

Colonial Beach, Virginia

April 1, 1977

PRESENT - COMMISSIONERS: Chairman Robert J. Rubelmann, John T. Parran, Jr., James E. Douglas, Jr., Milton T. Hickman, William P. Hunt. (Absent: Richard E. Lankford)

OFFICERS: Robert M. Norris, Jr., Executive Secretary; Kirby A. Carpenter, Asst. Executive Secretary; J. Owen Wise, Legal Officer.

VISITORS: Paul C. Wentzell, Henry C. Batchelor, and John F. Mattingly, Maryland Marine Police; C. E. Thomas, Jr., Virginia Marine Police; Howard S. Hudnall, VMRC; Dexter Haven, VIMS; Elgin A. Dunnington, CBL; Marsh Cook and Bill Sieling, DNR; J. W. Allen, Jr., Irving Daiger, Bill Trossbach, Francis Cullison, Thomas L. Crowder, Francis J. Russell, Robert T. Brown, Tucker Brown, James W. Dutton.

PRESS: Joe Gatins, Richmond Times-Dispatch; Rusty Dennen, Free Lance-Star; Lawrence Latane, Westmoreland News; Jack Kershaw, The Enterprise; Isabel Gough, Richmond News Leader.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert J. Rubelmann, who then asked for consideration of the Minutes of the meeting held February 4, 1977, mimeographed copies of which previously had been sent to each Commissioner. The following motion was made and seconded:

"That the Minutes of the February 4, 1977 meeting be approved as written and submitted. The motion was approved.

Mr. Norris reported that the U. S. Coast Guard's investigative report on the grounding of the oil barge ELK RIVER near Moss Point on December 13, 1976 revealed that the Captain had lost his bearing in the fog and was confused by unidentified objects on his radar. These objects were the towers for the power line crossing, which were not on the vessel's navigation charts. Mr. Norris also said that a copy of the report had been sent to Mr. Dutton, as requested at the last meeting.

The following motion was made and seconded:

"That forms, as prepared by the PRFC staff and approved by Legal Officer for advertising for bids, bid forms, and contracts for seed and shell planting repletion programs be accepted and approved." The motion was approved.

Mr. Carpenter reported that on March 14 and 15 an intensive bottom survey of the Jones Shore area was conducted from the R/V AQUARIUS by Mr. Dunnington, CBL; Messrs. Haven and Kendall, VIMS; representatives of the Maryland and Virginia Marine Police, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Hydrographic Engineers and PRFC personnel. The survey indicated that some areas contained moveable quantities of seed, some areas were barren, and he said that it provided a general characterization of the bottoms in the area. The engineers located the position for six (6) markers to be used in a rotation plan for Jones Shore. The area will be permanently marked as soon as the necessary permits can be obtained, and the rotation system will begin this year. It was explained that, although the rotation system would take one or two sections out of production during any one given year, the cull law would be the controlling harvest factor in the area, and it is recommended that it remain open for hand tonging.

There being no other old business, new business was declared in order.

After discussion by the Commissioners, the Chairman announced that hereafter, in place of a monthly itemized listing of disbursements submitted for approval, that a quarterly comparison of expenditures versus budgeted amounts for each item in the annual budget be presented for consideration of the Commissioners.

Mr. Norris explained that most of the funds for repletion work are currently invested in interest bearing C/D's and suggested that the Commission borrow funds needed for repletion work rather than lose interest on the C/D's by redeeming them prior to maturity. The following motion was made and seconded:

"That the Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman and the Executive Secretary be authorized to borrow up to \$50,000 for a short term on demand loans from the Bank of Westmoreland, Inc. to temporarily finance the PTFC repletion program to be repaid as each C/D matures." The motion was approved.

Mr. Norris reported that during the first three weeks of hand scraping 10,197 bushels of oysters had been reported caught with hand scrapes. There were 217 men and 98 boats licensed. He said this amounts to \$31,500 in license fees purchased.

He also noted that the total production (both tonged and scraped) was 24,878 bushels. Tucker Brown said that generally everyone was pleased with the results of hand scraping. He felt that Piney Point and St. George Island bars had been brought back into production with hand scrapes, and that he believes that three (3) hours per day is too little time for harvesting "deep-water" plus looking for uncharted and new or unworked oyster areas, but he thanked the Commission for the opportunity to work with hand scrapes.

Mr. Rubelmann asked that on the final report of hand scraping, to be given at the next meeting, a comparison be made between tonging and hand scraping. Mr. Norris said that hand scrapers may have realized the importance of submitting the catch reports required by law, perhaps more so than the tongers, and all reports are not in, but a final evaluation should be available by time of the next meeting.

The Chairman appointed Mr. Douglas and Mr. Parran to the Budget Committee for 1977-78.

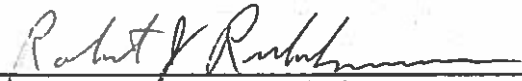
Disbursements for the month of February 1977, totaling \$6,008.10, an itemized list of which had been circulated to the Commissioners, were considered. The following motion was made and seconded:

"That the disbursements for February 1977 totaling \$6,008.10, as listed and presented, be approved."

Mr. Norris reported that roughly \$140,000 would be available for the repletion program as outlined and approved at the last meeting, and that amount does not include any FY '78 appropriation money. He also presented a statement of funds on hand as of March 30, 1977. It totaled \$184,472.43, which includes \$24,472.43 in checking account and \$160,000 in C/D's.

There being no other new business, the next meeting was set for May 6, 1977 at 9:00 a.m. in Leonardtown, Maryland. (Subsequently, by telephone poll, the date of the meeting was changed to June 3, 1977 at 9:00 a.m. in Leonardtown, Maryland.

At 11:05 a.m. a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved.



Robert J. Rubelmann
Chairman



John T. Parran, Jr.
Secretary