



Virginia Israel Advisory Board

Office of the Governor

Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting

December 5, 2013 10:00 AM to 11:45 PM, House Room 2, Richmond, Virginia

Attended in Person: Jeff Brooke, Mel Chaskin, Donald Ferguson (OAG), Eileen Filler- Corn, Fran Fisher, Ron Glaser, Jay Ipson, Joel Kanter, Lala Korall, Julie Krachman, Chuck Lessin, Jay Myerson, Ralph Robbins, Nathan Shor

Via Conference Call: Craig Einhorn, Michael Ginsberg, Bill Kilberg,

1. Board Minutes of August 1, 2013 were presented. There were no comments.
2. **Gateway USA: Agrotech Program.** Ralph presented an update of VIAB's agro-tech program and with the aquaculture aspect of it in particular. VIAB organized intensive business meetings in Tazewell, Virginia on October 22. Meetings were held with a major supermarket chain (Food City headquartered in Abingdon), with the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (VCEDA) as well as with the Tazewell County Council and VIAB's partners at Virginia Tech. Management from the Israeli companies were present. Project Jonah was presented to all of these stakeholders and was received very positively. The Tazewell County Council committed approximately \$1 million in tax abatements. VIAB will work with the company to raise \$150 million in public and private equity both from Israel and the U.S., as well as from private/public partnerships in the State and on the Federal level. The VCEDA application was submitted in mid November and the decision should be made on December 19, 2013

The Israeli aquaculture company executives participated in all of the meetings and said that the process for them to locate in Virginia was going as well as possible.

Ralph said that the process will be a challenge specifically because it needs significant funding but there is a proven market and proven support.

VIAB Board Member Chuck Lessin reported that Ralph has leveraged VIAB's small budget and personnel to put together a great program and encourage the company to think seriously about building a major project in Virginia. Chuck reported that in 5 years this project could create 426 jobs in Virginia. VIAB Consultant Lala Korall added that for every job the aquaculture project will bring to the state 7 more are created through ancillary services like trucking, etc. -- it is a vertical operation.

Ralph reported that there is additional potential funding through the Virginia Legislature. If the project can be proved "transformative," there could be dollars allocated from the state budget. Precedents for this include Rolls Royce. The new administration has been receptive and has already shown support for the project. During the Administration transition the VIAB will continue to work on all of the aspects required to make the project successful.

Project Jonah fundraising should be completed in about 6 – 12 months. The detailed plans will be developed in parallel to the fundraising, but the groundbreaking will only occur after the fundraising process is completed.

Ralph explained that the aquaculture program is part of the overall vision of bringing Israeli agro technologies to the overall ecosystem that is being created in the Southwestern part of the Commonwealth. The other areas of concentration include “turnkey smart greenhouses” and onsite waste treatment facilities. The “Sabra chickpea development” also falls into this overall vision. All of these activities will be much needed job creation to this area of the State where both tobacco and coal have declined significantly in terms of economic contribution to the area.

3. **Minds in Motion - Cultural Exchange.** Brett Bonda, Managing Director of the Richmond Ballet, announced that 2 donors had decided to fund the \$10,000 required for **Minds In Motion** to continue their program with the Emek Hefer and Beit Yitzchak schools in Israel. Richard Samet of the Richmond Federation suggested that Minds in Motion could make an application to all of the Federations in the State for funding to assure the ongoing continuation of the program. It was also announced that the Arab village of Qalanswa will also participate in the program. Mr. Bonda said that the goal would be to institutionalize the Minds in Motion program that will be backed by permanent funding. He invited everyone to attend the final presentation in Emek Hefer, Israel, in January 2014.

4. **New Business Updates:**

- ❖ **Techina Plant** - Sabra has requested that VIAB help with locating a Techina factory near the Sabra manufacturing facility in Chesterfield. VIAB is working with 2 companies and has seen progress with one. The business model will include vendor managed warehouses which will be located in a tax free zone.
- ❖ Ralph reported that an Israeli plastics manufacturer will visit Virginia in February, 2014 in the expectations that they will build a manufacturing facility in Virginia to service their US clients. The VIAB is working with the company and Ralph will visit their facilities in Israel during his next visit.

5. **HLS/Defense Gateway program:** Ralph reported that there are additional offices opening in Virginia as a result of the VIAB program. VIAB is teaming with the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority program in March, 2014, as a follow up to our program.

6. **Tazewell Dental School:** Tazewell County asked VIAB if we could help them add value to a potential dental school the county is proposing. VIAB suggested that they create a dental innovation center. We suggested that that we could bring new product development/innovation from Israel, which could be the differentiator for the school. The VIAB is working with the stakeholders to develop this concept.

7. **Chickpea Project:** Ralph reported that about 350 test plots have been planted in Virginia. Virginia State University are now in the third out of six years R&D project and are on-schedule to roll out the Virginia “Sabra” chickpea within 2 - 3 years.

8. The next Board meeting was scheduled for April 3, 2014 (which has been changed to March 26, 2014)

9. The meeting was adjourned at 11:45.