



DRAFT

Virginia Potato Board Meeting Minutes

Eastern Shore AREC, Painter, VA

February 10, 2026

Attendance:

Board Members Present:

Mark Hickman

Kyle Sturgis

Bruce Richardson

Sawyer Johnson

Board Members Absent:

John Holland

Guests:

Tresica Colvin – VDACS Inspection

Dr. Doug Higgins – VT

Dr. Kemper Sutton – VT

Dr. Mark Reiter – VT

Ursula Deitch – VDACS

- I. **Call to Order** – Chairman Hickman called the meeting to order at 8:36am and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- II. **Reading and Approval of Previous Board Meeting Minutes** – A motion was made by Bruce Richardson and seconded by Kyle Sturgis to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2025 and February 11, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. The minutes were approved unanimously.

- III. **Financial Report** - Ursula Deitch presented the financial statement that reflected revenues and expenditures as of December 31, 2025. Receipts of \$11,355.79 were reported year to date, a cash balance of \$52,598.59, and revenues of \$14,242.02 from the previous year. ***A motion was made by Bruce Richardson and seconded by Sawyer Johnson to approve the financial statement as presented. The motion passed unanimously.***

- IV. **Old Business**



- a. Seed Potato Season Update – Tresica Colvin Fruit & Vegetable Specialist with VDACS provided data to identify trends in potato exports for 2025.
 - i. Bruce Richardson asked for seed varieties grown on the ESVA in 2025 instead of export data next year.
 - ii. Kyle Sturgis, of Sturgis Family Farms, requested to have an experienced inspector stationed at his shed since it is his first year in production and the buyer is requiring inspection.

V. New Business

a. Project Proposals

i. P.I.: D. Higgins - Pathology

“Continued Diagnostic and Forecasting Support for Potato Disease Management with Targeted Evaluation of Fungicide Options for Charcoal Rot on the Eastern Shore”

Requested Amount: \$5,000.00

A motion was made by Bruce Richardson and seconded by Kyle to approve the project at \$5,000.00. The motion was approved unanimously.

ii. P.I. K. Sutton - Entomology

“Evaluating in-furrow insecticides for control of wireworm in Virginia”

Requested Amount: \$5,000.00

A motion was made by Kyle Sturgis and seconded by Bruce Richardson to approve the project at \$5,000.00. The motion was approved unanimously.

iii. P.I. A. Lay - Horticulturalist

“Potato Cultivar Trial to Assess Crop Performance on the Eastern Shore”

Requested Amount: \$3,448.68

This project was not submitted on time and was brought to the board by Dr. Mark Reiter after inquiries were made regarding the new horticulturalist and when she planned to begin her tenure at the Eastern Shore AREC. Board members had concerns that the data from last year’s variety trial had not been released and that specific varieties of interest had not been outlined, nor seed potatoes obtained.

The board decided not to fund this project as it felt incomplete and lacked information.



iv. Promotional Funding/Brochure –

Board members would like to have a promotional brochure made and promotional materials such as pens, stickers, or koosies purchased to promote the Virginia Potato industry at trade shows. This is routinely done by other states such as North Carolina, Idaho, etc. They requested that this be completed by October 1, 2026 so that they may be taken to the IFPA tradeshow in Orlando, FL by VDACS staff.

A motion was made by Bruce Richardson and seconded by Sawyer Johnson to give The Association of Eastern Virginia Agricultural Producers, Inc. \$3,000.00 for marketing and promotion of potatoes in Virginia. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Public Comment

None

VII. Next Meetings –

There will be a Researcher Informational Meeting on December 08, 2026.

The next funding meeting will be held on February 09, 2027 at the Eastern Shore AREC at 8:30am.

VIII. Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Hickman at 10:12am