



DRAFT MINUTES
VIRGINIA SOYBEAN BOARD MEETING

Williamsburg, Virginia
March 9, 2026

I. Attendance

Board Members Present

Lynn P. Gayle, *Chairman*
Robert Harper, *Vice Chairman*
Harrison A. Moody
Tom Taliaferro
Ray Keating
Bill Henley
Colin Whittington
Michael Bryant
Susan Watkins
Robert White, Jr.

Board Members Absent

Chuck McGhee

Staff

Laura Maxey-Nay, Program Director, VDACS

Guests

Ms. Sarah Aswegan, AMS-USDA, Des Moines, IA (Virtually)
Dr. Carrie Orel, VA Tech, Suffolk, VA
Ms. Rachel M. Gresham, Virginia Soybean Association, Goochland, VA
Ms. Gayle Terry, Virginia Soybean Association, Goochland, VA
Dr. Kate Maher, American Soybean Association, MO
Dr. Guillaume Pilot, VA Tech, Blackstone, VA
Dr. Michael L. Flessner, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA
Mr. Scott Reiter, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Prince George, VA
Mrs. Stephanie Romelczyk, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Montross, VA
Dr. Yuan Zeng, VA Tech
Dr. David Eisenback, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA
Dr. Mark S. Reiter, VA Tech, Painter, VA
Dr. Joseph Haymaker, VA Tech, Painter, VA
Mr. Michael Flessner, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA (virtually)
Ms. Lynn Black, Agriculture in the Classroom, Richmond, VA
Ms. Georgia Grady, VA FFA, Fauquier, VA
Mr. Franco Abud, VA FFA, Courtland, VA
Ms. Jennifer Armstrong, VA FFA, Weyers Cave, VA
Ms. Danielle Bauer, Atlantic Soybean Council, Federalsburg, MD
Dr. Yuan Zeng, VA Tech, Blackstone, VA

Dr. Ozzie Abaye, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA
Mr. Will Ubben, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA
Dr. Joseph Oakes, VA Tech, Warsaw, VA
Mr. Scott Tindall, Fuel Digital, Richmond, VA
Mr. Mark Gallagher, Fuel Digital, Richmond, VA
Mrs. Katie Hall, Soybean Aquaculture Association, IA
Mr. Mike Steenhoek, Soy Transportation Coalition, MO
Dr. Jasleen Makkar, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA
Dr. Chandel Abhilash, VA Tech, Suffolk, VA
Dr. Voothururu Priya, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA
Dr. Azahar Ali, VA Tech, Painter, VA
Dr. Runze Sun, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA
Mr. Chris Slemple, WISHH, St. Louis, MO (Virtually)
Dr. Luciana Rosso, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA
Mr. Matheus Ogando do Granja, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA
Mr. Yaojie Zheng, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA

- II. **Call to Order** - Chairman Gayle called the meeting to order at 7:46 am and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked the group for their service to the Virginia Soybean Industry and for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend the meeting.
- III. **Reading and Approval of Minutes** –*R. White moved and M. Bryant seconded a motion for the Board to dispense with the reading of the December 17, 2025, minutes and approved the minutes as presented. Motion passed.*
- IV. **Financial Report** – Laura Maxey-Nay presented the financial statement that reflected revenues and expenditures from July 1, 2025 – February 19, 2026. The Financial Report showed that on February 19th there was a total balance of \$2,278,416.15; the Board had expended \$671,254.69 with \$422,729.15 outstanding for FY 2025-26 projects; \$500,000 in reserve; \$664,966.75 available for allocation.

H. Moody moved, and R. White seconded a motion for the Board to accept the Financial Report as presented. Motion passed.
- V. **United Soybean Board Conflict of Interest Form:** Laura Maxey-Nay presented the United Soybean Board Conflict of Interest Form and encouraged each member to complete the form and return it. All present Board Members returned the completed forms.
- VI. **Annual Audit** – Laura Maxey-Nay distributed the draft FY 2024-25 Annual Audit that was performed by the accounting firm of Joyner, Kirkham, Keel & Robertson.

T. Taliferro moved, and H. Moody seconded a motion for the Board to approve the year ended June 30, 2025, Financial Statement as presented by Joyner, Kirkham, Keel & Robertson, PC. Motion passed.

VII. **Four Elevator Compliance Reviews Report** -Laura Maxey-Nay presented the reports by Joyner, Kirkham, Keel & Robertson that identified their findings from the four first purchaser audits that were completed during 2025. The first purchasers that were audited included Chesapeake Grain Co., FS Grain, Virginia Crop Improvement Association and Wakefield Farm Service Inc.

Chesapeake Grain Co., Inc. showed consistent ability to accurately assess the check-off amount for the transactions selected during the period examined. FS Grain showed consistent ability to accurately assess the checkoff amount for the transactions selected during the period examined. However, FS Grain made errors in reporting the number of bushels assessed, net market value of assessed bushels, and the checkoff remittance on the quarterly SPARC forms. They also indicated that they take deductions for hauling before calculating the checkoff amount. Virginia Crop Improvement Association made errors in reporting the number of bushels assessed, net market value of assessed bushels, and the checkoff remittance on the SPARC form for the June 2024 quarter. They also did not disclose the amount of checkoff collected from the buyer on their invoices since they calculate and pay the checkoff at the end of the quarter instead of collecting it from the buyer. Wakefield Farm Service Inc. showed consistent ability to accurately assess the check-off amount for the transactions selected during the period examined.

VIII. **United Soybean Board Update:**

Ms. Sarah Aswegan, AMS-USDA, joined the meeting virtually to address the Board's questions related to USB appointments. Aswegan indicated that USDA will soon release a nomination request to fill a 2-year term for the Virginia position that is currently vacant. She anticipates that once the applications are released, VSB will have six weeks to provide two (2) Virginia nominees. USDA anticipates the vacant spots to be appointed by December. Aswegan mentioned that letters of recommendation from the Virginia Soybean Board, the Virginia Soybean Association, and Congressperson through working through the Virginia Soybean Association may help strengthen VSB's preferred nominees; however, AMS-USDA will not dictate or recommend how Congress support is requested or received with the differences throughout the nation with QSSB and Association structures.

In July of 2025, VSB made two nominations (Watkins and Gayle) for S. Watkins' expiring term. Lynn Gayle was appointed and declined appointment due to a change in personal time commitments. Per USDA, when you apply and sign the nominee packet, you agree to serve. When the appointment was declined, following the Soybean Act and Order, USDA declared the position is vacant and the other nominee (Watkins) did not receive the appointment. Moving forward Aswegan stated that Susan Watkins can reapply.

Report from Virginia's United Soybean Board Member, Shannon Ellis: "The United Soybean Board of Directors met in Biloxi, Mississippi for the February Board Meeting. While we are still using the same strategic plan, our portfolios names have shifted from supply and demand to value and volume.

The value portfolio is all about creating new markets and protecting existing ones for your soybeans. Value’s portfolio is divided into three workgroups: Industrial(\$5.7M), Food(\$4.5M), and Sustainable Production(\$14.8M). The goal is to build demand that didn't exist before. Additionally, it is to keep soy competitive where it already is and ensure a robust supply chain and infrastructure to support soy products. I am part of the Sustainable Production work group.

The volume portfolio is all about moving the pile — domestic and international demand for soybeans and soy products. It is divided into three work groups: Fuel(\$6.2M), Feed(\$5.2M), and Export(\$28M). When we talk about volume, we talk about every bushel you grow having a buyer ready to pay for it.

Please let me know if you would like more details on the work group structure or projects within each work group. I was selected to serve on the Audit and Evaluation committee which handles state audits and any issues that arise during the year. We are beginning the search for the next USB CEO. Our next meeting is scheduled for July in Indianapolis.”

- IX. **State Executive Operating funds**: The Board was presented with the estimated travel expenses for the State Executive to attend the State Executive Staff meeting, The Soybean Leadership Academy, the Commodity Classic and the National State Staff meeting.

B. Henley made a motion that the Board expense \$12,500 in the operating expense budget to cover State Executive travel; M. Bryant seconded and the motion passed.

- X. **Projects Reports and Proposals** - The following Project Proposals totaling \$1,046,700 for the period July 1, 2026– June 30, 2027, were presented to the Board.

Title	Topic And Category	Project Type	Project Leader	Requested Funds
Soy in Aquaculture: Research to Results	Research	New	Hall, Katie	\$25,000
FY26.27 VSA Marketing Promotion, & Education Proposal	Education	New	Gresham, Rachel	\$294,900
Soy Transportation Coalition Membership	Market	New	Steenhoek, Mike	\$25,000
Comparing IPM recommendations with Automatic insecticide applications in Virginia Soybeans	Research	New	Bryant, Dr. Tim	\$21,095
Validating In-Season Potassium Management Opportunities in VA Soybean	Research	Continuation	Ortel, Dr. Carrie	\$61,994

Big Teams Collaborating on Big Soybean Problems (Deer and Slugs)	Research	New	Ortel, Dr. Carrie	\$70,000
Eastern Virginia AREC Soybean Research Support	Research	New	Oakes, Dr. Joseph	\$12,000
Efficacy & Return on Investment for Applying Fungicide with a Spray Drone	Research	New	Oakes, Dr. Joseph	\$6,995
Experiential-Learning: Using an agricultural lens to serve Virginia and abroad	Education	New	Abaye, Dr. Ozzie	\$10,000
Cover Crop Termination Timing for Nutrient Cycling, Reduced Slug Damage, and Improved Yields	Research	Continuation	Reiter, Dr. Mark	\$38,373
Comparative analysis of nitrogen acquisition and partitioning in high and low protein soybean line	Research	New	Pilot, Prof. Guillaume	\$14,269
A Web-Based Decision Support Platform for Precision Management of Frogeye Leaf Spot in Soybean	Research	New	Chandel, Dr. Abhilash	\$27,256
On-Farm Investigation & Evaluation of Soybean Production Strategies for 2026	Research	New	Reiter, Scott	\$11,250
Waterproofing against drought: Assessing soybean genotypes for accumulation of suberin in primary	Research	New	Voothuluru, Dr. Priya	\$22,506
Development of Improved Soybean Varieties and Germplasm Adapted to Virginia	Research	Continuation	Zhang, Dr. Bo	\$73,237
Integrating Genomic and Multimodal Phenomics Prediction to Enhance Soybean Breeding Strategies	Research	Continuation	Zhang, Dr. Bo	\$80,468
Optimizing Winter Cereal Cover Crops Termination Timing and Herbicide Systems in Soybean Production.	Research	New	Makkar, Jasleen	\$9,552
2027 ASA Action Partnership (ASAAP Virginia Soybean Board Membership Proposal)	Education	New	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$1,500
2027 Virginia Awards Celebration Proposal	Publicity	New	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$6,000

2027 Virginia BBDI Proposal	Market	New	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$5,000
2027 Virginia SoyStats Proposal	Publicity	New	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$750
2027 Virginia I2M Work Group Membership Proposal	Market	New	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$7,500
2027 Virginia Young Leader Proposal	Education	New	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$9,200
2027 Virginia Soybean Leadership Academy Proposal	Education	New	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$3,000
2027 Virginia ASA Economic Analysis and Support	Education	New	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$5,000
In-Plant Sensing of Nitrogen Fixation and Uptake Stress in Soybean	Research	New	Ali, Dr. Azahar	\$28,222
Virginia FFA Agronomy/Proficiency/Leadership	Education	New	Armstrong, Jennifer	\$8,000
Soybean Weed Management 2026	Research	New	Flessner, Dr. Michael	\$38,874
WISHH Markets: Building Demand for U.S. Soy Trade Together	Market	New	Slemp, Chris	\$15,000
Regional Research Collaboration	Research	Continuation	Bauer, Danielle	\$5,000
AITC Educator Outreach	Education	New	Black, Lynn	\$12,500
Optimizing JDE115-Centered Microbial Consortia for Sustainable Management of Soybean Nematodes	Research	New	Eisenback, Dr. Jonathan	\$59,608
Managing PFAS Risks in Virginia Soybean Production Systems by Identifying Sources, Plant Uptake, and Practical Mitigation Strategies	Research	New	Wang, Dr. Zhiwu	\$25,000
Performance of soybean varieties with and without fungicide applications in Virginia.	Research	New	Langston Jr., Dr. David	\$30,264

- XI. **History of Collections** – Laura Maxey-Nay presented the History of Soybean Collections report that estimated the Virginia Soybean Board (VSB) should collect \$1,199,470.00 from the 2025 crop and as of February 19, 2026, the Board had received

\$320,200.21. The Virginia Ag Statistics estimated price for the Virginia 2025 crop came in at \$10.70.

XII. **Virginia Soybean Board Funding FY 2026-2027**- The following actions were taken on the project proposals that were received by the Board for the upcoming fiscal year.

Title	Project Leader	Requested Funds	Funded	Notes
Soy in Aquaculture: Research to Results	Hall, Katie	\$25,000	\$25,000	
FY26.27 VSA Marketing Promotion, & Education Proposal	Gresham, Rachel	\$294,900	\$299,900	PNL August Audit in December +5000 for SAA travel
Soy Transportation Coalition Membership	Steenhoek, Mike	\$25,000	\$25,000	Who will represent?
Comparing IPM recommendations with Automatic insecticide applications in Virginia Soybeans	Bryant, Dr. Tim	\$21,095	\$21,095	Remove the word stipend and change to salary.
Validating In-Season Potassium Management Opportunities in VA Soybean	Ortel, Dr. Carrie	\$61,994	\$61,994	
Big Teams Collaborating on Big Soybean Problems (Deer and Slugs)	Ortel, Dr. Carrie	\$70,000	\$70,000	
Eastern Virginia AREC Soybean Research Support	Oakes, Dr. Joseph	\$12,000	\$12,000	
Efficacy & Return on Investment for Applying Fungicide with a Spray Drone	Oakes, Dr. Joseph	\$6,995	\$6,995	
Experiential-Learning: Using an agricultural lens to serve Virginia and abroad	Abaye, Dr. Ozzie	\$10,000	\$10,000	
Cover Crop Termination Timing for Nutrient Cycling, Reduced Slug Damage, and Improved Yields	Reiter, Dr. Mark	\$38,373	\$38,373	
Comparative analysis of nitrogen acquisition and partitioning in high and low protein soybean line	Pilot, Prof. Guillaume	\$14,269	\$14,269	

A Web-Based Decision Support Platform for Precision Management of Frogeye Leaf Spot in Soybean	Chandel, Dr. Abhilash	\$27,256	0	Encourage to rethink and come back
On-Farm Investigation & Evaluation of Soybean Production Strategies for 2026	Reiter, Scott	\$11,250	\$11,250	
Waterproofing against drought: Assessing soybean genotypes for accumulation of suberin in primary	Voothuluru, Dr. Priya	\$22,506	\$22,506	
Development of Improved Soybean Varieties and Germplasm Adapted to Virginia	Zhang, Dr. Bo	\$73,237	\$73,237	
Integrating Genomic and Multimodal Phenomics Prediction to Enhance Soybean Breeding Strategies	Zhang, Dr. Bo	\$80,468	\$80,468	
Optimizing Winter Cereal Cover Crops Termination Timing and Herbicide Systems in Soybean Production.	Makkar, Jasleen	\$9,552	\$9,552	
2027 ASA Action Partnership (ASAAP Virginia Soybean Board Membership Proposal)	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$1,500	\$1,500	
2027 Virginia Awards Celebration Proposal	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$6,000	\$3,000	Work with VSA to find people to attend Commodity Classic to sit at table during celebration
2027 Virginia BBDI Proposal	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$5,000	0	
2027 Virginia SoyStats Proposal	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$750	0	
2027 Virginia I2M Work Group Membership Proposal	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$7,500	\$7,500	Work with VSA to find someone(s) to represent VA
2027 Virginia Young Leader Proposal	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$9,200	0	
2027 Virginia Soybean Leadership Academy Proposal	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$3,000	\$3,000	Work with VSA to find someone to represent VA

2027 Virginia ASA Economic Analysis and Support	Maher, Dr. Kate	\$5,000	\$5,000	Work with VSA to find someone(s) to represent VA
In-Plant Sensing of Nitrogen Fixation and Uptake Stress in Soybean	Ali, Dr. Azahar	\$28,222	0	Changing Batteries not practical
Virginia FFA Agronomy/Proficiency/Leadership	Armstrong, Jennifer	\$8,000	\$10,000	
Soybean Weed Management 2026	Flessner, Dr. Michael	\$38,874	\$38,874	
WISHH Markets: Building Demand for U.S. Soy Trade Together	Slemp, Chris	\$15,000	\$15,000	
Regional Research Collaboration	Bauer, Danielle	\$5,000	\$5,000	
AITC Educator Outreach	Black, Lynn	\$12,500	\$15,000	Extra money to purchase extra materials to be provided to schools.
Optimizing JDE115-Centered Microbial Consortia for Sustainable Management of Soybean Nematodes	Eisenback, Dr. Jonathan	\$59,608	\$59,608	
Managing PFAS Risks in Virginia Soybean Production Systems by Identifying Sources, Plant Uptake, and Practical Mitigation Strategies	Wang, Dr. Zhiwu	\$25,000	0	
Performance of soybean varieties with and without fungicide applications in Virginia.	Langston Jr., Dr. David	\$30,264	\$30,264	

R. White moved and S. Watkins seconded a motion for the Board to approve payment for the following projects at the stated dollar amounts for a one-year period from July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027. The total funding amounts to equal \$975,385.00. Motion passed. Mike Bryant abstained from Virginia Soybean Association Funding decisions. Robert Harper abstained from the Ag in the Classroom funding decision.

- XIII. **Next August, December and Funding Meetings** – The Board requested that Laura Maxey-Nay send out a poll asking for dates for upcoming meetings. Meeting dates will be set after the poll. The meetings’ locations will be determined at a later time.
- XIV. **Public Comment** – Chairman Gayle opened the floor up for public comment. There was none.

XV. **Adjournment** – There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 pm.