

**Minutes**  
**Advisory Committee on International Trade**  
**Virginia Economic Development Partnership**  
**June 16, 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 10:01 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  
                              David White  
                              James Xu

Members Absent:     Tag Greason  
                              Secretary Lohr

Staff Present:         Stephanie Agee  
                              Lindsey Bertozzi  
                              Jamie Canup  
                              Julie Richmond  
                              Mary Wood  
                              Darren Ray  
                              Joseph Davis

Guest Speaker:       Ed Laughlin, VEDP Global Defense Manager  
                              VEDP Program Spotlight: Global Defense Program

**Welcome**

Chairman Mike Ligon welcomed everyone to the meeting at 10:00 a.m. He extended his welcome to all in attendance. Mr. Chairman shared he reviewed and edited the spreadsheet he had circulated via email, stemming from the April 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, where he had posed questions related to the direction the committee should focus.

**Public Comments**

Chairman Ligon solicited for public comments. There were none.

## **Review and Approval of April 5, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

After a review of the April 5, 2022, minutes, Chairman Ligon asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion was made by John Milliken to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ned Masee 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 10:03 a.m. A motion was made by John Milliken and seconded by Stuart Malawer to move into a closed meeting. Jamie Canup, 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.

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 CONVENEED 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. Note: Ned Masee was absent for the vote.

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 International Trade update. Stephanie mentioned the upcoming VALET Program graduation and noted that a full class would also begin the program. Stephanie personally invited the committee to participate in the July 13 and 14 event. She described what the agenda entailed. Chairman Ligon confirmed the date and location.

The Committee discussed the publication of 13 testimonial videos that were developed in partnership with VEDP's Marketing and Communications division. Two testimonial videos were shown to the committee: Hooker Furniture and First Line Technology. Both companies described their experiences working with VEDP's International Trade division.

After viewing the testimonials, Stuart Malawer asked if they would be posted to VEDP's website. Stephanie Agee noted that the videos would be posted so that stakeholders could see VEDP's impact.

Stephanie presented import and export data for Virginia. It was mentioned that the export of coal is on the rise while there is a decline in meat exports, especially pork. Imports are up 19% since April 5, 2022.

### **Chairman's Update**

Chairman Ligon discussed the consolidation of information gathered on a spreadsheet that had been circulated via email to the committee members. Mr. Chairman stated his intention to continue the effort to incorporate all feedback on the committee's focus.

David White, John Milliken, and Stuart Malawer all asked about what more the committee could study.

Chairman Ligon asked David White to elaborate on what the committee's actions would be.

Stephanie Agee suggested hiring someone to commission a regular report regarding trade policy. She also discussed Virginia's economic competitiveness and noted that Virginia's ports are extremely competitive.

Chairman Ligon stated that there is a need to understand more about Virginia's competitors such as North Carolina and South Carolina. He suggested a deeper dive as the Carolina's have expanded their ports. Carolina invests more on site readiness projects compared with Virginia.

David White and Bob Feeser would like to identify specific areas that Virginia's competition has a "best in class" or "gold standard."

Lindsey Bertozzi suggested focusing on what other countries are doing.

Chairman Ligon asked the committee to consider whether it was more important to focus on where Virginia is today or where it is headed in the future.

On the topic of participating in a Governor's trade mission, Stephanie commented that it would be very impactful however, extremely hard to get on the calendar. Chairman Ligon agreed

however, it would be nice to take an active role in ACIT's focus while being mindful and respectful of the committees' time.

Stuart Malawer asked how the Port of Virginia is coping with remarkably high volumes. John Milliken foresees a slowing down as less spending is predicted. He also projects there will be a great slowdown in the fall as there will be a change in sourcing which will mean more coming to the east coast ports.

David White commented that Virginia has been the most productive port in North America in terms of more productivity. He mentioned the availability of equipment and improvement on the chassis front. He stated that 3,000 units of chassis have been bulked up and that the ratio of chassis to containers puts Virginia in a better position than other ports.

John Milliken said that the biggest challenge currently at the Port of Virginia is where to put empty containers, although there is a need for industrial and flex space. He mentioned there are a number of companies willing to build empty warehouses which makes for a robust industrial space.

Before the conclusion of the meeting, David White mentioned the topic of higher education. He said that ODU recently announced the establishment of a school for maritime education.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.