

Virginia Agricultural Council
Stonewall Jackson Hotel and Conference Center
Staunton, Virginia
March 27-28, 2017

The Virginia Agricultural Council met on March 27-28, 2017, at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel and Conference Center in Staunton, Virginia. The meeting's purpose was to review and act upon new grant proposals submitted to the Council and to act upon continuation of current projects.

Monday, March 27, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m., by Chairman T.D. Watkins.

Members present were:

Joseph Barlow	Sonny Meyerhoeffer
Kathy Coffee	Mark Newbill
Travis Croxton	Lynn St. Clair
T.D. Watkins, III	Ashley Hardesty
John R. Hall, III	Jason Bush
Kimberley Nixon	Larry Harris, Executive Director VAC

Members Absent:

Phil Glaize
Alan Worrell
Jeff White

Ex-officio members in attendance:

Dr. Saied Mostaghimi the dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Dr. Wondi Mersie, the Associate Vice President for Agriculture and Extension of Virginia State University
Sandy Adams, Commissioner, VDACS

Guests in attendance included the following:

VDACS: Charles Green, Deputy Commissioner
Jennifer Cavedo, Director of Administrative and Financial Services
Anna Seymour, Commissioner's Office
Margie Gehler, Administrative and Financial Services

Chairman Watkins called for introductions, asking each person to give their name and the organization and/or commodity they represent.

Minutes from the August 2016 meeting were discussed. Chairman Watkins asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mark Newbill motioned to adopt the minutes as presented, and Kathy Coffee seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote of Council.

At this time, Commissioner Adams gave a brief update on VDACS and General Assembly activities. Some items discussed included the budget reduction for VDACS which was 5% for the current fiscal year and 7.5% for the next fiscal year. Commissioner Adams noted that the General Assembly added back quite a bit of funding to VDACS. Commissioner Adams reported on two programs that were cut. They were the Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund and the Farm Business Development program. The second program was a new program to VDACS designed to assist farmers with small grants for the business and financial side of farming. Commissioner Adams stated the grant portion of the program had been cut, however the positions created for the program were left in the budget. She commented that VDACS is keeping an eye on activities in Washington DC since 15% of the budget is federally funded. Joe Barlow asked for a status update on the situation with beekeepers and producers. Commissioner Adams reported that the situation had improved in the last two years with the addition of the Pollinator Protection Plan (PPP) which was developed as a communication tool between beekeepers and producers.

Chairman Watkins asked if Dr. Saied Mostaghimi would like to give Council members an update from Virginia Tech. Dr. Mostaghimi reported that Virginia Tech was also dealing with the impact from budget reductions, however, the plans to expand Agriculture and Life Sciences were progressing quite well. There is a plan to create a School of Plant and Environmental Sciences within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. This would be done with the hope to increase the visibility, opportunities, and impact of the college's learning, discovery, and engagement programs. He added that there is also a national search for a new director.

Next, Dr. Wondi Mersie gave a brief update from Virginia State University. He reported VSU is looking for a new dean. Dr. McKinnie remains the interim dean. He added many studies are continuing that involve hops.

At this time, Chairman Watkins introduced Anna Seymour who reviewed the project closeout summaries. This new report summarizes the final reports submitted by the researchers. Council members commented how helpful it was to see the results of the grant spending. Sonny Meyerhoeffler requested that the dollar amount of the project be added in the future. Ms. Seymour confirmed the addition in future reports.

Chairman Watkins asked Larry Harris to review the financial reports. Mr. Harris began by discussing the current cash balance for the Council through March 08, 2017. Mr. Harris stated the opening cash balance for this fiscal year was \$432,719.65. Revenue year-to-date is \$316,128.29 and expenses year-to-date are \$242,553.01, leaving the ending cash balance at \$506,294.93.

Mr. Harris then directed attendees to the Revenue Differentials Spreadsheet. He explained this spreadsheet is the revenue estimation for 2016-2017 and the five-year average. According to these figures, the five-year average is about \$36,032 higher than the estimated total revenue amount for 2016-2017. Part of the difference is due to a revenue refund issued to a company that overpaid in the previous year. Mr. Harris stated that for the financial estimations, he used the current year number. That is the more conservative figure.

REVENUE DIFFERENTIALS 2011-2016								
						5 YR AVG	ACTUAL	
	2011-2013	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2011-2016	2016-2017	5 Yr (over) under Actual
Feed Tonnage	\$ 236,544.74	\$ 224,483.55	\$ 227,126.96	\$272,115.82	\$ 207,191.05	\$ 233,492.42	\$ 191,504.19	\$ (41,988.23)
Fertilizer Tonnage	37,951.53	33,919.58	41,385.43	37,495.10	35,611.89	\$ 37,272.71	41,670.56	4,397.85
Lime Tonnage	21,998.60	24,666.45	23,622.09	22,177.29	24,894.97	\$ 23,471.88	22,357.84	(1,114.04)
Motor Fuel/Misc.	3,536.74	2,069.79	1,512.48	2,376.83	405.00	\$ 1,980.17	1,943.10	(37.07)
NON SEED TOTAL	\$ 300,031.61	\$285,139.37	\$293,646.96	\$334,165.04	\$268,102.91	\$ 296,217.18	\$257,475.69	\$ (38,741.49)
Seed	\$48,358.05	\$56,069.43	\$59,130.16	\$71,138.22	\$45,021.01	\$55,943.37	\$58,652.60	\$2,709.23
TOTAL	\$ 348,389.66	\$ 341,208.80	\$ 352,777.12	\$405,303.26	\$ 313,123.92	\$ 352,160.55	\$316,128.29	(\$36,032.26)

Mr. Harris then reviewed the Estimated Financial Status for Non Seed-Anticipated Funds Available for Projects 2017-2018. Net funds available for projects are \$392,904.25. The total amount submitted for all new proposals and second year projects is \$324,916. The Council has the option, based on the cash balance, to fund all proposals if they so choose.

Mr. Harris gave an overview of seed money and related expenses for the last five years, including current allocations, overhead expenses and how they fit into the overall Council's budget. Mr. Harris reported Betty Parker with the Turf Grass Foundation has requested the amount left in their reserves be increased to \$20,000. The total funding requests for seed projects was discussed. This year \$51,624.00 has been recommended for funding by the Turf Grass Foundation.

Council began hearing new proposed grant requests for fiscal year 2017-2018. The following projects were those approved by Council for the amounts shown.

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LAST NAME	PROJECT NAME - New Requests	AMOUNT
Estienne	Mitigating the effects of iron deficiency anemia in pigs fed antibiotic-free nursery diets containing elevated levels of copper or zinc	\$9,512.00
Dalloul	Delivering Probiotics to chicken embryos to enhance post-hatch performance	\$18,000.00
Holshouser	Increasing Profitability for Virginia's Double Crop Wheat-Soybean System	\$20,093.00
Persia	Evaluation of alternative methods for the prevention and control of histomonosis (blackheads) in turkeys	\$10,000.00
Akers	Mastitis in the Developing Bovine Mammary Gland	\$15,000.00
Huang	Increasing the economic value of brewer's spent grain by producing high-protein and high-fiber products to support animal production in Virginia	\$24,000.00
Mercadante	Establishing the efficacy of <i>Faecalibacterium prausnitzii</i> as a probiotic to enhance pre-weaning health, growth and performance of beef calves	\$15,650.00
White	Enhancing Opportunities for Pasture-Based Beef Production Research at Virginia Tech	\$10,008.00
Langston	Early Detection of Soilborne Diseases of Peanut Using Multispectral and Infrared Sensor Technology	\$10,997.00
Samtani	Evaluating nutrient supplements to improve strawberry fruit yield and quality	\$5,410.00
Owen	Understanding Nitrogen Fate to Increase Profitability in Ornamental Container-Grown Plant Production	\$18,790.00

Chairman Watkins adjourned the meeting at 4:52 p.m.

Tuesday, March 28, 2017

Chairman Watkins called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The following projects were those approved by Council for the amounts shown.

LAST NAME	PROJECT NAME- New Requests	AMOUNT
Rhoads	Utilizing Oocyte Reconstruction to Improve the Heat Tolerance of Dairy Cattle	\$10,000.00
Booher	Alternative Fencing and Watering Systems to Enhance Stream Exclusion and	\$15,578.00
Da	English Cucumber as an Alternative Cash Crop	\$11,800.00
Williams	Enhanced Apple Cider Fermentation by Selective Light Exposure	\$9,000.00
Hanigan	Testing a novel strategy for evaluating energy content of feed	\$9,959.00
Wolf	Pre-bloom Leaf Thinning to Increase Grape Aromas and Aid Bunch Rot Management	\$16,254.00
Dick	Increasing Hops Yield with Phototherapy	\$8,000.00
Total New		\$238,051.00

This concluded the session on grant presentations. The Council convened for the business session and public comment period. Council members were asked to report scores for all projects.

After scores were tabulated, Chairman Watkins moved to review the second year projects as follows with Council approval on grant dollar amounts:

LAST NAME	PROJECT NAME- Second Year	AMOUNT
Zhang	Release Public, Roundup Ready Soybean Varieties	\$12,000.00
Vinatzer	Identification and Testing of Novel, Locally Isolated Biopesticides for Fire	\$16,000.00
Persia	Evaluation of higher concentrations of butyric acid in broiler diets raised	\$10,000.00
White	Low-cost nutritional intervention to improve growth and fertility of replacement heifers grazing endophyte infected tall fescue	\$7,798.00
Wilson	Determining the feeding value of corn gluten feed in fescue forage-based	\$8,543.00
Thomason	Management and cultivar effects on malt-type barley performance and end use quality in Virginia	\$7,000.00
Walke	Improving honey bee colony health: Assessing the role of honey bee gut microbiota in mediating pesticide effects	\$13,497.00
TOTAL		\$74,838.00

Kathy Coffee motioned to approve all of the second year projects. Mark Newbill seconded, and the motion was passed by unanimous vote of the Council.

The Council reviewed the scoring on all of the first year projects. Each project was discussed among Council members as to the merits of the project. Jason Bush motioned to approve the projects for the amounts shown previously. Ashley Hardesty seconded the motion. The new funding was approved by unanimous vote of the Council.

Finally, the Council reviewed the Turf Grass Foundation's recommendation for funding seed projects. The projects approved by the Council follow:

LAST NAME	SEED Fund - Second Year Projects	AMOUNT
Evanylo	Comparison of Exceptional Quality (EQ) Bio solids and Inorganic Fertilizer on Carbon and Nitrogen Dynamics and Turf grass Production and Quality	\$15,000.00
McCall	Rapid estimation of water, nutrient, and pesticide needs using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) for reduced inputs	\$20,000.00
	SEED Fund - First Year Projects	
Derr	Management of spreading troublesome weeds in Bermuda grass and tall fescue turf	\$16,624.00
Total	Seed Fund Projects	\$51,624.00

Mark Newbill motioned to approve the 2017-2018 seed projects as recommended. Jason Bush seconded and the motion was passed by unanimous vote of the Council.

Business Session

The Council approved eighteen new projects in the amount of \$238,051, and the continuation of seven second year projects totaling \$74,838. The total amount approved for the three seed projects was \$51,624. Total funds allotted by the Council were \$364,513.

Council discussed the feasibility of limiting presentation times to 20 minutes. The intention of limiting times was to increase the number of proposals that Council can hear. There was a motion made by Mark Newbill to limit the proposal presentation times to 20 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Watkins opened the floor to public comment. The president of The Turf Grass Foundation, Jeff Everhart spoke on behalf of the Foundation.

Chairman Watkins opened the floor for discussion on the location for the August meeting on August 24th and 25th. The decision was made to hold the meeting near Suffolk, Virginia. Joe Barlow will work with VDACS staff to plan the tours.

Joe Barlow moved to adjourn the meeting. Mark Newbill seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote of Council and the meeting adjourned at 2:11pm.

Approved:

Tscharner D. Watkins, III,
Chairman

Cecil W. Meyerhoeffer
Vice-Chairman