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MEETING MINUTES
Virginia Recreational Fishing Advisory Board
Monday, September 9, 2024
5:30 p.m. work session and 6:00 p.m. meeting

Members Present

Charles Randolph
Ed Rhodes
Charles Southall
Maggie Whittemore

Staff Present

Debbie Corker
Sheri Crocker
Pat Geer
Alicia Nelson
Ethan Simpson
Kylie Muir

Board Members Absent

J.T. Holland
Meriwether Payne
Wayne Jessie Jr.

Others Present

Sunny Demming
Ike Eisenhower
Shannon Ferguson
Jan McDowell
Susanna Musick
Rebecca Gwynn
Steve York

The meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams. Meeting minutes were recorded by Alicia Nelson. A recording of the meetings and presentations are available.

Work Session (5:30 Meeting):

During the work session, staff worked with board members on connectivity issues and clarification of the schedule. Alicia Nelson reviewed the additions to the meeting agenda since the July meeting, which included applications from Steve York for a renewal of the Sunshine Program formerly run by Denny Dobbins, and a large project proposal from the DWR that was brought to the agency in August. The board members and staff also reviewed the peer reviews that had been submitted since the last meeting. The board did have concerns about the comments raised for item P noting suggestions for changes to the layout of the peer and kayak launch.

Voting Meeting (6:00 Meeting):

I. Introduction, Announcements, Comments.

Alicia Nelson thanked everyone for attending the meeting and noted the new additions to the agenda. The board welcomed Chairman Rhodes back after an extended absence.

II. Status of Fund.

Sheri Crocker reviewed the status of the fund and noted that \$4,400,306 is available for projects at this time. The board clarified the agency support costs and thanked Ms. Crocker for careful management of the fund. Mr. Southall asked about soliciting applications from municipalities given the current balance of the fund. There was also discussion about continued support for the reef program and law enforcement. Mr. Southall wanted to make the localities aware of the funding opportunity. Ms. Nelson suggested an outreach document or request for proposals to share

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for the municipalities. She suggested addressing that document in a work session or future meeting. Virginia recreational and parks conference

Ms. Demming noted that the Virginia Recreation and Parks Society Conference is this weekend, and offered to share any information. While the immediate weekend is likely too soon, a future meeting would be ideal. There were comments about putting brackets on any potential requests to make sure there are reasonable funding proposals. Mr. Rhodes asked that we have a working group to review these concepts. Ms. Nelson will work with the board to have a working group draft a request for proposals or funding opportunities and review at the next board meeting.

III. Review of Minutes from the July 2024 RFAB Meeting.

Mr. Southall motioned to approve the minutes from the July 2024 RFAB Meeting, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Randolph. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Fishing event applications:

- A) 0424-01 2025 Hope House & Oak Grove Nursing Home Fishing Excursions and Clinics. T.B. Butch Pierce; Great Bridge Fisherman's Association. **\$2,450.**
- B) 0424-02 2025 Virginia Beach Anglers Club/Seton Youth Shelter Children's Fishing Trip. Bob Burstein, Virginia Beach Anglers Club. **\$2,500.**

Mr. Ferguson introduced himself and noted he would be taking over the project for GBFA. He also requested a budget change from \$2,500 to \$3,000 due to changes in vessel costs over time.

- C) 0424-03 2025 Norfolk Youth Head Boat Fishing Trip. Ike Eisenhower, Norfolk Anglers Club. **\$1,800.**
- D) 0424-04 2025 Kiwanis Club Children's Fishing Clinic and Kiwanis Fishing Clinic. Wesley Brown, Capital District Kiwanis Club. **\$11,000.**
- E) 0424-05 2025 Saxis and Morley's Wharf Children's Fishing and Conservation Educational Outings. Robert Mucha, Eastern Shore of Virginia Anglers Club. **\$2,662.**
- F) 0424-06 2025 Knights of Columbus Annual Kids Fishing Day. Jim McCaddin, Knights of Columbus. **\$7,500.**
- ~~G) 0424-07 2024 Broken Men Foundation Incentive-Based Goal Fishing Trip for the Summer Program. *approved in July*~~
- H) 0424-08 2025 Broken Men Foundation Incentive-Based Goal Fishing Trip. Ellery Lundy, Broken Men Foundation. **\$13,975.**

Mr. Southall recommended taking projects A through F, and items H and R as a block, clarifying that the motion would include all of the fishing events proposed on the agenda that have not yet been approved. Mr. Southall motioned to approve the fishing projects noted, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Whittemore. The motion passed unanimously.

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V. Other Projects:

- I) 0424-09 Virginia Game Fish Tagging 2024. S. Musick (VIMS), L. Gillingham (VMRC). **\$92,495.**
- J) 0424-10 *Estimating Relative Abundance of Young-of-Year American Eel in the Virginia Tributaries of Chesapeake Bay. M. Fabrizio, T. Tuckey, VIMS. \$32,983. **(\$16,492 from VSRFDF, and \$16,491 from MFIF).**
- K) 0424-11 *Federal Assistance (Sportfish Restoration) Matching Funds, Federal FY 2025. P. Geer. \$204,822 **(\$153,616 from VSRFDF, \$51,206 from MFIF).**
- L) 0424-12 *Boat Scarring Effects on Submerged Aquatic Vegetation in Virginia: Monitoring and Recovery Patterns – year 23. Christopher Patrick, VIMS. \$21,919 **(\$10,960 from VSRFDF, and \$10,959 from MFIF).**
- M) 0424-13 M Use of Satellite Archival Transmitting Tags (PSATS) to evaluate air exposure and handling effects on the survival of red drum (*Scianops ocellastus*) released during Virginia’s late summer recreational fishery. ***updated*** Hamish Small, VIMS. **\$84,975.**

The peer review was noted and reviewed.

- N) 0424-14 Genetic Analysis of the Distinctiveness of Gray Triggerfish, *Balistes capricus* sampled from Virginia. Jan McDowell, VIMS. **\$78,295.**

The peer review was noted and reviewed.

- O) 0424-15 MLC Public Access Waterfront Enhancement and Community Saltwater Learn to Fish Program. Bernadette La Casse, Mathews Land Conservancy. **\$27,600.**
- P) 0424-16 Phoebus Waterfront Park Dock Improvements. Alison Eubank, City of Hampton. ***updated* \$120,000.**

Sunny Denning from Hampton was present for the project and noted that Alison Eubank is not longer with the City. The board discussed the pier reviews and concerns about the parking and orientation and distance for kayaks between the parking and proposed launch. Mr. Southall suggested that Ms. Denning take the board’s and reviewer’s comments back to the City and revise the project based on those recommendations. The project could be heard at a later date. The board decided to table the item until Hampton could revise the project and bring it back to the RFAB.

- Q) 0424-17 Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament: Youth Division Add-On. ***updated*** Joseph Grist, VMRC. **\$10,259.**
- R) 0424-18 2025 Sunshine Program. Steve York, Norfolk Angler’s Club. **\$10,100.**

This project was approved by the Commissioner to be heard out of cycle. Steve York introduced the program that they would like to restart after a pause in 2024 due to the passing of Denny Dobbins.

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- S) 0424-19 Cole's Point Water Access. Rebecca Gwynn. Department of Wildlife Resources. **\$500,000.**

Rebecca Gwynn, DWR, gave a presentation on the project at Cole's Point in Westmoreland County. She described the funding already allocated to the project and the need to acquire the land in the near future. The project includes acquisition and improvements to the site for both the boat launch and parking. Mr. Geer asked about boater access funds, and Ms. Gwynn noted that all of the boater access funds are currently used to maintain existing sites. There was discussion about mixed use of the location and neighboring properties. If funded, the land acquisition is expected to be completed by April 25 with a full completion by December 2025. The chairman discussed the check list with Ms. Gwynn and her only comments were that 30 years may be a difficult useful life for a project given environmental conditions.

Mr. Southall motioned to recommend funding items I through O and Q through S (leaving item P tabled for a future meeting). Mr. Randolph seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Other Business:

Discussion: Potential funding to support the Saltwater Tournament and Tagging Program interim staffing needs.

Mr. Geer led the discussion. He said that the current tournament director and PI for the agency's portion of the tagging program is on extended leave for some time. He also noted that the administrative assistant for the program also has plans for retirement next year leaving a staffing gap that cannot be filled with existing staff members. He proposed funding for \$83,417 for an interim director. Mr. Rhodes asked if there was any possibility of getting funding from the state budget, and Mr. Geer noted that it would be difficult given the timing.

Mr. Southall noted that given the unforeseen circumstances, he feels that this project needs to be funded immediately. Mr. Southall motioned to recommend funding the proposal and Ms. Whittemore seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Adjourn

Projects marked * are split funded