

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**VIRGINIA HORSE INDUSTRY BOARD**  
Department of Forestry – Charlottesville, VA  
Wednesday, July 17, 2019

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Horse Industry Board Meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m. on Wednesday, July 17, 2019 at the Department of Forestry in Charlottesville, VA by Chairman Sue Fanelli.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Sue Alvis  
Sue Fanelli  
Nancy Troutman  
Debbie Easter  
Dr. John Wise  
Robert Banner  
Dr. Kelly Foltman  
Dr. Beth Sheely  
Janie Ober

**GUESTS / STAFF**

Heather Wheeler, Program Manager, VDACS

**APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The Program Manager discussed the missing section of minutes from the April 17, 2019 meeting. During the April meeting, the Program Manager was asked to leave the room while the Board discussed a grant and upon her return she was not provided minutes for the time during which she was absent. The Board was reminded by the Program Manager that minutes must be taken at all times throughout the meeting. The Chairman indicated that she had taken the minutes during that time but did not provide those to the Program Manager. The minutes of the previous meetings (April 17, 2019) were approved.

**FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Heather Wheeler reported on the finances for each fund. Income and revenue are listed as follows:

**Coggins – cc 625 (Figures through March 31, 2019)**

Beginning Balance 7/1/2018	\$301,369.07
Revenues YTD	\$101,949.82
Expenditures YTD	-\$114,327.17
Cash Balance YTD	\$289,018.72
Uncommitted Balance (Cash bal 7/1/18 + rev - budgeted)	\$273,791.57

## Feed Tonnage – cc 626 (Figures through March 31, 2019)

Beginning Balance 7/1/2018	\$344,163.51
Revenues YTD	\$264,463.20
Expenditures YTD	-\$65,133.90
Cash Balance YTD	\$543,492.81
Uncommitted Balance (Cash bal 7/1/18 + rev - budgeted)	\$448,756.15

## OLD BUSINESS / UPDATES

### Program Manager Update

Heather Wheeler reported on marketing activities since the April Meeting:

- During the month of July, the Program Manager is coordinating a Social Media Takeover on Facebook that is highlighting the various equine related associations from Virginia. Associations are providing the information for the posts, photos and contact information and the VHIB is hosting a new post each day. In the last 30 days, VHIB's post reach has been well above 6,500, with post engagement up 90% to over 1,700 and a 92% increase in page followers to 1477 followers. Most of the association posts are reaching an audience of 300 or more.
- The Program Manager met with a representative from Agriculture in the Classroom to discuss the addition of equine curriculum in the AITC program. Various options were discussed to engage teachers and students in learning about horses and AITC has prepared a sponsorship proposal for the Board to review.
- The Program Manager has been working with the website host to identify a database platform that could power the VHIB Equine Directory. Various options have been looked at and the most promising one to date is the Caspio platform. This platform is customizable and can grow with VHIB as needed. The website manager has created a test environment for VHIB to see and to begin consider as an option. The addition of the database is estimated to cost around \$4,000 a year plus an initial setup fee but the Program Manager will continue to work with the website host to finalize the costs.
- The Program Manager has compiled a trail guide for VHIB and is in the final stages of cleaning the data. Once it is cleaned, it will be uploaded onto the VHIB website as a resource for those wanting to trail ride in the state. In addition to the guide, the Program Manager will work with the website team to develop a map on the page that indicates where the trails are and all trail information will be linked to the trail's webpage for easy access to information about fees, parking, camping, maps, etc. The Board can then decide on printing handouts for distributing at events, expos, tourism sites, hotels, tack shops, etc.
- The Program Manager has continued to meet with Virginia Tourism representatives to discuss future marketing opportunities for the Board.
- The Program Manager provided all Board Members with an updated copy of the 2019-2020 Board Member Handbook.

## **VHIB Grants**

The Board had two grants that carried over from the April 17, 2019 meeting – The Virginia Horse Council Grant and a research grant from Emory and Henry.

The Virginia Horse Council grant had been given a second grant deadline extension until May 31, 2019 at the April 17<sup>th</sup> meeting to rewrite a grant that was original submitted March 27, 2019. Virginia Horse Council had rewritten and submitted three grants to the Board for consideration by the May 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. The Board held considerable discussion about potential conflicts that can arise as the Board considers grants applications from Board Members and how to handle those conflicts. The Board also reviewed the current VHIB grant policies and noted that those policies do not allow for the extension of deadlines or submission of corrections or addenda after the grant deadline. After discussion, the Board moved, seconded and unanimously approved that they feel that VHIB has the procedures in place to move forward with grants without making changes to the current policies and that the Board realizes that all Board Members need to be held to the same standards as all applicants applying for grants, no rules should be bent for any applicant and the Board with the assistance from the Program Manager will hold itself accountable for upholding its policies. The Virginia Horse Council withdrew its grant applications and will reapply in the 2020 cycle.

The Board had received a grant application for “The Effect of Dietary Protein on the Equine Hindgut Microbiome” from Emory and Henry during this grant cycle. At the April 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Board determined that it could not make a decision based on the information provided and asked a clarifying question of the researcher. The researcher responded to the question and the Board discussed the grant and the response. After discussion, the Board moved, seconded and unanimously decided not to fund the grant project.

After discussion regarding grant submissions and how the Board should handle applications when they have the need to ask clarifying questions of the applicant as was the case in the above grant, the Board moved, seconded and unanimously approved a motion to add a line to the Grant Procedures section of the VHIB Board Member Handbook under the Grant Deadline section that states that the Board may ask clarifying questions of a grant applicant when reviewing grant proposals even in the event that the review comes after the grant application deadline.

## **Marketing RFP**

VHIB released an Unsealed Request for Proposal(URFP) for a five year strategic marketing plan. The URFP closed on July 16<sup>th</sup> and the Board received four proposals for review. The committee will meet on July 31<sup>st</sup> with the Director of Procurement for VDACS to review the proposals.

## **Flair Communications Contract**

The VHIB Flair Communication Contract for the VHIB Website is set to expire in August of 2019. Since the Board was issuing and Request for Proposal for a strategic marketing plan that could affect elements of the website, the Board decided at the last meeting to offer a six month extension of the contract to Flair so it could incorporate any suggested changes to the website

into a new website Request for Proposal. That extension has been offered to and accepted by Flair. The new extension will expire in January of 2020.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Nomination of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

After discussion, the Board moved, seconded and unanimously nominated Janie Ober as Chairman of the Board and Sue Fannelli as Vice Chairman for the 2019-2020 year.

### **Agriculture in the Classroom Sponsorship Proposal**

The Program Manager met with Morgan Slaven with Agriculture in the Classroom in April and discussed opportunities for VHIB to become involved in the program. VHIB expressed an interest at its April meeting at having equine based curriculum included in the program and being engaged with the school program. Ms. Slaven provided a proposal to the Board which included the following projects for the 2019-2020 year - the creation and distribution of an Equine Curriculum Unit, promoting National Horse Month in December to teachers and students, supporting professional development for educators, the creation of equine banners for display at community events by Agriculture in the Classroom and by VHIB – these banners can also be requested by educators for use in their classroom or events. After discussion, the Board moved, seconded and unanimously approved the \$5,000 sponsorship request from Agriculture in the Classroom to fund the projects outlined in the proposal.

### **VHIB Marketing**

The Board will be considering the proposals from a released Unsealed Request for Proposals in late July that will provide the Board with a 5 year strategic marketing plan by the end of October of 2019. The Board feels there is a need for it to get serious about marketing efforts moving forward and needs to make a concentrated effort to market the horse industry in Virginia and the Board. There is interest in the Board to consider the current VHIB logo and consider a redesign. The Program Manager will begin to gather information on firms that could do a redesign for VHIB and costs associated with that and will provide that information to the Board at the next meeting.

### **Virginia State Fair**

The Virginia State Fair will be hosted September 27<sup>th</sup> through October 6<sup>th</sup> and VHIB has the opportunity to once again host the Showcase of Breeds at the Fair. Last year, the Fair presented some challenges to the Showcase and getting horses and volunteers to participate after the Showcase was located next to a Chainsaw Artist demonstration and volunteers opted not to come due to safety concerns. It was also challenging getting the horses into the Showcase area due to

the set up of the Fair. This year, VHIB has a volunteer that is interested in setting up for all ten days which eliminates the need to identify ten volunteers and he will be onsite for the Fair so moving in and out will not be as much of a challenge. The Program Manager will work with State Fair staff to schedule the exhibit. The Board discussed ways to create a display that is reflective of the Virginia horse industry to include graphics from the Virginia Economic Impact Study, photos from around Virginia and information on Virginia horse trails.

**Public Comment**

None

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the board will be held on September 4, 2019.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:53 PM.

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