

Board Members Present:

Jeff Bloem	Kelly Gordon	Mark Smith
Joshua Chandler	Andrew Yancey	
Scott Harris	Dale Farino, VA ABC	

Board Members Absent:

Matthew Harris
Tim Nichols
Tom Murray
Charles Green, VDACS

Guests/Staff:

Jennifer Atkins, VDACS
Jack Gorman, Spirits Board Marketing Office
Lissie Lockard, Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom
Nicholas Santantonio, Virginia Tech
Alexis Perry, Virginia Tech
Shelley Sackier, Reservoir Distillery
Clanci Jo Conover, SPIRITS Museum
Agatha Brinkley, Common Grain Alliance
David Cuttino, Virginia Distillers Association

I. Call to Order – 1:06PM

II. Approval of Minutes from February 3, 2026

The minutes from the February 3, 2026, meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved as presented. The motion was made by Mr. Yancey and seconded by Mr. Smith.

III. Research & Education Grant Proposal Presentations

The following project managers/principal investigators/designees were given the opportunity to speak about their grant proposal and receive questions from the Board in advance of the Board's consideration and award decisions.

- Lissie Lockard – Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom
- Shelley Sackier - The Virginia Heritage Grain Study: From Seed to Spirit
- Agatha Brinkley – Virginia Heritage Grain Project: Strengthening Supply, Scale, and Story for Virginia Spirits
- Agatha Brinkley - Expanding Virginia Distillers’ Use of Mid-Atlantic Grains
- Dr. Nicholas Santantonio - Developing low-GN and GN-zero malt barley varieties for the Eastern United States
- Clanci Jo Conover – Distilled Heritage: Building Virginia’s Spirits History Archive Through Oral Histories, Material Culture, and Virtual Exhibitions
- Dave Cuttino – Virginia Distillers Association Educational Conference

IV. Review and Consideration of Research & Education Grant Proposals

After review and discussion of each proposal by the Board, the following proposals were funded from the Virginia Spirits Promotion Fund for the fiscal year 2026-2027:

- *Allocate \$1,500.00 to Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom; the motion was made by Mr. Harris and seconded by Mr. Yancey. The vote was unanimously in favor.*
- *Allocate \$96,500.00 to Reservoir Distillery for the Virginia Heritage Grain Project: From Seed to Spirit and \$59,680 to Common Grain Alliance for Virginia Heritage Grain Project: Strengthening Supply, Scale, and Story for Virginia Spirits; the motion was made by Mr. Bloem and seconded by Ms. Gordon. The vote was unanimously in favor.*
- *Allocate \$77,332.00 to Virginia Tech: Developing low-GN and GN-zero malt barley varieties for the Eastern United States; the motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Bloem. The vote was unanimously in favor.*
- *Allocate \$130,000.00 to the Virginia Distillers Association (VDA): VDA Educational Conference; the motion was made by Mr. Yancey and seconded by Mr. Smith. The vote was unanimously in favor.*
- *Allocate \$36,940.00 to the Common Grain Alliance: Expanding Virginia Distillers’ Use of Mid-Atlantic Grains; the motion was made by Mr. Yancey and seconded by Mr. Smith. The vote was unanimously in favor.*
- *Allocate \$50,779.47 to the SPIRITS Foundation & Museum: Distilled Heritage: Building Virginia’s Spirits History Archive Through Oral Histories, Material Culture, and Virtual Exhibitions; the motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Gordon. The vote was unanimously in favor.*

V. Other Business

Mr. Chandler and Mr. Scott Harris have terms expiring on June 30, 2026, and both are eligible for reappointment. VDA has submitted nominations to the Secretary of the Commonwealth and the Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry

VI. Public Comment

The Chairman opened the floor for any public comments. There were no public comments.

VII. Schedule Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for June 2, 2026, in Richmond at the Hodges Partnership at 1PM.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 2:49PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Atkins
Secretary