

Draft

MEETING MINUTES **Virginia Recreational Fishing Advisory Board** **Virginia Marine Resources Commission** **2018 Applicant presentations** **Monday, May 14, 2018**

Board Members Present

Sheldon Arey
Carolyn Brown
Meriwether Payne
Charles Randolph
Ed Rhodes

Staff Present

Rob O'Reilly
Sheri Crocker
Pat Geer
Alex Aspinwall
Debbie Corker
Lewis Gillingham

Board Members Absent

J. T. Holland
Jack Miller
Randy Pack
Charles Southall

Others Present

Denny Dobbins
Greg Brown
Jack "Ike" Eisenhower
Rob Cowling
Bonnie Fitz
Steve Elliot
J. Paul Richardson
Troy Tuckey
George Reich
Joe Stephenson
Mary Fabrizio
Susanna Musick
David Anderson
Wesley Brown
Cody M. Henley

Minutes were recorded by Lewis Gillingham. An audio recording of the meeting is available.

I. Introduction, Announcements, Comments.

Chairman Ed Rhodes introduced Sheri Crocker as the new Chief of Administration & Finance. Ms. Crocker took Jane McCroskey's place in September 2017 following her retirement.

II. Status of Fund.

Ms. Crocker addressed the RFAB. The current cash balance as of March 31, 2018 was \$4,201,997.14. Going forward, funds reserved for approved projects are \$2,189,669.41. Projected revenue for April-June (based on prior year's receipts) is \$772,000. FY2019 VMRC support costs are \$2,093,144 and VDGIF support costs for FY 2018 will be \$76,377.

This yields a projected balance of \$614,806.73 as of March 31, 2018 for RFAB projects. Chairman Rhodes compared the current requests for funding with the budget status and summed up his view as “bad” and not likely to improve anytime soon. He indicated the Board would try to work with all the applicants but it would require a tightening of everyone’s budget.

III. Review of Minutes from the September 2017 RFAB Meeting.

Sheldon Arey moved to approve the minutes from the September 11, 2017 RFAB meeting. Carolyn Brown seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

IV. Discussion

A) VIMS Report—A Brief Guide to Striped Bass Ecology & Management in the Chesapeake Bay

Chairman Rhodes indicated he had received a text message from Dr. Fabrizio indicating she was stuck in traffic on 64, as both west bound and east lanes of I-664 were closed. The Chairman said the Board would move on in the agenda but the Board would provide Dr. Fabrizio time once she arrived. Dr. Fabrizio arrived prior to the conclusion of the meeting and after a brief consultation with the Board she agreed to attend the next meeting, on Monday, July 9, 2018, to make her presentation.

V. Fishing event applications for 2019 events:

A) 2019 Knights of Columbus Annual Kids Fishing Day (Year 31). Greg Brown, **\$7,510.**

The Chairman Rhodes said Greg Brown was not present but he assumed Mr. Brown was likely stuck in traffic as well. Mr. Brown would be given time on the agenda once he arrived. Mr. Brown addressed the Board following the last item (M) and indicated this request to the Board was the same as the past two years (\$7,510). The Chairman indicated funds were extremely tight this year and the Board may need to make changes in allocations to all of the projects to be able to fund, at some level, all of the children’s fishing events.

B) 2019 Hope House & Oak Grove Nursing Home Fishing Excursions and Clinics. Joseph Stephenson; George Reich, Great Bridge Fisherman’s Association. **\$3,825.**

Joe Stephenson presented a brief overview of what had occurred during the 2017 event. This request for \$3,825 was the same as the 2018 request. The requested funds provide a pier fishing trip and headboat trip. Mr. Stephenson indicated the club has and maintains its own fishing equipment for the pier event and tackle is supplied as part of the headboat trip. Sheldon Arey asked for a more detailed breakout of exactly what the RFAB funds are providing. Chairman Rhodes requested Mr. Stephenson provide more detail for the 2019 RFAB budget request and send it to Sheri Crocker.

C) 2019 Virginia Beach Anglers Club/Seton Youth Shelter Children’s Fishing Trip. Robert Burstein, Virginia Beach Anglers Club. **\$2,500.**

David Anderson, who took over for Robert Burstein, presented the Virginia Beach Anglers Club request of \$2,500. Charles Randolph reiterated the RFAB fund was “really hurting” and asked Mr. Burstein to consider an array of cost saving measures from sponsorship of advertisement on the t-shirts to additional in-kind contributions. Mr. Randolph indicated this request was not meant to apply just to the Virginia Beach Anglers Club’s funding request but all the requests for fishing excursions the Board would review tonight. Any reduction on of these fishing trip requests would help enable the Board to fund, at some level, and keep all these events going.

- D) 2019 Children's Fishing Clinic. Rob Cowling, Newport News Rotary Club and Coastal Conservation Association-Peninsula. **\$7,500.**
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- E) 2019 Kiwanis Club Children's Fishing Clinic. Wesley Brown, Capital District Kiwanis Club. **\$7,500.**

At the request of Chairman Rhodes D and E would be reviewed simultaneously and Rob Cowling, Newport News Rotary Club and Coastal Conservation Association-Peninsula and Wesley Brown, Capital District Kiwanis Club approached the podium.

Rob Cowling indicated the Newport News Rotary Club and Coastal Conservation Association-Peninsula was seeking funding for their 24th annual event. They invite over 250 children but expect to have about 250 children the day of their event. Along with the children there are about 100 chaperones and another 50 volunteers to give a day of education and fishing experiences. They try to have “new kids every time” because there are plenty of at-risk children in the region. They do buy rods and reels, shirts and hats that the kids keep. The RFAB request is about 47% of their overall budget as they obtain another \$8,000 in sponsorship whose names are displayed on the t-shirts. The kids are also provided with a cookout of hotdogs after the kids come back from the pier fishing event. Mr. Cowling and the Newport News Rotary Club and Coastal Conservation Association-Peninsula work closely with Wesley Brown and the Capital District Kiwanis Club to combine resources and get the most for the money spent. The two events are purposely scheduled close together (one on Saturday the other the following Tuesday) to further conserve their resources and help each other. Rob added that the RFAB does receive “top billing” on the banner and t-shirts.

Wesley Brown said this would be his 19th year for their fishing clinic. They select children with a similar at-risk background but mostly from the Smithfield area. The group solicits in-kind contributions and donations from the local community. Mr. Brown was proud to inform the Board that this project was selected by Kiwanis for special recognition of the Smithfield District Kiwanis Club. Chairman Rhodes thanked both presenters for everything they have accomplished.

- F) 2019 Saxis and Morley's Wharf Children’s Fishing and Conservation Educational Outings. Steven Elliot, Eastern Shore of Virginia Anglers Club. **\$2,200.**

Steve Elliot said the Eastern Shore of Virginia Anglers Club conducts two pier fishing events for children under 15, one each at the Saxis Pier and the other at Morley’s Wharf. They have chaperones for the children and do provide rods, reels and t-shirts for the kids. Mr. Elliot added that the counties of Accomac and Northampton were two of the least

wealthy counties in Virginia. Mr. Elliot asked if the Board had questions and there were none.

- G) 2019 Norfolk Youth Head Boat Fishing Trip. James “Ike” Eisenhower, Norfolk Anglers Club. **\$1,200.**

James Eisenhower from the Norfolk Anglers Club presented the club’s request for funding a children’s headboat trip for 45 to 50 children. The event provides a cookout and t-shirts for the kids. All kids are from the local community and the Norfolk Anglers Club partners with the Norfolk’s East Oceanview Community Center. Mr. Eisenhower pointed out that the majority of their budget request pays for fuel and rental of the headboat.

- H) 2019 Sunshine Children's Fishing Program. Denny Dobbins, Portsmouth Anglers Club/Sunshine Program. **\$9,550.**

Denny Dobbins explained the Sunshine program’s goal is to develop fishermen and in doing so the Sunshine program serves disadvantaged children and provides them with the experience of a day on, or over the water, and teaches them how to fish. The program receives assistance from the Virginia Marine Police, Portsmouth Police, Virginia Power and the U.S. Navy. This RFAB request includes several new groups as a source of participants and is scheduled for two pier events and five headboat trips. In all, Mr. Dobbins expects about 740 children will benefit with the majority on kids in the 7 to 14 year old range. Each event has volunteers from not only the Portsmouth Angler Club but other area clubs as well. The overall cost per child is expected to run \$17-18 each. The cost of each headboat trip averages \$1,300-1,500. The Program receives partial sponsorship for the food from Kroger. The Program no longer provides hats or t-shirts for the kids but uses wrist bands for identification purposes. Over the years the Program has amassed about two hundred rods that the Portsmouth Anglers Club maintains but each year Mr. Dobbins expects to replace about ten outfits. The Program solicits donations from other sources to keep the cost/child as low as possible. Starting June 23 there is an event scheduled every Thursday throughout the summer.

VI. Access Projects

- I) Wormley Creek Waterfront Improvements – Phase 2. Bonnie Fitz, York County. **\$58,115.25**

Bonnie Fritz presented York Counties RFAB request for funding and stated she would be brief since the Board heard this proposal last year. This was Phase II funding of the project initially requested in last year’s proposal. It includes demolition of the existing fishing platform (20’ X 12.5’) and construction of a larger fishing platform (31’X 12’) that will be ADA compliant. Last year the Board only approved funding for the kayak access facility and upgrades to the site portion of the request. The total estimated cost of this project is \$77,467 that includes a 15% contingency. The RFAB portion of the request is for \$58,115.25. The Board questioned the availability of access to deep enough water to provide a positive fishing experience in terms of catch. The Board had two requests to Ms. Fritz for additional information--provide depth readings at high and low tide around the pier’s new footprint and to check with the Army Corp of Engineers regarding the Corp’s intentions of dredging in this area of Wormley Creek in the near future.

VII. Research Projects

- J) Virginia Game Fish Tagging 2019. S. Musick (VIMS), L. Gillingham (VMRC). **\$82,487.**

Susanna Musick presented the Game Fish Tagging proposal. Ms. Musick indicated the request was nearly identical to last year's except for a slight decrease in the cost of the tags. She displayed two summary slides that were in the 2017 Annual Report (hard copies will be available at the next meeting and the electronic version will be sent to Board members next week) and indicated over 19,000 fish were tagged in 2017 and that was a 25% increase over 2016. Speckled trout were the most tagged species in 2017. Ms. Musick also provided a brief update to the four cobia research projects funded by the RFAB. Three of the four projects have requested a one year no cost extension to allow for addition data processing and analysis.

- K) *Estimating Relative Abundance of Young-of-Year American Eel in the Virginia Tributaries of Chesapeake Bay (Yr 16). M. Fabrizio, T. Tuckey, VIMS. \$26,960. **(\$13,480 from VSRFDF, and \$13,480 from MFIF)**

In the absence of Dr. Fabrizio (still stuck in traffic) chairman Rhodes indicated the board would hear this item at their next meeting. Mr. Tuckey was in attendance but Dr. Fabrizio had the presentation on her person. The chairman asked if anyone could reach her via email or text and let her know so she could get out of traffic and head home.

- L) Federal Assistance (Sportfish Restoration) Matching Funds, Federal FY 2019. R. O'Reilly, VMRC. **\$301,334.**

Rob O'Reilly, Chief of Fisheries, presented the agencies long standing request to provide matching RFAB money for the Sportfish Restoration funds. Although the request is for \$301,334 Mr. Reilly anticipates the final request to be less because, beginning with the federal fiscal year 2019, the agency's share of the Sportfish Restoration money will be less. The best estimate of how much less at this time is about \$38,000 less but staff will have a more accurate calculation in time the September meeting final vote. Mr. O'Reilly stated this RFAB request provides funding for very important and worthwhile projects including ASMFC required monitoring projects and projects that are used indirectly to comply with requirements from the ASMFC.

- M) Restoration of Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Habitat in Chesapeake Bay and the Virginia Coastal Bays. R. Orth, VIMS. **\$102,368.**

Paul Richardson from VIMS presented this request in the absence of Dr. Orth, who could not attend due to family issues. Mr. Richardson gave brief overviews of the four main objectives of this project --large scale sea grass restoration, Bay scallop monitoring, forage fish monitoring and maintaining various partnerships with other groups such as the Nature Conservancy.

- VIII. Chairman Rhodes said the next meeting would be Monday, July 9, 2018, with a Work Session (5:30 p.m.) followed by a Public Hearing (7:00 p.m.). The night's meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Tentative Dates for Future RFAB meetings:

September 10, 2018 — Work Session (5:30 p.m.) and Recommendations (7:00 p.m.)
April 15, 2019 — 2019 Cycle Project Applications Due

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