

# MEETING MINUTES

Virginia Commercial Fishing Advisory Board  
Virtual Meeting, Virginia Marine Resources Commission  
June 1, 2026; 2:00 pm

## Members

James Minor  
Richard Harding  
Jason Smith  
Ross Kellum  
Ben Johnson  
Lynn Kellum

## Board Members Absent

Nathan Reynolds  
Revel Walker

## Staff Present

Sheri Crocker  
Joseph Grist  
Gloria Hatcher  
Alicia Nelson

## Others Present

Rachael Peabody  
Owen Hinson  
Ron Larson  
Tiffany Wood

The meeting minutes were recorded by Alicia Nelson; a full recording is available.

## Agenda:

### I. Introduction, announcements, comments.

Alicia Nelson welcomed everyone and noted that the meeting would be recorded. She also noted that there were three projects and two sets of meeting minutes that require a vote at this time, in addition, a federal aid match is not requested from the commercial fund this year.

### II. Review of the meeting minutes from the December 2025 and March 2026 meetings.

Ross Kellum motioned to approve the minutes from December 2025 and March 2026. The motion was seconded by Jason Smith. The motion passed with five in favor and Ms. Abstaining.

### III. Budget update

Ms. Crocker reviewed the financial report, noting that there was over \$1.1 million available for projects.

### IV. Waterman's Apprentice Program Update

Alicia Nelson gave an update on the Waterman's Apprentice Program and explained that the name would be shifting to the Waterman's Internship Program to better align with Virginia Works definitions. Ms. Nelson described the program's increasing number of applicants in the last review cycle, current year training opportunities, and plans for the future. Her presentation is part of the record. She requested additional funding for program support for

2026 that included staff funding (10% for 5 years) and funds to return the program funds to the original level requested. Revel Walker motioned to recommend funding the \$119,663 request, and Ms. Kellum seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Applications for review

- A. Estimating relative abundance of young-of-year American eel, *Anguilla rostrata*, in the Virginia tributaries of Chesapeake Bay 2026. M. Fabrizio. VIMS. \$35,370.

Because the applicant was unavailable, Ms. Nelson described the project to the board. The young-of-year American eel survey fulfills the ASMFC mandates for the fisheries management plan for American eel. Ross Kellum motioned to recommend funding the item, and Rick Harding seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- B. Beyond the Dock: A Virtual Reality Journey into Virginia's Seafood Industry. T. Wood. Virginia Tech. \$25,000.

Ms. Wood presented the project, and her presentation is available. She noted that the proposed project would provide an immersive virtual reality program to help promote the seafood industry. Mr. Minor asked about budget details and Mr. Kellum asked if Virginia Tech had produced a tool like this before. Ms. Wood answered that they had seen a similar product promoting soy bean farms at an agricultural expo and wanted to mirror that with a fisheries example. Ms. Kellum asked if it would be available for other outreach uses, and Ms. Wood explained that it would .

Ross Kellum motioned to recommend funding the item, and Mr. Harding seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Virginia Marine Products Board Presentation

Rachael Peabody gave a brief introduction and presentation about the Virginia Marine Products Board is its new executive director. Her presentation is available. She introduced herself and her role and described the initiatives and goals of the products board.

VII. Additional Business

Mr. Minor congratulated Joe Grist for his recent appointment to Commissioner. Lynn Kellum motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Kellum seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting concluded at 2:44 pm.