

**MINUTES**  
**SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING**

**December 5, 2023**  
**4:00 to 6:00 pm**

Commission Room  
380 Fenwick Road, Bldg. 96  
Fort Monroe, Virginia

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Members Present

J. C. Hudgins  
Richard Harding via WebEx  
Beverly Ludford via WebEx  
Jackie Shannon  
Dan Dize via WebEx

Members Present

Tommy Kellum  
Ernest George  
Peyton Mason  
Cody Metcalf  
Lee Deihl

VMRC/VIMS/VDH Staff

Andrew Button  
Adam Kenyon  
Jamie Hogge  
Andy Shin  
Melissa Southworth, VIMS  
John Cosgrove

J. C. Hudgins, Chairman, opened the meeting at 4:06 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:**

Member Tommy Kellum made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Lee Deihl. Motion passed 8-0.

**Approval of Aug 10, 2023, Meeting Minutes:**

Member Tommy Kellum made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Member Lee Deihl seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-0.

Tommy Kellum requested to recognize the passing of Royce Bridger and his contributions to the agency through the years.

**Discussion of current season and harvest amounts**

Member J. C. Hudgins began the meeting with a discussion about the various harvest areas. He asked for a summary of each open harvest area from Shellfish Management Advisory Committee (SMAC) members and Andrew Button. Their comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Missy Southworth, VIMS spoke about the health and condition of the oysters. The increase in disease and higher salinity can cause mortality. Her comments are a part of the verbatim record.

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# MINUTES

## SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

### Larsons Bay Sanctuary Reef

Andrew Button, Deputy Chief, Shellfish Management Division, gave further details about the Larsons Bay Sanctuary Reef. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Member Kellum request more direction and clarification by the General Assembly and legislators on the definition of a 'Reef' and 'closed area' for the benefit of the Commonwealth. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

After detailed discussion by the members, Member Ernest George made a motion to open the entire Larsons Bay area, including the reef and sanctuary for harvest. If it is voted not open it, motion is to close it all. Member Ernest George withdrew his motion.

J. Hugdins, Chairman, expressed concerns of Rappahannock Area 6 being the only area open in February will not sustain the present the scrape fleet. He asked staff for recommendations of harvest options in February besides Blackberry Hangs and James River. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Recommendations and comments presented by committee members and staff were: All comments are a part of the verbatim record.

#### J. C. Hudgins:

Enter below areas into a 2 year rotation

Area 3 (Parrots) – 10 working days

Area 5 (Temples Bay) – 10 working days

Cover 20 working days, split the fleet with 2 weeks in one area and 2 weeks in the other area.

#### T. Kellum

Not in favor of working Area 3 and Area 5 because it is due to be in rotation for harvest next year.

Recommend Rappahannock Area 2 instead of Rappahannock Areas 3 and 5.

Concerned with the mortality and large oysters that were left in Rappahannock Area 2

#### Rich Harding

Recommend 2 weeks in Rappahannock Area 9 for scrape.

#### A.Button:

Patent tong surveys for Rappahannock Area 9 have not been completed and would be difficult to area to replenish.

Recommendation :

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## SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

York River – Pages Rock

Easy to replenish

More data collected in the York vs. Area 9 in the Rappahannock

J. Hudgins:

Recommend staff survey Area 9

P. Mason:

Consider replacing Area 1 with Area 9 for the next 3-year rotation.

Motions:

Member P. Mason made a motion to direct staff to survey Area 9 to check viability of possibly opening Area 9 for 10 working days in February. Seconded by Member J. Shannon. Motion passed.

Motion:

Member T. Kellum made a motion to open Rappahannock Area 2 for 2 weeks (10 working days) on February 1, 2024 – February 14, 2024, then open G. Wicomico Area 1 in conjunction with Blackberry Hangs from February 15, 2024 – February 29, 2024, for Hand scrape. Member Harding seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Member P. Mason made a motion to allow harvesters to catch their limit of oysters then work James River Seed area in the same day. Member T. Kellum seconded the motion. Andrew Button clarified that the motion would most likely take a regulatory change prior to this going into effect. Member E. George opposed. Motion passed.

TASK from Commissioner Green:

Plans in place for RFP (seed oyster in the spring)

- Buy seed from waterman as done in the past to replant in areas needing replenishment.

### Public Comment

Ty Farrington:

Does not agree with the recently changed Oyster User Fee Transfer eligibility. Recommending incorporating the old regulation for transferring of an Oyster User Fee All Gear license of 40 days

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## **SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

of harvest on public ground the previous year and the new regulation to give another transfer option of one or the other.

Committed Members agreed to revisit and discuss Oyster User Fee All Gear transfer eligibility options at the January 2024 meeting.

Member E. George made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member L. Deihl seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

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