

FINAL MINUTES

Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Patrick Henry Building
East Reading Room
1111 E. Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia
Thursday, May 19, 2022

The meeting of the Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services (Board) convened at approximately 9:07 a.m. on Thursday, May 19, 2022, at the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond. President Barlow called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

The Board Secretary called the roll:

PRESENT

O. Bryan Taliaferro, Jr.
Clifton A. Slade
Shelley Barlow
Margaret Ann Smith
Jacquelin Easter
James S. Huffard, III
Richard Sellers
Neil Houff
Charles Church
Dr. Wondie Mersie

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st
3rd
4th
6th
7th
9th
11th
Pesticides – Commercial Agricultural
Pesticides – Commercial Structural
Representing Dr. Makola Abdullah, President,
Virginia State University

ABSENT

Donald Horsley
Cecil Shell
Vacant
Tyler Wegmeyer
Lonnie Johnson

2nd
5th
8th
10th
Representing Dr. Timothy D. Sands, President,
Virginia Tech

STAFF PRESENT

Joseph Guthrie, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Kevin Schmidt, Secretary, Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Katherine Coates, Administrative Assistant, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Sellers moved that the draft minutes of the meeting on March 24, 2022, be approved as distributed. Mr. Huffard seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Commissioner Guthrie opened the floor for nominations for Board President. Mr. Huffard nominated Ms. Barlow for President. There being no other nominations, Commissioner Guthrie

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closed the nomination and called for a vote on the nominee. The Board elected Ms. Barlow as President by a unanimous vote.

President Barlow opened the floor for nominations for Vice President. Mr. Church nominated Mr. Houff for Vice President. There being no other nominations, President Barlow closed the nomination and called for a vote on the nominee. The Board elected Mr. Houff as Vice President by a unanimous vote.

President Barlow then called for nominations for Secretary. Mr. Sellers nominated Mr. Schmidt for Secretary. There being no other nominations, President Barlow closed the nomination and called for a vote on the nominee. The Board elected Mr. Schmidt as Board Secretary by a unanimous vote.

All three officer positions become effective July 1, 2022, and run through June 30, 2023.

REPORT FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Charles Church

Mr. Church reported on recent and upcoming Virginia Pest Management Association (VPMA) trainings. The VPMA master tech series was held in person in April. The Jeffrey M. Johnson Memorial ACE Prep Course will be held in June in person in Richmond. VPMA conducted WDI Recertification Inspector training virtually in March and will hold another session in June. He concluded by reporting that VPMA also hosted General Recertification webinars in April and May, during which 150 technicians were trained, with another General Recertification webinar scheduled for June.

Neil Houff

Mr. Houff reported that supply chain challenges continue to impact the pesticide and fertilizer industries. He discussed challenges in the crop protection industry regarding the individual permits required for the application of certain restricted use pesticides for permitted commercial applicators. He stated that he has asked the state to develop a program that would allow a commercial applicator permit to cover all restricted pesticide products to address these challenges. He later commented on the stress to the transportation industry due to backordered parts and regulations prohibiting modifications that would allow repairs with available parts.

O. Bryan Taliaferro

Mr. Taliaferro echoed Mr. Houff's concerns about supply chain issues. He reported that grain prices are extremely high and input costs have been relatively low based on last year's prices. As a result, there is potential for good profits for producers as long as the weather remains good through the rest of the year. He discussed the impacts of the war in Ukraine on global wheat markets and world hunger. He stated that the war and its effects would have major impacts on the U.S. agriculture industry and in Virginia. He concluded with concerns about soil moisture in his district and stated that they will need timely showers through the growing season.

Clifton Slade

Mr. Slade began his report by thanking the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired for their assistance. He then reported that his sweet potato crop is coming in well and shipping is brisk. However, the deer have been relentless and can cause significant crop damage. He stated that the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources has been helpful with

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obtaining kill permits for the deer. He concluded his report by discussing his concerns as a small farmer about the rules and regulations regarding the destruction of hemp.

Margaret Ann Smith

Ms. Smith reported that it has been cold and dry in her district, which has resulted in grass being late for turnouts. She reported on the cattle markets, which have been very strong. For the last few weeks, Virginia has led the U.S. in pricing for 450-pound steers. She explained that this is perplexing because cattle prices typically increase as you move West. She stated that numbers are strong in sale barns. There are concerns going forward about significant increases in grain prices. She reported on the impacts of the drought in the West to the cattle industry. Increases in interest rates and trucking and fuel prices have also been a challenge. She stated that her freight bills have increased from \$3.00 a mile to over \$4.75+ a mile, which is a \$2,100 increase per load. She concluded by commending VDACS cattle graders for their work.

Jacquelin Easter

Ms. Easter began her report by offering condolences to the family of L. Wayne Kirby, her predecessor on the Board, who passed away in April. She reported on the challenges with the pricing and availability of fuel in her district. It has also been a challenge to order parts for work and personal vehicles. She reported that corn and soybeans have been planted in her district. The lack of moisture has impacted crops and pastures, and many producers in her district have weaned cows early as a result.

James Huffard

Mr. Huffard reported that producers in his district have finished harvesting rye and fertilizing fields and are now planting corn. Dairy prices have been at record highs, but he shared his concerns that the last time prices went this high, they eventually fell below the cost of production. Milk prices have increased approximately \$1.60 a gallon. Sales have been good at his operation, Duchess Dairy, but input prices have also been high. Pricing has been complicated due to the price increases, and they have been working with retailers on the mark up. He reported that Duchess Dairy has also started distributing cheese curds and it is going well.

Richard Sellers

Mr. Sellers reported that the highlight in his district since the Board last met was a visit from Commissioner Guthrie to his church garden. He stated that local Virginia Cooperative Extension agents were also in attendance, and he thanked the Commissioner for the visit. He concluded with a report on local precipitation and stated that they look forward to a good growing season.

M. Wondi Mersie

Dr. Mersie reported that Virginia State University (VSU) held its 2022 Spring Commencement Ceremony on May 14, during which, 527 graduates received their degrees. VSU students attended the Association of 1890 Research Directors Symposium in Atlanta, Georgia. He stated that the VSU College of Agriculture is offering a Sustainable Urban Agriculture Certificate program. This program helps meet the growing demand for trained urban agriculture professionals. He concluded with an announcement that the 2022 VSU Agricultural Field Day will be held on September 1, 2022, at Randolph Farms.

Lonnie Johnson

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Mr. Johnson was unable to attend the meeting, but he provided a report for Secretary Schmidt to read. His report stated that Virginia Tech (VT) held 2022 commencement ceremonies on May 7-15 in Blacksburg, Roanoke, and the Washington, D.C., area. More than 6,300 graduates were honored. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) conferred nearly 40 associate's degrees in the Agriculture Technology program and over 650 bachelor's degrees. Dr. Arash Rashed has accepted the Director of Southern Piedmont Agriculture Research and Extension Center and Entomology Specialist position. At VT, searches continue for an Associate Dean for the College of Natural Resources and Environment, the Director of CALs Information Technology, and the Associate Dean and Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Shelly Butler Barlow

Ms. Barlow began her report by providing comments and feedback on the reports from other Board members. She stated that cotton prices have been extremely high, but the high associated input costs result in the similar profit margins. She reported that in her district, corn has been planted and peanuts are in the ground. Cotton planting has started on her farm. Weather conditions have been good. She stated that she looks forward to an excellent farmers' market season. She concluded with an update on the interviews for the seventh VALOR cohort.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Joseph Guthrie delivered his report to the Board. During the presentation of this report, he briefed the Board on personnel changes, recent events, and other matters relating to VDACS. A copy of the written report on which his presentation was based was included in the Board meeting agenda and materials.

FINAL STAGE - 2 VAC 5-405 (REGULATIONS FOR THE APPLICATION OF FERTILIZER TO NONAGRICULTURAL LANDS)

President Barlow called on David Gianino, Program Manager, Office of Plant Industry Services. Mr. Gianino briefed the Board on the final stage for 2 VAC 5-405. Following Mr. Gianino's presentation and questions from the Board, Mr. Sellers moved that the Board adopt 2 VAC 5-405, Regulations for the Application of Fertilizer to Nonagricultural Lands, as presented by staff, and that the Board authorize staff to take any and all steps necessary to have this regulation become a final regulation of the Board.

Mr. Houff seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

VIRGINIA GROWN PROGRAM REBRANDING AND NEW LOGO AND REFRESH OF THE VIRGINIA'S FINEST LOGO

President Barlow called on Rob Davenport, Director, Division of Marketing. Mr. Davenport presented the Board with information on the refresh of the Virginia's Finest logo and the rebranding and new logo of the Virginia Grown program. Following his presentation, Mr. Davenport responded to Board member question and comments.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business brought before the Board.

FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

President Barlow announced that the summer Board meeting and tour will be held July 19-20, 2022, in Suffolk. The December meeting will be held on December 9 in Richmond.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Stefanie Taillon, Senior Assistant Director of Governmental Relation, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, addressed the Board to provide information on a series of listening sessions the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, Virginia Agribusiness Council, and Virginia Cattlemen's Association are hosting related to meat processing in Virginia as part of the development of VDACS's strategic plan to help increase meat processing capacity within Virginia. She stated that these sessions will give producers an opportunity to weigh in and share their thoughts on the opportunities and challenges associated with the industry. The sessions will be held; June 15 in Buckingham, June 20 in Culpeper, June 21 in Harrisonburg, and June 22 in Wytheville. She concluded by inviting Board members to attend.


ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Board adjourned at approximately 11:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shelley Barlow
Board President



Kevin Schmidt
Board Secretary