

# Meeting Minutes

## Virginia Commercial Fishing Advisory Board Meeting

Virginia Marine Resources Commission  
380 Fenwick Road, Ft. Monroe, VA 23651  
Tuesday March 31, 2026

Members in Attendance:

JJ Minor, Ross Kellum, Revel Walker

Members not in attendance:

Rich Harding, Ben Johnson, Nate Reynolds, Jason Smith, Lynn Kellum.

Others Present: Sheri Crocker, Eric Hilton (virtually), Adam Tomlin, Alicia Nelson

### Agenda:

I. Introduction, announcements, comments

Alicia Nelson provided an overview of meeting expectations and noted that one board member had stepped down recently, but the board still needs 5 members in attendance for a meeting. She explained the procedure for recommendations from board members if no quorum was present and noted that it had been reviewed by council.

II. Review of the meeting minutes from the December 2025 meeting

No errors were noted; however, the minutes were deferred to a future meeting due to lack of quorum.

III. Budget review

Sheri Crocker reviewed the budget and noted that \$1,499,611 are currently available for new projects. There were no questions about the budget.

IV. Waterman's Apprentice Program Update

Alicia Nelson noted that she was acting director of the program at this time and introduced Adam Tomlin as the program manager. She noted that there were a record number of new applicants during the last cycle. She explained that new apprentices were capped at 21 based on capacity of staff, and existing apprentices.

She noted that a guidance document was being developed, and invited comments and questions about the program at any time. The next application period is expected in the fall of 2026.

The board asked if they could reapply every year, and Ms. Nelson noted that they did have to reapply; however it will be a simpler process. She noted that there will be a small final report required as well. There was also questions about the age requirements for the program, and it was clarified that applicants must be at least 12 years of age, and there was no maximum age.

Adam Tomlin updated the board on training opportunities and plans for the future. He also explained details of the application process.

V. Applications for review

A. Biological monitoring of river herring. Eric Hilton. VIMS. \$40,000

Dr. Hilton provided a presentation about the annual river herring request to the CFAB. He noted the requirements of the fisheries management plan for river herring and the addition of hickory shad in this year's survey. He described this specific effort and how it fits in with the larger program for River Herring (clarified that it is also part of the larger suite of sportfish restoration programs).

Board members asked about the time series needed for management. Dr. Hilton explained that when the moratorium was first enacted in 2012, it was estimated that at least 10 years of data would be needed to demonstrate the current levels and the characteristics of the existing and projected fishery. He noted that the ASMFC typically considered three year running averages. He said that at this time, we are just getting enough three-year averages to determine a trend. However, there is still concern about how to justify a fishery and how to maintain required levels – which would require consistent sampling.

Because there was no in-person quorum, each board member individually commented on the project, and all board members were in favor of funding the project.

VI. Additional Business

Ms. Nelson noted that the next meeting would be virtual and is tentatively scheduled for Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>.