

VWB Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2025

Board Members Present

Kerem Baki

Stephen Barnard

Anne Shelton

James King

Nate Walsh

Megan Seibel, Chair

George Hodson, Vice Chair

Aubrey Rose, Treasurer

Board Members Absent

Joe Guthrie, VDACS Commissioner

Luca Paschina

Guests Present

Anna Anderson, Wine Board Marketing Office

Annette Boyd, Wine Board Marketing Office

Susan Kramer, Wine Board Marketing Office

AJ Greely, Virginia Vineyards Association

Matthieu Finot, King Family Vineyards

Joy Ting, Winemakers Research Exchange

Desiree Harrison Brown, Wine Board Marketing Office

Carly Seward Maher, The Verasion Project

Emily Hodson, Winemakers Research Exchange

Elizabeth Akers, Wine Board Marketing Office

Lindsey Anderson, VDACS

Jennifer Reichert, Virginia Wine Board Grant and Budget Manager

I. Call to Order – 10:04 AM

II. Minutes

- a. *A motion was made by G. Hodson to accept the December minutes as presented and was seconded by S. Barnard. The motion was approved unanimously.*

III. Industry Reports – Full reports can be found on Board Docs

- a. Winemakers Research Exchange – J. Ting
- b. Virginia Vineyards Association – A. Greely
- c. Verasion Project – C. Seward Maher
- d. Virginia Wineries Association – G. Hodson
- e. Virginia Wine Distribution Company – M. Seibel
- f. Virginia Cider Association – Anne Shelton
- g. Wine Board Marketing Office – A. Boyd
 - i. The Wine Marketing Office has \$15,000 allotted for matching marketing grants. A. Boyd asked the Board to review and approve the two grant proposals: Toast Virginia with Maureen Kelly & Matt Brown and Monticello Wine Week with Tracey Love.
 - 1. *A motion was made to approve and fund the two marketing grants by A. Rose and seconded by J. King. The motion passed unanimously.*
 - ii. There is a current matching marketing grant that is not able to execute their plan to bring Canadian citizens to tour Virginia wines this Spring. A. Boyd requested that the \$2,000 allotment be moved into the next fiscal year in order to carry out the plan at a later date.
 - a. *A motion was made by G. Hodson and seconded by S. Barnard to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.*

IV. Old Business

- a. Revisiting Washington Opportunity- M. Seibel
 - i. In continuing the conversation about learning more about the school in Walla Walla, WA that serves to educate and train students on Washington wine and stay in the local industry, M. Seibel suggested having her contact for the program attend the August meeting. She will then present the Board with information on what the program entails and how Virginia can learn more.

V. New Business

- a. Strategic Plan – G. Hodson
 - i. To make the strategic plan stronger and more regularly addressed, G. Hodson recommended that it become a topic of discussion at association meetings, such as Virginia Vineyards Association, Virginia Wineries Association, and Wine Collective. This will allow more continuous

contact with the plan and might provide a more genuine interaction. A. Anderson plans to get the associations together in late spring for a combined meeting.

b. Board Docs

- i. Board Docs has announced that they will no longer be providing their program beginning next May. In the meantime, the Board will need to find another way of managing the meetings. L. Anderson emphasized the importance of narrowing down what the Board uses Board Docs for and what will be needed in the next program – these include document sharing, agenda creation, and record keeping.
- ii. Over the next few months, L. Anderson will research options that provide everything the Board needs to replace Board Docs. The Board was prompted to think on the topic and send details on things like would like included in the next online program. At the August meeting, Anderson will present current findings and a plan outline of moving forward.

VI. Grants Management Report – J. Reichert

- a. The Virginia Wine Board currently has 17 active grants and 4 active contracts. Final reports for each grant will be due at the end of June, and subsequently posted on the Virginia Wine website. For the 2025-2026 grant cycle, there are 16 tentatively selected grants, which will have their final decision confirmed later in the day. J. Reichert requested indicators from potential grantees and all responses contained great detail, showing the investment each applicant has in these projects. After analyzing the metrics from each grant application, the anticipated overall total of touchpoints could reach 68,725 for the upcoming grant year.

VII. Financial Report and Budget Review – A. Rose

- a. A. Rose led the Board in a discussion about the Board's current budget, spending, and potential for decreased allocations. When looking at the Board's commitments, the current allocation would not suffice past the next fiscal year if spending is continued the way that it has been. Each contract has agreed to decrease their budget for the upcoming year.
- b. The Board entered into a lengthy discussion to determine which other commitments could be cut back. The idea of combining the Virginia Wineries Association and Virginia Vineyards Association meetings is now even more important, as the largest costs of those meetings for facilities would be cut in half. The Board made suggestions such as making more items virtual, decreasing frequency of certain items, and having associations seek other support, with the goal of becoming self-sustained in future years. The Board also chose to decrease the funding for the grant program for the short term but chose to start making internal budget cuts rather than cut out quality grants that the industry will benefit from.

- c. A. Greely suggested that with the leftover contractual funds in the Virginia Vineyards Association’s Commercial Grape Report grant, that they could purchase the software they have been eyeing, which would greatly reduce costs to the grant for subsequent years.
 - i. *A motion was made by G. Hodson to change the statement of work in Virginia Vineyards Association’s grant for the Commercial Grape Report to include the purchase of cost-saving survey management software and seconded by J. King. The motion passed unanimously.*

VIII. Revisiting Tentative Awards

- a. There are 16 awards that were tentatively awarded at the March meeting.

Awardee	Title	Approved
VT	Maintain fungicide resistance testing capabilities for grape diseases-2025-2026	\$9,900
VT	Impacts of Exposure to Adult Spotted Lanternfly on Cabernet Franc Yield and Grape Composition	\$59,373
VT	Comparing annual and perennial legumes as under-vine cover crops in Virginia vineyards	\$44,638
VT	Assessing red wine phenolics in three Virginia wine varieties over three vintages	\$47,323
VT	Harvest Maturity and Postharvest Storage of Southern Apples for Cider Production	\$59,797
VT	Improve the efficacy of grape downy mildew management in Virginia	\$56,000
VT	Preparing for Pierce's disease-ready future vineyard operations	\$25,117
VVA	Virginia Commercial Grape Report 2025	\$21,000
VWA	VWA Technical & Reception Programs	\$45,000
VWA	VWA Regulation and Rules Round Ups and Winery Resource Guide	\$42,000
VCA	Virginia Cider Educational Meetings FY 2025-2026	\$8,000
Nelson County	Cost of Production Review	\$17,945
VVA	Virginia Vineyards Association 2026 Winter Technical Meeting Facility Support	\$25,000
Sustainable Virginia Vineyards	Developing a Sustainable Vineyard Certification Pilot Program	\$12,000
Wine Cellar Stories Productions	Virginia Wine Docu-series	\$50,000

- i. *A motion was made by G. Hodson and seconded by A. Rose to give final approval to 14 tentative awards. The motion passed unanimously.*
- ii. *A motion was made by G. Hodson and seconded by A. Rose to approve the tentative award for the Commercial Grape Report at \$21,000. The motion passed unanimously.*

IX. Contract Renewals

- a. Winemakers Research Exchange – full report in Board Docs
 - i. The Winemakers Research Exchange proposed 3 budget options with thorough explanations of what each budget could provide the industry.
 - ii. The Board favored their budget option of \$327,220 which would result in a 10% budget cut, where they would be cutting out virtual sensory sessions, reducing host winery reimbursements, and modifying unspent categories.
 1. *A motion was made to approve the Winemakers Research Exchange's contract renewal and budget of \$327,220 by K. Baki and seconded by J. King. The motion passed unanimously.*
- b. Governor's Cup
 - i. VDACS is currently still in negotiations with the Virginia Wineries Association to submit their sole source contract proposal to the Department of Purchasing and Supplies for approval. With that in mind, L. Anderson, J. Reichert, K. Baki, and A. Shelton are working closely with procurement to tie up all loose ends. In the instance of the contract being awarded, everything will be ready.
 - ii. Currently, VDACS is looking at a deliverables based contract accompanied by a project plan.
 - iii. *A motion was made by N. Walsh and seconded by A. Rose that ending a satisfactory proposal as determined by the two designated Board members Kerem Baki and Anne Shelton, and DGS approval, the Board approves spending up to \$100,000 in the first year of a new contract with the Virginia Wineries Association to hold the Governor's Cup Competition. The motion passed unanimously.*
- c. StonyWater – full report in Board Docs
 - i. J. Reichert has requested \$73,000, a cut from the previous year's contract award.
 1. *A motion was made by A. Shelton and seconded by J. King to approve StonyWater, LLC's contract renewal and budget request. The motion passed unanimously.*
- d. Wine Board Marketing Office – full report in Board Docs
 - i. A. Boyd proposed a budget of \$1.25 million, a 35% cut in programming. With this budget, the Marketing Office would focus solely on programs

that are focused on increasing Virginia wine sales in Virginia. A. Boyd acknowledged that the office has gotten to do some great projects previously, but wine sales are still down so it is now time to take a new approach.

- ii. The types of projects that are being cut are Vin Expo, and national publications. They are looking at bringing back the Virginia Wine Summit, but in a more downscaled approach than previously seen.
- iii. *A motion was made by G. Hodson and seconded by S. Barnard to approve the Wine Board Marketing Office's contract renewal and budget proposal. The motion passed unanimously.*

X. Public Comment

- a. None

XI. Meeting Dates Outlook

- a. The next Virginia Wine Board meeting will be held on August 5th at 10:00 AM at the Forestry Building in Charlottesville.
- b. The remaining 25-26 meetings will be held on the following dates (subject to change):
 - i. December 4th, location TBD
 - ii. March 31st – April 1st, location TBD
 - iii. May 13th, location TBD

XII. Adjourn

- a. *A motion was made by S. Barnard and seconded by G. Hodson to adjourn the meeting.*