

New River Valley Beekeepers Association
June 11, 2020, Meeting Minutes

President Emory Altizer opened the meeting at 6:35 pm with a total of 28 members present. Carl Lefko hosted the meeting digitally via Zoom due to the State of Virginia COVID-19 restrictions.

Emory announced that the picnic in July has been cancelled for the moment. We plan to revisit this later this summer and hope that we can plan one later in the year.

Apiary Report: 7 of 8 colonies survived the winter, of which at least 5 and possibly 6 swarmed. Of the colonies that swarmed, only two successfully produced mated queens. Rainy weather in April and May probably contributed to the poor success rate of queen production.

The treasury report for this month was emailed to the membership recently by James Hill. Per his email, we have \$7733.51 in the checking account and \$200.00 in the PayPal account. The major financial activity this month was the collection of orders and payments for Varroa Sensitive Hygienic (VSH) queens. The Board had previously decided to subsidize the purchase of VSH queens in an effort to boost VSH traits in our local bee stock.

Due to the virtual limitations, there was no raffle this week.

What should you be doing with your bees right now: There's not a whole lot for the bees to eat right now so many people have been talking about feeding. You may want to consider adding robbing screens. We should almost be finished with the main nectar flow, which was really non-existent this year. Many of us are hoping for rain during the summer and a slow flow for them to feed on. With that being said, things can differ based on your microclimate. One member tried feeding but is concerned because one nuc took the food but the other two nucs didn't touch the sugar syrup whatsoever. A question was asked if he should keep feeding the one that is taking it or would that entice robbing. Richard Reid responded that if you spill syrup or open honey frames, you will most likely see robbing. To prevent this, you should be very careful not to spill and consider feeding at dusk.

Jerry Borger announced that as a club, we agreed to subsidize a bulk queen order for repurchase by members at \$15 per queen. We got a total of 134 varroa sensitive queens.

While this is not a permanent cure, it improves the genetics in the environment. Keep in mind, you will still want to do mite checks! If we continue to do this year after year, we can really make a big impact on our area's genetics. They will arrive June 20th, July 18th, and July 22nd. Jerry will reach out about 4-7 days ahead of time to those who have ordered. We will meet at our normal meeting spot in Christiansburg on those days for pickup. Be sure to brush up on how to introduce them to your hives.

Morgan Roth, PhD student, Molecular Physiology and Toxicology Laboratory, joined us to present: "Varroa Mite History, Biology, and Management". Morgan spoke about not only the first known discovery of varroa mites and how it initially spread, but also educated about the biological impact on bees. She also shared with us her research in both varroa treatment and of hive beetles.

Respectfully submitted,
Morgan Otten, Secretary