

**Minutes  
Advisory Committee on International Trade  
Virginia Economic Development Partnership  
September 13, 2022**

**901 E. Cary Street  
9<sup>th</sup> Floor Board Room  
Richmond, Virginia 23219**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:14 a.m. by Mike Ligon, Chairman of the VEDP Advisory Committee on International Trade.

Members Present:     Bob Feeser  
                              Mike Ligon  
                              Stuart Malawer  
                              John Milliken  
                              David White (via Zoom)  
                              James Xu

Members Absent:     Tag Greason  
                              Matt Lohr

Staff Present:        Stephanie Agee  
                              Lindsey Bertozzi  
                              Lisa Wallmeyer  
                              Jamie Canup  
                              Julie Richmond  
                              Mary Wood  
                              Camera Elliott

Guest Speaker:       Rob Davenport, Director of Marketing and Development,  
                              Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

**Welcome**

Chairman Mike Ligon welcomed everyone to the meeting at 10:14 a.m. He extended his welcome to all in attendance. He apologized for the issues with not being able to establish a quorum at the time of the meeting scheduled in August and shared that we need assistance from all parties to ensure an active committee.

**Public Comments**

Chairman Ligon solicited for public comments. There were none.

### **Proposed Electronic Meetings Policy §2.2-3708.3 of the Code of Virginia**

Stephanie Agee introduced Lisa Wallmeyer, VEDP's General Counsel. Lisa provided an overview of what it would mean to adopt an electronic communication policy and proposed the Advisory Committee vote on an electronic meeting policy, referencing §2.2-3708.3 of the Code of Virginia. A motion to adopt the policy was made. Motion was first approved by Stuart Malawer and seconded by Bob Feeser; all Committee members unanimously approved.

### **Review and Approval of June 16, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

After a review of the June 16, 2022 meeting minutes, Chairman Ligon asked for a revision to one of the comments attributed to him, noting the reference to East Carolina should be North Carolina. Edit was noted and motion to approve the minutes was made. The motion was first approved by Bob Feeser and seconded by Stuart Malawer 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 at 10:24am. A motion was made by Chairman Ligon and seconded by Bob Feeser to move into a closed meeting. Lisa Wallmeyer, General Counsel, voiced the following motion for adoption by the Committee to enter a closed meeting. The following motion was unanimously adopted by all Committee members present. Please note: Rob Davenport of Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services was welcomed to join @ 10:45am by Chairman Ligon and Stephanie Agee.

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 roll call vote, bringing the Committee out of the closed meeting.

Yeas: Chairman Mike Ligon, Bob Feeser, Stuart Malawer, John Milliken, David White, and James Xu

Nays: None

### **VEDP International Trade Update**

Stephanie Agee provided an update on Virginia's year to date imports and exports. She commented that exports from Virginia are up 38% from the same period last year. She reported the top three export destinations were Canada, India, and China, while top import markets were China, Mexico, and Canada. Ms. Agee commented that the high percentage for exports is driven by coal, soybeans, and sulfate chemical wood pulp.

Lindsey Bertozzi highlighted that the Trade team is developing an internship program in partnership with local colleges and universities, matching students with international-related majors with Virginia exporting companies. The program is in the first phase of development.

### **Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Update**

Stephanie Agee introduced Rob Davenport, Director of Marketing and Development for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS). Mr. Davenport provided an overview of Virginia's agricultural exports, including top export markets, the impact of those exports on Virginia's economy, and VDACS's efforts to promote them.

Mr. Davenport commented that Virginia's number one industry is agriculture and forestry is number three. He shared agricultural export data for 2021 and 2022. In the first quarter of 2021, Virginia agriculture and forestry exports were up 20% from last year. Total exports ag and forestry exports in 2021 were \$4.1 billion, with soybean, port, wood/lumber, and soybean meal as the top four export categories. Mr. Davenport commented that Virginia ranks twelfth in ag and forestry exports overall and third on the east coast. He stated that Florida and North Carolina are Virginia's strongest state competitors.

Chairman Ligon asked James Xu for his perspective on current exports and imports to and from China. Mr. Xu commented that China's zero covid strategy and stance on the Russia-Ukraine war has put the U.S. in an advantageous position. However, he noted the U.S.-China relationship has weakened, which could mean less trade between the two countries and less jobs supported by trade.

Mr. Davenport mentioned that in the first quarter of 2022, soybeans were the number one export, while pork was second, with a decrease of 44% due to lower imports from China.

In terms of VDACS's work on promoting ag and forestry exports, Mr. Davenport was excited to announce the opening of an international trade office in Dubai focused on promoting some of Virginia's largest segments, including fresh apples, cocoa products, and snack foods. Mr. Davenport said that VDACS is focusing on assisting small to medium companies to grow their exports.

### **Chairman's Update**

Chairman Ligon reminded everyone of the next Committee meeting, scheduled for December 6, 2022. There was discussion about whether to schedule another in-person meeting before then and the decision was made to not do so, but to convene a virtual meeting if it was possible to get an audience with either Senator Warner or Senator Kaine before then.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.