

Final Minutes
Virginia Wine Board
August 29, 2007
Virginia Department of Forestry
Charlottesville, VA

Present

William Moses	David King	Jennifer McCloud
Dean Triplett	John Stephens	Ruth Saunders
Mills Wehner	Patrick Duffeler	
Todd Haymore, Commissioner, VDACS		

Absent

Luca Paschina

Guests

Neil Williamson	Frank Britt	Emma Randel
Terri Beirne	Herman Ellison	Rex Linville
Christie Bieber	Liz Bryant	Eric Gregory
David Robishaw, Secretary		

Call to order and Opening Remarks

Chairman William Moses called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM and welcomed the Board and guests. Todd Haymore, the new Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, introduced himself to the Board.

Approval of the minutes from the July 18, 2007 meeting

Prior to the meeting, Dave Robishaw distributed the draft minutes from the July 18, 2007 meeting to the Board. After a brief review, Patrick Duffeler moved to accept the minutes as written and John (Rock) Stephens seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the minutes were approved as written.

Industry Survey

Herman Ellison, Director of Virginia Agricultural Statistics, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, reviewed with the Board the 2006 Commercial Grape Report. This report was in the preliminary stage but will be released shortly. Mr. Ellison also reported that his office would be doing a major industry survey and requested that the industry get behind this effort and complete the surveys. The information collected would be very valuable for the industry.

Virginia Wine Expo

Alex Papajohn made another presentation to the Board requesting support and funding for his first annual "Virginia Wine Expo". After discussion, the Board deferred taking action on his request. When the new independent contractor for marketing is hired, the project would be reviewed in context of the total marketing program.

Virginia Vineyard Association Report

John (Rock) Stephens reported to the Board on the activities of the VVA. The VVA will be working on a sustainable agricultural program. This is not the same as trying to grow organically but rather a total approach to becoming more environmentally responsible. There may be some additional marketing benefits as consumers seem to be looking to support farms that are more environmentally focused. The VVA also provided Tony Wolf some funding for extension travel that will allow more vineyards to be visited. Rock also thanked Patrick Duffeler from Williamsburg Winery for hosting the summer meeting of the VVA.

Virginia Wineries Association

The Wineries Association did not have a formal report, but Terri Beirne offered to answer any questions regarding Association activities.

Report on the Independent Marketing Contractor

John (Rock) Stephens and David King updated the Board on the search for office space and the RFP for an independent contractor for Marketing. There is suitable office space available in a state building in downtown Richmond that meets the size and budget requirements. The lease will be for 1 year with the option to renew for at least another 3 years. The cutoff date for the RFP's to be in is September 24, 2007. After discussion, Jennifer McCloud moved that Rock Stephens, David King, Patrick Duffeler, Jennifer McCloud, Mills Wehner, William Moses, and the Commissioner or his designate form a review committee to screen the proposals. Patrick Duffeler seconded the motion, and with no further discussion, the motion passed. The evaluation committee will meet on September 25, 2007 at the VDACS building in Richmond.

Report from the Piedmont Environmental Committee

Rex Linville from the Piedmont Environmental Committee made a brief presentation to the Board on their efforts towards promoting local foods and sustainable agriculture, as well as their work on land preservation and conservation.

Wine Guide and Final Marketing Budget

The Board discussed the options for the new Wine Guide. The completion of a Wine Guide by January 15, 2008 is part of the RFP. The consensus of the Board was to wait until the independent contractor for Marketing was hired and let that person deliver a guide. The Board felt there was time for the Guide to be developed, printed and delivered in a timely fashion. The RFP establishes a time line for the completion of the guide. The Board felt it was important to deliver a quality guide. The Board also discussed what other assets the new contractor would have, including the web site,

mailing lists, data bases, furniture etc. The Attorney General's office will check to see who controls the domain name of the web site.

Election of New Officers

Chairman Moses asked the Board to elect a new chair. He has served since the new Board was created and felt it was time for a new voice. The industry is facing many serious challenges including funding, marketing, and working with the legislature and counties to establish policies that will allow wineries to survive. William Moses nominated David King to be the new Chair, and Jennifer McCloud seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed and David King is the new Chair of the Wine Board. Dean Triplett moved that Rock Stephens remain as Vice Chair, Jennifer McCloud seconded the motion, and with no further discussion, the motion passed and Rock is the Vice Chair. David King encouraged those on the Board and those within the industry to volunteer to work on committees and serve the industry. There is a lot of work to do and you have to have people willing to pitch in and help. David King also thanked William Moses for his work on the Board and for the industry.

Public Discussion

The new chair, David King, began the discussion by saying the industry in moving in the right direction with the establishment of a permanent office and the hiring of an independent marketing contractor. There is still much work to be done to increase funding, improve marketing, and to prevent counties from regulating wineries out of business. Patrick Duffeler agreed that the battle with the counties will be critical. One of the priorities must be the establishment of safety guidelines for visitors to wineries. After further discussion, Patrick Duffeler moved that the Board develop an industry set of safety standards and volunteered to work on the project. Dean Triplett seconded the motion, and with no further discussion, the motion passed.

Frank Britt, Britt Marketing reported to the Board on his "Virginia Wine Lover Newsletter" with over 100,000 copies printed plus electronic distribution.

Terri C. Beirne reported to the Board on the status of the Virginia Wine Distribution Company (VWDC). The VWDC has a Board of Directors and is incorporated with a set of bylaws. The process is moving along as quickly as possible.

Neil Williamson of the Trellis Group reported that Greene County will be the site of the second annual "Discover Virginia" festival and will feature Virginia wineries and food companies. The festival is expected to draw over 1,000 visitors and is supported by the county administration.

Dean Triplett felt it's critical to work on increasing the communication between the Board and all industry groups so everyone is included. This will help the industry put out a unified message.

Next meeting and adjourn

The next meeting of the Wine Board will be in Richmond on September 25, 2007. With no further business, William Moses moved to adjourn, Rock Stephens seconded, and at 1:10 PM the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

David King, Chair

David Robishaw, Secretary