

MINUTES

COMMISSION MEETING

September 23, 2025

The meeting of the Marine Resources Commission was held at the Marine Resources Commission main office at 380 Fenwick Road, Bldg. 96, Fort Monroe, Virginia with the following present:

- Jamie L. Green Commissioner
- Patrick Hand
- Lynn Kellum
- A.J. Erskine Associate Members
- William Bransom
- Jeremy Headley
- Jeanette Edwards
- Preston White
- Kelci Block Assistant Attorney General
Via phone
- Joseph Grist Deputy Commissioner
- Randy Owen Chief, Habitat Management
- Adam Kenyon Chief, Shellfish Management

Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS):

- Lyle Varnell Ellen Rowe Roger Mann

Others present:

- Rachel Kellam Beverly Ludford Richard Ray
- Alan Kellebrew J.C. Hudgins Montaigne Cree
- Melissa Southworth Tony Edwards Deven Simmerman
- Jim Wesson Mike Shackelford Jordan Krevonick
- David O'Brien Chris Ludford Garrett Ludford
- and others.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA. – Commissioner Jamie Green asked if there were any changes from the Board members or staff.

Associate Member Erskine moved to approve the agenda as presented. Associate Member Bransom seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

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MINUTES: Commissioner Green asked if there were any changes or corrections to be made to the August 26, 2025, Commission Meeting minutes.

Associate Member Bransom moved to approve the minutes as presented. Associate Member Erskine seconded the motion. The motion carried, 6-0-1. Associate Member Hand abstained.

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Commissioner Green swore in the VMRC staff and VIMS staff that would be speaking or presenting testimony during the meeting.

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- 2. **PERMITS** (Projects over \$1,000,000.00 with no objections and with staff recommendation for approval).

There are no Page 2 agenda items.

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- 3. **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:** There were no Consent Agenda Items presented.

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- 4. **CLOSED MEETING FOR CONSULTATION WITH, OR BRIEFING BY, COUNSEL.** – No meeting needed

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5. SHELLFISH

Montaigne Cree, Oyster Planting Ground Application #2023-051: requests authorization to lease approximately 3 acres of oyster planting ground within the Warehouse Creek in Northampton County.

Adam Kenyon, Chief, Shellfish Management, gave the briefing of the information provided in the staff's evaluation, with PowerPoint slides. Mr. Kenyon's comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Montaigne Cree, applicant, was sworn in and spoke in support of the application. Her comments are part of the verbatim record.

There were several people that spoke in opposition to the application. Their comments are a part of the verbatim record.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Bransom moved to deny the project as presented. Associate Member Edwards seconded the motion. The motion carried, 4-1-2. Associate Member Erskine voted no. Associate Members White and Hand abstained.

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6. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

William Newell MRC ID: 2749:

Mr. William Newell came before the Commission to address a striped bass quota overage that occurred in 2024. Mr. Newell asked the Commission for relief on the penalty that is set in Chapter 4VAC-20-252, "Pertaining to Atlantic Striped Bass". Ms. Beverly Ludford spoke in front of the Commission on behalf of Mr. Newell's character and his career as a commercial waterman.

Associate Member Headley moved to remove 599 pounds from Mr. Newell's Chesapeake Bay quota for 2026, with no permanent deduction or suspension from the fishery. Mr. Newell will also be placed on probation for a period of two years 9/23/2025 through 9/23/2027. Associate Member Bransom seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

Michael Shackelford:

Mr. Michael Shackelford came before the Commission to ask for the ability to participate in the commercial shrimp trawl fishery. The Commission voted to allow Mr. Shackelford and Mr. Jason Smith to be eligible for the commercial shrimp trawl fishery based on their previous participation in the experimental fishery.

Associate Member Headley made a motion to allow Mr. Shackelford and Mr. Jason Smith to be eligible for the commercial shrimp trawl fishery based on their previous participation in the experimental fishery. Associate Member White seconded the motion. The motion carried, 7-0.

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7. **EMERGENCY REGULATION:** Proposal to amend Chapter 4-VAC-20-720, “Pertaining to Restrictions on Oyster Harvest” to establish the 2025-2026 areas of public harvest, public oyster harvest season, oyster resource conservation measures, and an oyster user fee transfer exception.

Adam Kenyon, Chief, Shellfish Management, gave the briefing of the information provided in the staff’s evaluation, with PowerPoint slides. Mr. Kenyon’s comments are a part of the verbatim record.

J. C. Hudgins, Virginia Waterman’s Association, requested the approval of the 2025-2026 public Oyster Harvest Season as recommended by the Shellfish Management Advisory Committee and the approval of mechanical assist hand tongs. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Jim Wesson, a member of the Blue-Ribbon Oyster Panel, explained some of the discussions from the Blue-Ribbon Oyster Panel committee. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

Roger Mann, VIMS, spoke and provided further information about the health of the oysters and discussed the potential rotation of the upper portion of the Rappahannock River. Mr. Mann recommends endorsing a rotation in the upper Rappahannock River. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

The matter was before the Commission for discussion and action.

Associate Member Headley moved to adopt emergency amendments effective October 1, 2025, to establish the 2025-2026 areas of public harvest, public oyster harvest seasons, and oyster resource conservation measure of mechanically assisted hand tong gear, as presented. Associate Member Bransom seconded the motion. The motion carried, 5-2. Associate Members Erskine and White voted no.

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Commissioner Green announced that there will be a combined November/December Commission Meeting that will be held on December 2, 2025. His comments are a part of the verbatim record.

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There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 11:59 a.m. The next Commission meeting will be held on **Tuesday**, October 28, 2025.

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Jamie L. Green, Commissioner

Jamie Hogge, Recording Secretary