



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
*Office of the Governor*  
Virginia Israel Advisory Board

Minutes of Board of Directors' Meeting  
July 29, 2014

10:00 AM to 11:45 AM, House Room 2, Richmond, Virginia

**Attended in Person:** Marc Broklawski, Mel Chaskin, Syd Dorsey (for Secretary Jones), Donald Ferguson (OAG), Will Frank, Aviva Frye, Joel Kanter, Julie Krachman, Larry Krakover, Chuck Lessin, Abby Moore, Jay Myerson, David Oblon, Jennie O'Holleran (for Secretary Holton), Ralph Robbins, Nathan Shor

**Attended Via Conference Call:** Jeff Brooke, Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn, Fran Fisher, Aaron Roberts

1. Chairman Mel Chaskin welcomed new members of the Board. He explained that all members of the Board receive VIAB By-Laws, that there are 3 Board Meetings per year, that Board Meetings are informational unless we have a quorum, and that those attending via conference call participate for information only. He also noted that our Board is made up of Members from across the Commonwealth so we have networking opportunities and contacts throughout Virginia. Mel encouraged all Board Members to call him or Ralph Robbins with any questions or comments if they arise between Board Meetings.
2. Board Minutes of March 26, 2014 were presented. There were no comments, additions or corrections.
3. Ralph presented the current projects that are currently work-in-process:
  - **Tahini - Company 1 & 2** - VIAB is working on bringing a Tahini company to Virginia to support Sabra. Two companies are currently competing to come here. VIAB is working with the VEDP and various localities to develop relevant incentive packages for a manufacturing facility that will create approximately 60 jobs. In addition, the VIAB is introducing them to other contacts in the Commonwealth who can help them grow their business. One of the contacts is Prof. Harbans L Bhardwaj of Virginia State University who is working on a program to grow sesame in Virginia. Currently, all sesame for both of these candidates is only grown in Ethiopia and would have to be imported. Our representative at VSU has told us that he thinks sesame can be grown here which will enable the Tahini company to reduce the risks to Sabra.

- **Project Lunchbox** – The VIAB is working with a plastic injection molding company to establish a manufacturing facility in Virginia. This Israeli company is an established company with factories in Israel and France. They also have excellent clients in the US which they have been selling to for several years. One of the locations being considered has another Israeli manufacturer. The VIAB explained that if the company selects this location, there will be a small cluster of Israeli manufacturers which will be used in a future VIAB program designed to attract additional Israeli manufacturers. The VIAB is working with the VEDP and local government officials on the project.
- **Project Bag-in-Box** – The VIAB is working with an Israeli manufacturer that makes “bags-in-box” such as those in box wine that wants to establish a manufacturing site in the United States. Chuck Lessin, the VIAB Vice Chair, participated in two days of intensive meetings with the company and economic development people from various Virginia communities. The VIAB is working with the VEDP on this project.
- **Project Greenhouse** - The Israeli Greenhouse initiative developed by the VIAB continues to move forward in SW Virginia. A delegation from Israel that represents a large Israeli steel manufacturer and an agronomist who is an expert in greenhouse projects was introduced by Ralph during the meeting. After the board meeting, they are to travel to SW Virginia for three days of intensive meetings with Virginia Tech, Food City, local EDAs, two meetings with farmers and a meeting with a local manufacturer that is interested in developing a joint venture.
- **Project Jonah Update** - Board Member Chuck Lessin summarized developments in Project Jonah: Land has been optioned in a SW Virginia County and the company has hired a new CEO. VIAB has guided them to potential private/public funding opportunities available in Virginia. Ralph reported that a due diligence trip by the leadership of one of the funds is scheduled for later this summer to the company’s European facility.
- **Biodiesel Project** - Chuck Lessin briefed us on an Israeli project involving a new Israeli technology to develop biodiesel cost effectively and thus overcome the historical dependence on government subsidies that have plagued the industry. Chuck reported that because of his personal involvement with the project and its VIAB origin, he turned to Don Ferguson to clarify if there are any conflicts of interest and was told that there are no conflicts.
- **Gateway USA: Teaming Program** - VIAB has created a program where a Virginia boutique law firm will work with the VIAB to identify Israeli companies with high tech products and/or development capabilities that can team with Virginia companies that fall in the “special set aside categories”. It is expected that the companies can identify opportunities within the government segment. This can offer unique opportunities for Israeli companies to navigate the complicated US government contracting bureaucracy while offering Virginia companies to expand their offerings. It is expected that future manufacturing and/or assembly requirements will take place in Virginia and that the VIAB will guide the job creating expansion that will result from the program.

- **Virginia - Israel R & D Agreement** – Ralph reported that the “Virginia – Israel R&D agreement” that was signed by then Governor Kaine has never been executed for lack of funding. Ralph is investigating the possibility of building a \$1 million fund that will work under this agreement. The funds would be used to support a teaming program between a “post startup/commercialization ready Israeli company and a Virginia company to introduce new technologies into the US. The concentration will be on agro technology, which is consistent with a major thrust of the VIAB. Virginia Tech be responsible for project evaluation in Virginia and the Strauss Group will be responsible for project evaluation in Israel. It is expected that the Israeli government will commit \$500K to the project and several sources in Virginia will contribute \$500K. Ralph will report on progress at the next Board Meeting.

4. Old Business

**Minds in Motion - Cultural Exchange** - Brett Bonda, Managing Director of the Richmond Ballet, made a presentation on the possibility of institutionalizing the funding for the Minds in Motion project. A committee was formed by Board member Nathan Shor and Abby Moore to work with the Richmond Ballet to find funding solutions that will result in a sustainable program.

5. The next Board meetings are scheduled for December 2, 2014, March 24, 2015, and July 21, 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45.