

**Minutes  
Advisory Committee on International Trade  
Virginia Economic Development Partnership  
October 26, 2021**

**901 E. Cary Street  
Second Floor Conference Room  
Richmond, Virginia 23219**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Mike Ligon, Chairman of the VEDP Advisory Committee on International Trade.

Members Present:     Bob Feeser  
                              Mike Ligon  
                              John Milliken  
                              Secretary Bettina Ring  
                              David White  
                              James Xu

Members Absent:     Tag Greason  
                              Nick Jiannas  
                              Stuart Malawer  
                              Ned Masee

Staff Present:        Stephanie Agee  
                              Lindsey Bertozzi  
                              Jamie Canup  
                              David Devan  
                              Jason El Koubi  
                              Scott Kennedy  
                              Julie Richmond  
                              Monica Sadie  
                              Mary Wood

Guests Present:     Congressman Don Beyer

**Public Comments**

Chairman Ligon solicited for public comments. There were none.

**Welcome**

Chairman Ligon welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for staying engaged during the pandemic when the Committee had been meeting virtually. He mentioned the potential for the Committee to prepare an op-ed to bring more public and legislative awareness to the International Trade Plan. Bob Feeser noted that the op-ed would be an opportunity for the Committee to show united support for the International Trade Plan. David White agreed, adding that it would be good timing given all the supply chain issues in the news.

David Devan, Vice President of Economic Competitiveness, spoke about North Carolina's significant investments in site development over the years and that Virginia is falling behind in investment in site development. Bob Feeser and James Xu added that Georgia has also made large investments near its port and that Virginia needs to catch up.

Chairman Ligon said that since it seemed like everyone was on board with the op-ed, David White would work on getting a quote for the cost and determining how to move forward.

### **Planning for Future Meetings**

In preparation for the Committee's next meeting on December 7, 2021, Chairman Ligon said that he would like to set aside 15 – 30 minutes to have a strategic planning conversation. Now that the International Trade Plan has received initial funding, new staff have been hired, and VEDP is requesting additional funding for the plan, he would like to discuss what's next for the Committee. Chairman Ligon would also like to discuss opportunities with the continent of Africa and ask Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger to participate in a future meeting.

David White and Bob Feeser agreed that it makes sense to discuss the way forward for the Committee. Mr. Feeser added that it may be good to discuss various scenarios for the International Trade Plan being partially or fully funded. Secretary Bettina Ring noted that the more attention that can be drawn to international trade and site development, the better. She would like the Committee to reflect on what's been accomplished so far as part of the International Trade Plan.

Chairman Ligon said that the Virginia Chamber's Blueprint Virginia 2030 will be coming out soon and the Chamber included input from him, Stephanie Agee (Vice President, International Trade), and other leaders to make sure the International Trade Plan was highlighted.

### **Review and Approval of June 1, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

After a review of the June 1, 2021 minutes, Chairman Ligon asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion was made by Bob Feeser to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by David White and was unanimously approved by all Committee members present.

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

Chairman Ligon requested that the Committee move into a closed meeting. A motion was made by Bob Feeser and seconded by David White to move into a closed meeting. Jamie Canup, Assistant General Counsel, voiced the following motion on behalf of Bob Feeser for adoption by the Committee to enter into a closed meeting. The following motion was unanimously adopted by the Committee.

I MOVE THAT THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE VIRGINIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP AUTHORITY CONVENE A CLOSED MEETING:

PURSUANT TO VIRGINIA CODE §2.2-3711(A)(50) TO ENGAGE IN A DISCUSSION OR CONSIDERATION OF THOSE PORTIONS OF VEDP'S STRATEGIC PLAN, MARKETING PLAN OR OPERATIONAL PLAN, THAT MAY RELATE TO TARGET COMPANIES, SPECIFIC ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES AND STAFF FOR MARKETING ACTIVITIES, AND SPECIFIC MARKETING ACTIVITIES THAT WOULD REVEAL TO THE COMMONWEALTH'S COMPETITORS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS THE STRATEGIES

INTENDED TO BE DEPLOYED BY THE COMMONWEALTH, THEREBY ADVERSELY AFFECTING THE FINANCIAL INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

**Back in Open Meeting, Certification of Closed Meeting followed by Roll Call Vote**

Following the closed session, Jamie Canup, Assistant General Counsel, voiced the following certification for adoption by the Committee:

WHEREAS, THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE VIRGINIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP AUTHORITY HAS CONVENED A CLOSED MEETING ON THIS DATE PURSUANT TO AN AFFIRMATIVE RECORDED VOTE AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE VIRGINIA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT; AND

WHEREAS, THE ACT REQUIRES A CERTIFICATION BY THIS COMMITTEE THAT SUCH CLOSED MEETING WAS CONDUCTED IN CONFORMITY WITH THE ACT;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE COMMITTEE CERTIFIES THAT, TO THE BEST OF EACH MEMBER'S KNOWLEDGE, (I) ONLY PUBLIC BUSINESS MATTERS LAWFULLY EXEMPTED FROM OPEN MEETING REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE ACT WERE DISCUSSED IN THE CLOSED MEETING TO WHICH THIS CERTIFICATION RESOLUTION APPLIES, AND (II) ONLY SUCH PUBLIC BUSINESS MATTERS AS WERE IDENTIFIED IN THE MOTION BY WHICH THE CLOSED MEETING WAS CONVENED WERE HEARD, DISCUSSED, OR CONSIDERED IN THE CLOSED MEETING BY THE COMMITTEE.

The Committee approved the foregoing certification by roll call vote, bringing the Committee out of the closed meeting.

Yeas: Bob Feeser, Mike Ligon, John Milliken, Secretary Bettina Ring, David White, James Xu

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Tag Greason, Nick Jiannas, Stuart Malawer, Ned Masee.

**Discussion with Congressman Don Beyer, U.S. Representative from Virginia's 8th District**

John Milliken welcomed Congressman Don Beyer who joined the meeting on Zoom. Congressman Beyer provided an update on United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai's recent comments. He mentioned that the U.S. is working to repair relationships in Europe and that the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is moving ahead.

Chairman Ligon and Stephanie Agee explained that VEDP is a recipient of the U.S. Small Business Administration's State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) Grant and would appreciate the Congressman's support in ensuring the program continues. Congressman Beyer said programs like this are important because only a small percentage of U.S. businesses are exporting. He reiterated his support for international trade. Chairman Ligon added that Virginia is an exporting state, and it is focused on increasing exports from the state.

Congressman Beyer said that many companies don't know how to export or haven't thought about it. Chairman Ligon and David White noted that Virginia is looking at the export of goods and services as well as imports. David White added that the goal is to build the capacity of VEDP to deliver its world-class services to help more Virginia businesses.

James Xu noted that supply chains are at a breaking point and the costs to move containers are being passed on to consumers. He asked how the federal government is tracking this. Congressman Beyer said that there are no clear public policy solutions to this but that they are watching and looking for policy opportunities. David White and Congressman Beyer also discussed workforce issues because many people have not returned to the workforce.

Chairman Ligon and John Milliken thanked Congressman Beyer for participating in the meeting. Congressman Beyer closed by saying he would like to be as involved in international trade as possible.

### **Virginia's Supply Chain Optimization Program**

Monica Sadie, VEDP Supply Chain Program Manager, provided an overview of Virginia's new Supply Chain Optimization Program. The program launched with a webinar on September 14, 2021 that featured a panel discussion on why supply chains are important to Virginia. Monica noted that 86% of Virginia industries that engage in international trade depend on the importation of intermediate goods.

VEDP developed the Supply Chain Optimization Program to streamline companies' supply chains. It is a one-year program that combines counseling with reimbursements of up to \$10,000 per company for eligible expenses. Companies will also participate in quarterly training sessions on Foreign Trade Zones, blockchain, shipping solutions, emerging technologies, and other topics. Eleven companies have been accepted into the program for each region of Virginia.

Bob Feeser, John Milliken, and David White asked questions about how many companies applied and how those companies learned about the program. Monica Sadie noted that she had pre-qualification meetings with 16 companies, held a webinar with approximately 80 participants, and is collaborating with associations and organizations across Virginia to spread the word about the program. Bob Feeser and Monica Sadie discussed common supply chain challenges that businesses are experiencing including supplier diversification and training needs.

### **International Trade Update**

Stephanie Agee provided a brief update on the International Trade division. She noted that the division performed well during the year and was able to continue supporting businesses during the pandemic. The International Trade division exceeded its goals for jobs, sales, and the number of companies supported while achieving high customer satisfaction scores. Chairman Ligon noted that the team's accomplishments were impressive.

Chairman Ligon added that the next meeting of the Committee will be December 7, 2021 and it will be an in-person meeting. Stephen Edwards, CEO and Executive Director of The Port of Virginia, is scheduled to participate in the meeting.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

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