

**Minutes
Advisory Committee on International Trade
Virginia Economic Development Partnership
February 3, 2022**

**901 E. Cary Street
9th Floor Board 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
 Stuart Malawer
 Ned Masee
 John Milliken
 James Xu

Members Absent: Tag Greason
 Secretary Lohr
 David White

Staff Present: Stephanie Agee
 Lindsey Bertozzi
 Jason El Koubi
 Sandi McNinch
 Christy Morton
 Julie Richmond
 Mary Wood

Welcome

Chairman Mike Ligon welcomed everyone to the meeting at 10:03 a.m. He extended his thanks to former Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, Bettina Ring, for her service on the Advisory Committee on International Trade and as secretary. He also expressed his gratitude for the efforts of the Virginia Maritime Association and committee members on recent op-ed pieces showing support for international trade and funding of the Virginia International Trade Plan (ITP) published in several regional publications around Virginia, including the *Richmond Times*, *Roanoke Times*, *Virginia Pilot*, and a publication in Northern Virginia. Chairman Ligon thanked James Xu for his introduction to Delegate Knight, also in support of ITP funding, and Stephanie Agee, Jason El Koubi and VEDP colleagues for their efforts and progress since December.

Jason El Koubi expressed his thanks, as well, and said that he can see the effects of the letters and Committee efforts within the General Assembly.

Public Comments

Chairman Ligon solicited for public comments. There were none.

Review and Approval of December 7, 2021 Meeting Minutes

After a review of the December 7, 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 Stuart Malawer and was unanimously approved by all Committee members present, except that Mr. Milliken was absent for the vote.

Closed Meeting – VEDP International Trade Plan Discussion

Chairman Ligon requested that the Committee move into a closed meeting at 10:08 a.m. A motion was made by Bob Feeser and seconded by Ned Masee to move into a closed meeting. Sandi McNinch, 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, except that Mr. Milliken was absent for the vote.

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.

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

WHEREAS, THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE VIRGINIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP AUTHORITY HAS CONVENEED 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, Stuart Malawer, Ned Masseur, John Milliken, James Xu

Nays: None

Legislative Update

Christy Morton, Vice President, External Affairs provided an update on the 2022 General Assembly session. She said she believed VEDP is in a good position with regard to its budget proposal due to good relationships with General Assembly members and the inclusion of funding for VEDP priorities in the outgoing governor's budget. Christy expressed her gratitude to the ACIT members for their assistance with connecting with General Assembly members to emphasize the importance of funding the ITP.

She mentioned that the International Trade team has a proven track record of success and that each element of the ITP has been thoroughly thought out.

Chairman Ligon asked what size business is considered small and Christy said that while it varies widely, \$20-100M in revenue would be considered a small business. She said it is important to note with the legislators that the programs in the ITP are designed for existing small and medium Virginia businesses to help them grow here in Virginia.

Mr. Feeser asked Christy which aspects of the budget request are getting the most scrutiny. She said that one concern expressed is whether the International Trade team can utilize all of the funding requested within a two-year budget cycle. Christy said the General Assembly members are interested in international trade. She said Delegate Bullova is both interested and supportive, as well as Senator Marsden, both of whom are from Northern Virginia.

Mr. Masseur mentioned the importance of sharing with the General Assembly the significance of Virginia's lack of prepared sites for economic development projects. The lack of project-ready sites and buildings has cost Virginia over 47,000 jobs and over \$115B in capital expenditure since 2016. Stuart Malawer inquired about Governor Youngkin's interest in or assessment of International Trade. Jason El Koubi mentioned that in his meetings with the Governor so far he is extremely focused on economic development and job creation activities in Virginia. He believes Trade is on the top of his agenda and he has great senior relationships with people across the world.

Export and Import Data Update

Stephanie Agee provided a brief overview of the export and import data, showing Virginia exports and imports have both seen increases compared to the same time last year. She will share the full year 2021 data at April's ACIT Meeting.

Chairman's Update

Chairman Ligon reiterated that the committee members should continue to think of how they can contribute to budget discussions, provide a response to questions raised by Appropriations Chairman Knight, invite Representative Spanberger to a future meeting, and invite Nicole Bevins Collinson, a trade policy expert, to the April meeting..

Jason El Koubi suggested a personal invitation be extended to Caren Merrick, Secretary of Commerce and Trade, to attend a future ACIT meeting. Jason commented that he would provide her contact information and would be happy to assist in connecting her with the ACIT.

Chairman Ligon mentioned Secretary Ball, former Secretary of Commerce and Trade, was supportive and a good connection to have. He thanked Secretary Ball for his efforts to develop the International Trade Plan.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.