



## Virginia Israel Advisory Board

Office of the Governor

Minutes of Board of Directors' Meeting

July 18, 2017 10:00 AM, House Room 1, Richmond, Virginia

**Attended in Person:** Aliza Asher, Irv Blank, Marc Broklawski, Bob Budoff, Jerome Chapman, Mel Chaskin, Holly Coy (for Secretary of Education), Don Ferguson, Eileen Filler-Corn, Doni Fogel, Hayes Framme (for Secretary of Commerce & Trade), Will Frank, Aviva Frye, Sophie Hoffman, Joel Kanter, Larry Krakover, Chuck Lessin, Abby Moore, Jay Myerson, Kevin O'Holleran, Ralph Robbins, Nathan Shor, Steve Valdez

**Attended Via Conference Call:** Aaron Roberts, Robin Mancoll, Jeff Brooke

1. Mel Chaskin, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:06. Quorum of 17.
2. The Board Minutes of March 30, 2017 were presented. Sophie Hoffman requested an amendment to add that she was present via conference call. Minutes were approved pending the amendment.
3. Re-election of Chairman and Vice Chairman: Aviva Frye nominated Mel Chaskin as Chairman and Sophie seconded. There were no other nominations. Sophie Hoffman nominated Chuck Lessin as Vice Chairman and Abby Moore seconded. There were no other nominations. The motions were carried.
4. OSG Update: Oran Safety Glass is working to expand their facility in Emporia. Ralph reported that we are very close to a Governor announcement about their expansion.
5. Energix Update: Aviva, who has been working closely with this company, explained that Energix is a publicly traded utility scale solar & wind company based in Tel Aviv. Governor McAuliffe visited last summer. Energix's visit to Virginia resulted in an MOU in Wise to put up a solar field for a beta company. Now they are in discussions with other solar companies who have a pipeline in VA to partner with them in moving forward and to go full scale on solar plants. Wind in VA is not ideal. They are in discussions with several companies who have a good reputation and a good network of companies to partner with. We remain cautiously optimistic. Deputy Secretary of Commerce & Trade Hayes Framme added: *Progress has been made in developing alternative energy in the Commonwealth during this administration. From the renewable standpoint on-shore wind is challenging; not as robust a resource as in Midwest. Off-shore wind is a different thing entirely. We live in a utility-regulated state so this kind of company needs to look for partnership at the investor and utility level. This environment does create some challenges for such companies from getting a strong hold in Virginia.* Ralph thanked everyone who helped and pointed out that Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn has assisted to set up important conference calls.

6. MIM is in its 7<sup>th</sup> year. We are hoping some of what we learn in Israel can be brought back to Virginia. The recurring challenge is sustainable funding. Tom Smith (present) wants to try to execute a fundraiser for the program: He was able to organize a women's group in Israel consisting of 120 female artists and business/educational leaders (or spouses of) and they have agreed to donate their work for the fundraiser. Tom, the CEO of Binns of Williamsburg, has taken the challenge along with Eli Shaharabany, to put this together. This is a VIAB cultural event of 60 women coming together for a cultural immersion-type experience where cultural and educational ideas can be shared between women leadership in both Israel and Virginia. The proceeds will go to the Virginia-Israel Minds in Motion program. Aviva and Eileen will join at a follow-up meeting about this fundraiser after this Board meeting.
7. Project Sugar Update: This company was identified as a potential for Virginia when we brought 3 experts from Virginia Tech and Evan Feinman from the Tobacco Commission to Israel for a program that included experts from the Strauss Group, who owns 50% of Sabra Dipping Company located in Chesterfield, Virginia. We interviewed 7 companies, downsized from 40 that applied. Since January, 2017, the VIAB has brought four of those companies to Virginia to explore opportunities. One company- DuoMatok- has a sweetening product that gives the same sweetness in ½ the sugar product. It is highly probable that the investment consortium that will invest in the company will dictate where they establish their commercial pilot plant. A Virginia VC working out of Roanoke, is part of one of two consortiums who wants to make the investment. While it looks like the consortium that includes the Virginia VC will not win, the VIAB is still working with the company to determine if we can still attract the facility to Virginia.
8. Carilion & Maccabi...New initiative. The VIAB has brought Carilion together with Israeli's largest private HMO for a potential partnership that would center on medical innovation and ultimately include a new Venture fund of \$100 million. The CEO of the Israeli HMO visited Carilion last week and had excellent meetings with the leadership of Carilion. While this is still in early stages, we will continue to work this opportunity as it has serious ramifications for economic development in Southwest Virginia.
9. Ralph introduced Nimrod Litvak to the Board. He is the US CEO of an aquaculture company that would like to work with Virginia Tech to establish their first demonstration site in the US. Ralph reported that the project and fish they want to grow makes this project mutually exclusive of Project Jonah. The company met with Prof Dave Kuhn of Virginia Tech in Israel and visited Virginia Tech last week. The company's filter technology will make them competitive in the field of aquaculture.
10. Virginia Tech/Hebrew University - Governor McAuliffe visited Hebrew University when he was in Israel in July 2016. An MOU between Hebrew University and Virginia Tech has been signed. The VIAB is helping Virginia Tech raise the seed capital for the fund by introducing them to relevant contacts in SW Virginia. We want to get 4 projects off the ground each with a \$50,000 grant.
11. Smart Greenhouses—Farmer/businessman Michael Richard, in Southwest VA is in the final stages of receiving bank approval for the funding of the project. Unfortunately, he was just in a bad accident on his farm. We remain hopeful for his recovery.
12. EPC Onsite waste treatment is ready to open its first US site in Tazewell. And if it goes well two Israeli companies associated with this project will open manufacturing/assembly in Tazewell: EPC and Hofit which supplies the polyethylene manholes and piping for the project.

13. Executive Director Process--- Mel Chaskin: Ralph announced his retirement at our last meeting. We came up with a job description, advertised, sent the resumes out to the board who could participate on the review committee. Top 8 were interviewed here on June 27. Since then, a question was raised as to who is actually doing the hiring. After close look, the Attorney General's office has decided that the Governor should appoint the new Executive Director since he is staff to the Board. Our charter says that the Governor's office should provide staff to the Board, the Executive Director counts as staff. It was recommended that we continue interviewing and take the recommendation of our final choice to the Governor. We will end up with a top 3 and send that over to the governor to review and he will make the appointment either from our selection or someone of his own. Ralph will work with the new hire for a month and show him around VA, meet in person with people we are working with, etc. Mel will send a letter to Governor's office requesting a meeting with them face to face about our selection process before making our recommendation. We had a review committee that was opened up to all board members. It was 8 people who participated and also who looked at our applicants. Thank you to Bob Budoff, Abby Moore, Doni Fogel, Jeff Brooke, and Robin Mancoll who helped out on the review committee since I could not be there. I met with the top choice at my office to get a feel for him. He was my #1 also on paper and that was confirmed in person. We wanted to make sure the candidate is who he says he is on paper so we did a background check which we will make available for the Governor's office. Came back very clean. Chuck: Thank Ralph for his years of service. He is irreplaceable. At the same time, we were very excited by the talent of the candidates we selected for interviews.

#### MOTION

I move that pursuant to Section 2.2-3712 of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, we convene a closed meeting of the VIAB Board of Directors pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) to discuss the candidates for the position of executive director.

#### CERTIFICATION FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION

Following the conclusion of a closed session of the VIAB Board of Directors, I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under this chapter and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered during the closed meeting.

#### SO CERTIFIED BY ROLL CALL VOTE

No other old or new business.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am.

The next Board meeting will be held on November 28, 2017