

Board Members Present:

Marshall Saunders, Chair	Shannon Showalter
Bethany Schaepler	Patrick Ryan
Ben Snapp	

Guests/Staff Present:

Laura Wiley, Virginia State Horticultural Society
Greta Liskey, Virginia State Horticultural Society
Melissa Ball, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Jim Atwell, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Jessa Allen, US Apple Association

I. Call to Order / Welcome

Marshall Saunders, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 11:03 AM.

II. Approval of Draft Minutes

The minutes of the January 23, 2024, meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved as presented.

III. Financial Report

Melissa Ball provided a financial report reflecting the following for FY 23-24:

Cost Code 646

Cash Balance: 6/30/2023	\$94,900.29
Assessment Receipts: 7/1/2023 – 6/30/2024	\$83,006.29
Total Cash Balance & Receipts:	\$177,906.58
Transfer to cc 647 – Reserve	\$0
Transfer to cc 648 - Admin	\$0
Total Actual Expenditures (from VDACS Financial Analysis)	\$94900.28
Cash Balance: June 30, 2024	\$83,006.30

Cost Code 647 - Reserve

Cash Balance: 6/30/2023	\$125,000.00
Other receipts	\$0
Total Balance	\$125,000.00
Deduct Total Actual Expenditures (from VDACS Financial Analysis)	\$0

Cash Balance: June 30, 2024 \$125,000.00

Cost Code 648 – Administration

Cash Balance: 6/30/2023	\$85,329.20
Transfer from cc 646	\$0
Other Receipts - Interest	\$10,186.31
Total Balance	\$95,515.51
Deduct Total Actual Expenditures (from VDACS Financial Analysis)	\$10,533.96

Cash Balance: June 30, 2024 \$84,981.55

IV. Annual Report

The Annual Report for FY 23-24 was reviewed. *Motion made and unanimously approved to accept the financial report as presented.*

V. Distribution of funds for 2024 crop

For the 2024 crop, a motion was made and unanimously approved to distribute collections as follows:

US Apple Association: 40%

Virginia State Horticultural Society: 20%

Virginia Agricultural Research Program: 20%

Administration: 10%

Reserve: 0%

The reserve fund is currently at maximum capacity, thus 10% of the collections cannot be put towards the reserve. The balance will be distributed equally between U.S. Apple Association, Virginia State Horticultural Society and Virginia Agricultural Research Program.

VI. Board member terms/nominations

Board Members, Heather McKay, Shannon Showalter, and Bethany Schaepler terms will expire on June 30, 2025. Ms. Schaepler in District Three stated she would like to serve another term. Ms. McKay wishes to step down and Mr. Showalter may step down if a replacement is secured. Board members for the positions in District One and District Two will be solicited by the program manager and other board members.

VII. Flair Communication – Website and Social Media Accounts

Ms. Girvan with Flair Communication was not present but provided a written proposal for the website and social media campaign. The analytics for the website and social media campaigns were also shared. Ms. Girvan suggested possibly adding an additional \$300 to social media ad campaign for the 2025 proposal.

A motion was made and unanimously approved to accept the proposal for the 2025 year to include the additional \$300 for social media ad campaign if these funds came from re-distributing of the service fees and the proposal amount did not exceed the presented total annual cost of \$9,994.

A second motion was made and unanimously approved to accept the proposal as originally proposed in the event that the first motion's request was unable to be implemented.

VIII. VSHS Update and Apple Tax Assessment Discussion

Laura Wiley, Executive Secretary and Greta Liskey, President of the Virginia State Horticulture Society (VSHS) gave an update regarding society membership, apple tax assessment concerns among VSHS Board Members, and the future direction of VSHS. Membership has dwindled and the society is trying to determine their relevancy to the fruit and vegetable growers. The discussion focused on industry trends of fewer processing apple growers, who historically have contributed the most through apple tax revenue. Ms. Wiley reported revenue generated from the apple tax was reduced by 20% for the 2023 crop and projections would be nearly the same reduction for the 2024 crop. For 2025, the VSHS plans to explore options regarding possibly modifying the Virginia Apple Tax code through legislation and assistance with Virginia Farm Bureau.

IX. Public Comment:

None

X. Next Meeting

Tuesday, January 13, 2026 @ 11:00 AM at Cracker Barrel in Staunton, VA

XI. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 1:20 PM