

**Minutes  
Advisory Committee on International Trade  
Virginia Economic Development  
Partnership Authority  
October 3, 2023**

**Port of Virginia Office (6<sup>th</sup> Floor)  
World Trade Center  
101 W. Main St.  
Norfolk, VA 23510**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:01p.m. by Mike Ligon, Chairman of the VEDP Advisory Committee on International Trade.

**Members Present:**

Hobey Bauhan  
Michael Coleman  
Bob Feeser  
Anne Marie Lacourse (via Zoom)  
Mike Ligon  
Secretary Lohr  
Will Sessoms  
David White  
James Xu

**Members Absent:** Tag Greason

**Staff Present:**

Stephanie Agee  
Lindsey Bertozzi  
Jamie Canup  
Elizabeth Di Constanzo  
Eric Jehu  
Julie Richmond  
Lee Sanderson  
Jordan Watkins  
Mary Wood  
LeAnn Young

**Guests Present:**

Delegate Barry Knight, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee  
Wyatt Toehlke, Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Trade  
Stephen Edwards, CEO and Executive Director, Virginia Port Authority

## **Welcome and Chairman's Remarks**

Chairman Mike Ligon welcomed everyone to the meeting at 1:01p.m.

Chairman Ligon extended a thank you to the Virginia Port Authority for hosting the meeting, commenting that the Port is the number one asset of the Commonwealth.

The Chairman commented that as an advisory committee, the ACIT works with VEDP to provide ideas for the future and stand to be a resource and source of vision. He encouraged all attending to engage with Stephanie Agee, as well as the International Trade team, as they focus on federal engagement going into the next meeting on November 27, which Senator Kaine is expected to join. Chairman Ligon stated his desire to solicit questions in advance of the meeting and present them to Senator Kaine to address during the meeting. One question he would like answered is if Senator Kaine is aware of any federal funding that could be used to further international trade growth in Virginia.

Delegate Barry Knight commented that the focus should be getting several megasites up and running and ready for investment projects to move into. He suggested two specific megasites – the Williams Farm tract located in Chesapeake and the Berry Hill located in Southern Virginia.

Will Sessoms commented on the need for megasites and tax breaks to entice companies to come to Virginia. He reminded all in attendance the need to look at both variables.

Mr. Sessoms asked Delegate Knight if he projected the corporate tax rate changing as Governor Youngkin had proposed. Delegate Knight said that by raising the standard deduction the business deduction needed to be addressed. Although the Governor wanted to get the rate down, there are more factors involved, such as workforce issues.

Delegate Knight commented that the \$750M investment in widening Interstate 64 from Richmond to Hampton Roads will be a major help.

David White said that the difference between Virginia and North Carolina is that North Carolina brings the connectivity in terms of roads and infrastructure to the front door of businesses which drives continued investment.

Mike Ligon and David White extended a thank you to Delegate Knight for his support of the Trade plan. Mr. White noted that VEDP's International Trade programs are highly regarded and effective and that improving VEDP's capacity to provide them to more Virginia businesses would drive more exports from Virginia, which is a win for the state.

## **Public Comments**

Chairman Ligon solicited for public comments. There were none.

## **Review and Approval of July 12, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

After a review of the July 12, 2023, minutes, Chairman Ligon asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion was made by Secretary Lohr to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Hobey Bauhan and was unanimously approved by all Committee members present.

### **Introduction of Eric Jehu, Vice President, Logistics, VEDP**

Stephanie Agee introduced Eric Jehu, Vice President of Logistics for VEDP. Mr. Jehu comes to VEDP with a 20-year career in logistics and transportation. The focus of his role is on business expansion and investments and ecosystem building in the logistics and transportation sector. Eric maintains an office at the Port Authority. Mr. Jehu provided a brief overview of his career and ambitions with his new position at VEDP.

### **Port of Virginia Update, Stephen Edwards, CEO and Executive Director, Virginia Port Authority**

Stephen Edwards joined as a guest speaker to provide an update on activities and key initiatives at the Port of Virginia. He focused on the efficiencies that make the Port one of choice, including to top importers Walmart, Target, and Lowe's. He also discussed the impact of ships getting larger and the Port's ability to handle these vessels with key investments currently being made to allow two ships to be able to pass each other in the lanes to and from the Port, eliminating backup. Mr. Edwards discussed the Port's plan to have net-zero carbon emissions by 2040, partly enabled by a \$220M investment in the offshore wind farm being developed by Dominion Energy.

### **Closed Meeting – VEDP International Trade Plan Discussion**

Chairman Ligon requested that the Committee move into a closed meeting at 2:05p.m. A motion was made by Mike Coleman and seconded by David White to move into a closed meeting. Jamie Canup, Assistant General Counsel, voiced the following motion for adoption by the Committee to enter into a closed meeting. The following motion was unanimously adopted by all Committee members present.

I MOVE THAT THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE OF THE VIRGINIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP AUTHORITY (VEDP) CONVENE A CLOSED MEETING TO DISCUSS ELEMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE'S AND VEDP'S STRATEGIC PLAN, MARKETING PLAN, AND OPERATIONAL PLAN PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION A 50 OF §2.2-3711, WHICH ALLOWS FOR THE DISCUSSION OF SUCH ACTIVITIES THAT WOULD REVEAL TO COMMONWEALTH'S COMPETITORS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS THE STRATEGIES INTENDED TO BE DEPLOYED THUS ADVERSELY AFFECTING THE FINANCIAL INTERESTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

Upon the return to the open meeting, the Committee members considered the following certification:

DO YOU CERTIFY, THAT TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE, (i) ONLY PUBLIC

BUSINESS MATTERS LAWFULLY EXEMPTED FROM THE OPEN MEETING REQUIREMENTS OF FOIA WERE DISCUSSED IN THE CLOSED MEETING, AND (ii) ONLY SUCH MATTERS AS WERE IDENTIFIED IN THE MOTION TO GO INTO THE CLOSED MEETING WERE HEARD, DISCUSSED, OR CONSIDERED DURING THE CLOSED MEETING?

The Committee approved the foregoing certification by roll call vote, bringing the Committee out of the closed meeting at 2:53p.m.

Yeas: Mike Ligon, Hobey Bauhan, Michael Coleman, Bob Feeser, Anne Marie Lacourse, David White, James Xu

Nays: None

### **Export and Import Data**

Stephanie Agee provided a brief update on the value of products exported from and imported to Virginia so far this year. She mentioned the decline in exports of coal and soybeans and that overall Virginia exports are down by 11% compared to the same time last year, which appears to be the norm across the U.S. Canada topped the list of export destinations and China for imports.

### **Committee Discussion**

David White suggested that the percentage change in top export destinations be presented in future updates.

Chairman Ligon encouraged committee members to submit questions to him that could be presented to Senator Kaine prior to the November 27 ACIT meeting, preferably by November 1.

David White commented on the development of the International Trade Plan and progress made so far. He said that the goal of the plan has always been to help Virginia businesses conduct more trade around the world and it has clearly done that. Virginia is already ranked first in class in export promotion and the Trade Plan updated presented at the meeting further validates that.

Bob Feeser complimented VEDP on the results presented as Phase 1 of the update to the International Trade Plan and asked how the committee could support Phase 2, which he said will be more important as those efforts will uncover what is and is not working with trade in Virginia.

Stephanie Agee commented that the VEDP Trade team is working with VEDP's Economic Competitiveness team on Phase 2 the International Trade Plan update and will involve the committee as that process gets underway.

Chairman Ligon concluded the meeting by thanking the committee members for what they are doing on behalf of the Commonwealth.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.