Hutt
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Oesterling", written over a horizontal line.

Mike Oesterling
Chair

