



Meeting Notes

**Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek
1257 County Farm Rd., Bedford, VA 24523**

May 4, 2022 – 7:30 p.m.

Present: Jeff Powers, Joy Powers, Ethan Tanner, Pete Fellers, Sam Gardner, Ken Newman

Absent: Don Gardner, Chuck Grove, Pam Willoughby, Matt Baumgardner, Dorothy McIntyre, Lindsay Tomlinson

Staff Present: Scott Baker, Pam Bailey, Holley Scheffel, Amanda Kaufman

Staff Absent: None

Guests: Supervisor Mickey Johnson

Chairman Powers indicated that the Ag Board did not have quorum tonight and therefore the meeting would be for informational purposes only and no votes nor official minutes would be taken.

(1) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

No vote was taken to approve the agenda since a quorum did not exist.

(2) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – April 6, 2022

Approval of April 6, 2022, meeting minutes will be postponed until the next Ag Board meeting.

(3) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

We do not have a budget yet for the county as we are still waiting for the General Assembly to approve their budget. There is a discussion at the state level about repealing the grocery tax which, if approved, would have a \$1.5 Million impact on the county. This would impact wage adjustments, new positions, or funding provided to the school district.

(4) LAND PROTECTION & CONSERVATION – Mr. Fellers reminded the board of the upcoming webinar on solar; he is planning on watching that online.

(5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Ms. Bailey updated the board on several projects her office is working on including submitting an AFID grant for a local farm.

(6) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

Mr. Baker shared information on upcoming events including the Lynchburg Livestock Market. He shared information about available water testing kits and shared information on the Tobacco Grant. He also shared an update on the Spotted Lantern Fly.

(8) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU/YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

Mr. Sam Gardner indicated that Will Hodges with USDA Livestock Damage came and spoke at their last meeting. One takeaway from the meeting was if you are having trouble with blackhead vultures, contact Will and he can assist with remediation or assist individuals with the permit process.

(9) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming Events – Ms. Powers shared information and updates regarding 4-H. There will be a camp in Illinois at the end of May that students will attend; they are excited about this opportunity. FFA updates were also given to the group.

2. County Fair Update – Ms. Powers shared that the fair board has met, and they would like to have a fair. They are not 100% sure that it will occur based on some things that need to be finalized, but they plan to have a firm answer by the end of May.

3. School Ag Programs Update – Ms. Powers discussed the disproportionality between middle school and high school Ag teachers' pay. Specifically, middle school Ag teachers are not compensated at the same rate as their high school counterparts. In short, the Board would like to write a letter to the School Board requesting that middle school Ag teachers be given an 11-month contract to remain competitive with surrounding counties and their high school counterparts.

b. Marketing & Production -

1. Farmers' Markets Updates –

Opening day went well for the Forest Farmer's Market.

(10) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – Mr. Powers shared information about hemp farms and production facilities which initiated a discussion among the group.

(11) ADJOURNMENT

8:40 PM