



VEMA Board of Directors - Meeting Minutes  
February 28- 2025  
Virtual



In attendance were the following members:

Voting Members:

Jessica Robison  
Danielle Holmstrom  
William Drewery  
Leslie Comer  
Samuel Burnette (Region 1)  
Robert Williams (Region 1)  
Melissa Meador (Region 2)  
Paul Helmuth (Region 3)  
Tracie Giles (Region 3)  
Michael Whiteaker (Region 4)  
Peter McCann (Region 4)  
Jane Wenner (Region 5)  
Tim Duffer (Region 6)

VEMA Board of Directors Members:

Jeff Fletcher (Region 7)  
Courtney Arroyo (Region 7)  
Felton Gilmore (Business/Industry)  
Leigh Ann Erdman (Federal Government)  
Matt Majid (IHE Caucus)  
Vladimir Tamashiro-Loma (VOAD)  
Trevor Shannon – Faith Based Caucus  
Henry Barnett (Student Rep.)  
Laura McHale ( Keeney Group, Inc.) – Ex. Officio)

Non-Voting Members:

Donna Pletch  
Alexa Boggs  
Jake Kezele

Additional Committee Chairs:

Rebecca Heins - DEI  
Bill Lawson – Legislative  
Brian Misner – Legislative  
Victor Podbielski - Membership & Marketing  
Stephanie Harris – VEMS Co-Chair  
Maribel Street – Professional Development  
Robert Foresman – Storm Ready Board  
Ryan Burkholder

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 by President Jess Robison who presided. She noted a quorum was present and presented the agenda as ordered. New members were welcomed. The board was reminded of the VEMA conflict of interest and antitrust policies before proceeding.

Motion Drewery/Fletcher to accept the consent agenda as presented. Including

• Reports

- Presidents Report (Robison)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President (Holmstrom)
- Constitution and Bylaws (Fletcher)
- VEMS (Holmstrom)
- IHE Caucus (Majid)
- VEMA Region 1 (Williams)
- VEMA Region 2 (Longenecker)
- VEMA Region 3 (Stewart)
- VEMA Region 7 (Fletcher)

Motions

- to approve the VEMA Financial Summary of Accounts as January 31, 2025 as distributed.
- to approve the VEMA Financial Statement as January 31, 2025 as distributed.
- to accept the VEMA Board of Directors minutes from the December 4, 2024 meeting as previously distributed
- to accept the following as members of VEMA since December 4 , 2024 as listed below

• INDIVIDUAL

Member Name	Member Type	City	Company Name / Organizational Members / Notes
Robert A. Paxton	Individual	Salem, VA	City of Salem, Virginia
Russell Richardson	Individual	Falls Church, VA	U.S. Marine Corps
Heather Hilliard	Individual	Henrico, VA	Henrico County
John Vannoy	Individual	Appomattox, VA	Appomattox County
Simone J. Gulisano	Individual	Chesapeake, VA	Chesapeake Fire Department
Alexander J. Horne	Individual	Leesburg, VA	Loudoun County Office of Emergency Management
Gary Bergeron	Individual	Hillsville, VA	Carroll County
Osiane Mayfield	Individual	Chesterfield, VA	Chesterfield County
Joseph Dame	Individual	Winchester, VA	City of Winchester
Walter Soto	Individual	Norfolk, VA	Children's Hospital of the Kings Daughters
Chad Bennett	Individual	Portsmouth, VA	Portsmouth Police Department

Emily Walter	Individual	Harrisonburg, VA	James Madison University
William Hurtes	Individual		HTC International
Kevin Leonard	Individual	Maidens, VA	Virginia Department of Military Affairs
Elizabeth Michniak	Individual	Colonial Heights, VA	Colonial Heights Emergency Management
Joe Coyle	Individual	Roanoke, VA	Carilion Clinic
Justin Hermann	Individual		Southampton County
Jason Bewley	Individual	Greensburg, PA	Applied Training Solutions
Kent Robey	Individual	Bedford, VA	Bedford County, VA
Matthew Dube	Individual	Durham, NC	WSP USA
Megan Justice	Individual	Georgia	WSP USA
Bobby Baker	Individual	Plainville, CT	Jensen Hughes
Edward Bonham	Individual	Bowling Green, VA	Caroline County Fire-Rescue
Maddie Interdonato	Individual	Richmond, VA	PlanRVA
James Babcock	Individual	Powhatan, VA	Powhatan County
Claire Doyle	Individual	Washington DC	Hagerty Consulting
Robert Fagan	Individual	Arlington, VA	U.S. State Department
Justin Ferrell	Individual	Ashburn, VA	VDH - Loudoun Health District
Amanda Hall	Individual	Hampton, VA	U.S. Department of the Interior

- **Organizational**

Member Name	Member Type	City	Company Name / Organizational Members / Notes
<i>City of Poquoson</i>	<i>Organizational</i>	<i>Poquoson, VA</i>	<i>Removed Brandon Burton &amp; added Elijah Rossi</i>
Virginia Institute of Marine Science	Organizational	Gloucester Point, VA	William Riley (voting), Eric Fidler, Joe Martinez, Mark Brabham
High Street Consulting	Organizational	Reston, VA	Donna Chaney (voting), Zachariah Becker

- **STUDENT**

Member Name	Member Type	City	Company Name / Organizational Members / Notes
Rossmay Pineda-Bautista	Student	Richmond, VA	Virginia Commonwealth University Police
Mary Laferty	Student	Roanoke, VA	Bradley Free Clinic
Katie Luetkenhaus	Student	Harrisonburg, VA	James Madison University
Tonya Simmons	Student	Suffolk, VA	Sentara Obici Hospital
Chloe Samuel	Student	Huddleston, VA	Hollins University

**Motions and reports in the consent agenda accepted unanimously.**

**Under the Executive Directors Report**

- a) General Membership Overview
  - a. Membership Numbers - 785
  - b. Recruitment Campaign – 33 New Members joined in conjunction with VEMS 2025
- b) VEMS 25 Planning
  - a. Sold Out of Exhibit Booths, 11 Sponsors and 298 registered as of 2/28. All promo items ordered and handed at office
  - b. Discussion of Federal Employees cancelling VEMS registrations and concerns it might spread to Local Government employees using EMPG funding
    - i. Motion Helmuth/Fletcher to make an exception to the VEMS refund policy and refund the 11 Federal Employees their full VEMS registration fees. Motion passed unanimously.
- c) Welcome to the new Keeney Group Staff Member – Leigh Anne Brinkley – Conventions/Events

**Under Unfinished Business the following were presented and acted upon accordingly./**

- a) Strategic Plan Workgroup
  - a. Motion Fletcher/Helmuth to approve the draft strategic plan update as presented with a final version to be presented and approved at the June VEMA Board of Directors meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
- b) VEMA Certification Policy Update
  - a. Discussion. Deferred until next board meeting. Questions to be directed back to the committee.
- c) VEMA Board Truancy Policy
  - a. Motion Fletcher/Drewery to accept the Board Truancy policy as presented. Motion passed unanimously.
- d) File Sharing Platforms
  - a. Staff is asked to get more information on Microsoft One Drive with 10 licenses.
- e) Amendments to Bylaws – Article 2 Section 1 - ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS
  - a. Motion Drewery/Helmuth to accept the proposed bylaws amendment as presented. As approved, bylaws proposal will need to be presented and ratified by the General Membership at the 2025 annual membership meeting before becoming active. Motion approved unanimously.
- f) Membership Types and Fees
  - a. Motion Helmuth/McCann to accept the proposed bylaws amendment as presented. As approved, bylaws proposal will need to be presented and ratified by the General Membership at the 2025 annual membership meeting before becoming active. Motion approved unanimously.
- g) Committee SOP's- each committee is asked to develop a SOP & policies for presentation at the board meeting.
  - a. No action. Deferred to next board meeting.

**Various updates from Committees, Caucuses, & Regional were presented.**

#### **Under New Business & Discussion Items**

##### **1. VEMA Certificate of Deposit**

- a. Motion Drewery/Comer to renew the VEMA CD for a 13 month period. Motion passed unanimously.
- b. Proposed updates to the VEMA Code of Ethics
  - i. Changed to "When becoming aware of a possible violation of the VEMA Code of Ethics, members are encouraged to report the matter to the VEMA Executive Director, *or a member of the Executive Committee*.
  - ii. Motion Helmuth/Erdman to accept the proposed and amended updates to VEMA Code of Ethics. Motion passed unanimously.
- c. Request to provide a letter of support for Terry Cole as the next DEA Administrator
  - i. LOTS of discussion and folks abstaining since it looks like VEMA would be taking sides politically
  - ii. Motion Helmuth/ Fletcher to NOT provide a letter of support for Terry Cole as the next DEA Administrator. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **For the Good of the Order**

Paul Helmuth just got an email from VDEM – FEMA/DHS is reviewing ALL grants before disbursing funds. Donna Pletch will still investigate.

#### **Adjournment**

**There being no further business the meeting adjourned as 2:30 pm**

**Respectfully submitted**

**Bo Keeney, VEMA Executive Director**

**On behalf of VEMA Secretary Stephen Davis**