



## Meeting Minutes

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

**January 5, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Pete Fellers, Don Gardner, Ken Newman, Jeff Powers, Joy Powers, Matt Baumgardner, Dorothy McIntyre, Ethan Tanner

**Absent:** Pam Willoughby, Chuck Grove, Lindsay Tomlinson, John Graham, Sam Gardner

**Staff Present:** Pam Bailey, Scott Baker, Holley Scheffel

**Staff Absent:** None

**Guests:** Supervisor Edgar Tuck, Supervisor Mickey Johnson, Supervisor Charla Bansley, Josh Powers

### **(1) CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

### **(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Powers asked for approval for the December 1, 2021 agenda.

A motion and a second were made to approve the December 1, 2021 agenda, as presented.

**Adopted unanimously**

### **(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – December 1, 2021**

Chairman Powers asked for approval of the December 1, 2021 meeting minutes. A motion and a second were made to approve the meeting meetings.

**Adopted unanimously**

#### **(4) APPOINTMENT OF NEW OFFICERS**

Mr. Powers stated that the 2022 officers needed to be elected. He opened the floor for nominations. Matt Baumgardner made a motion to keep the existing slate of officers for 2022. A second was made.

**Adopted Unanimously**

#### **(5) ADOPTION OF 2022 CALENDAR AND TIMES**

The Board discussed, and unanimously agreed, to adopt the 2022 meeting calendar. Ken Newman made the motion and Don Gardner seconded the item.

**Adopted unanimously**

#### **(6) ADMINISTRATION REPORT**

Supervisor Edgar Tuck updated the board on broadband. He stated that there were 3 successful applications for funding that amounted to \$25 million. Shentel was noted, and their hub in the town of Bedford. Comcast will provide service around Smith Mountain Lake, and Zitel will service areas in Huddleston, Diamond Hill, Moneta and River Street (a company based in NC) will be responsible for the bottom half of Huddleston and the town of Evington. The goal is universal coverage in Bedford County. This will be fiber optic to the home. Once contracts are signed, providers will have 18 months to deliver service to customers. The total investment between the grants, the county, and the companies is \$64-65 million. The hope is to have a spot on the county website for people to input their addresses to see which providers will service their area.

#### **(7) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Ms. Bailey introduced Holley Scheffel, who will be serving in the role of Business Programs Coordinator for the Economic Development office. Ms. Bailey indicated that her office is looking to create a new internship program (similar to a co-op experience) to create a pipeline to the workforce. She is hoping to work closely with Susie G. Gibson staff as part of this process as well.

Regarding the business side of Economic Development, there are a few prospects who are looking for building space. There is one retailer prospect in Montvale, a prospect for Teva and prospects for both the Bedford Center and New London parks. She also submitted two prospective candidates for the AFID grant to VDACS. She has not heard back from them yet. Ms. Bailey has also reached out to Parks and Recreation about the cannery and its interest in applying. The focus is on projects that benefit the community and not individual businesses. The next round of grant applications is set for April.

Ms. Bailey shared an update from a January 4 meeting regarding the Montvale Tanks. She and other staff met with members of DEQ, AEP, Norfolk Southern, board members, delegates, and

Megan Lucas. Megan Lucas is with the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance and is spearheading the effort in what to do about the tank farm. The 80-82 mile pipeline is owned by Colonial Pipeline which made a unilateral decision to shut the pipeline down because 40-42 miles of failing line due to faulty material. The cost to fix the pipeline was equivalent to one million dollars per mile, and therefore too costly to fix. As a result, two of the five tanks were fully closed and decommissioned. It should be noted that there is no negative environmental impact from the remaining tanks at this time.

Right now all gas is coming from Greensboro into Roanoke via tractor-trailer. There was discussion about how best to transport the gas whether via rail or road. Currently, there is no cost value for one means of transportation over another. However, moving the gas by rail would help reduce traffic on 81, 29, and 460.

## **(8) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT**

Mr. Baker spoke about upcoming cattle sales. He indicated that the next value-added cattle sale is scheduled for January 28. Cattle will be received on January 27. Additional sales are expected in July and September; however, dates are not set for that at this time. He shared information on the 2021 sales which yielded 2,075 animals sold; this was the most animals sold since the inception of the program in 2017. This regional program includes consigners from Bedford and the surrounding areas.

He also discussed a Tobacco Commission grant proposal. The original commission meeting was held in September; however, that proposal was tabled due to the request for additional information. The final proposal was submitted a few weeks before Christmas. If it goes through, all 20 counties in the southside tobacco commission footprint will receive monies. A final decision is expected on Friday, Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **(9) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU/YOUNG FARMERS REPORT**

Mr. Baumgardner shared that they are getting ready to send a group to the state legislature to work on agriculture-related issues. This will occur the week of January 10-14.

## **(10) LAND PROTECTION & CONSERVATION**

Mr. Fellers encouraged anyone on the solar committee to continue to read about and research this program. There are some people interested in this program in the county.

## **(11) COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **a. Education & Events**

1. Ms. Powers shared that all FFA chapters sold fruit over the holidays. She also shared that Smith Mountain, in conjunction with Beth Gillespie (student), put together a state-wide community service project called “Teddy Bear Toss” with help from the Roanoke

Rail Yard Dawgs hockey team. Over 20 trash bags filled with teddy bears were collected and donated to families in need.

## **2. County Fair Update**

Ms. Powers said things are still looking positive for 2022. A board meeting is likely coming soon to discuss specifics.

## **3. School Ag Programs Update**

Ms. Powers stated that Charlie Moser, FFA state president, and Emma Jackson, FFA state secretary, are in California right now on a two-week Ag immersion program.

### **b. Marketing & Production**

Chairman Powers noted that the Biden administration is investing 1 billion dollars in new and expanded meat and poultry processing. This money will be beneficial for beef producers, ranchers, and farmers.

## **1. Farmers' Markets Updates**

Mrs. McIntyre reported that Jeff Vittone from Vittone farms would like to attend the meeting next month. Ms. Bailey shared correspondence from the Bedford Market manager who stated there will be off-season markets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month (weather permitting). The off-season market dates are set for: January 15, February 19, March 19 and April 16.

## **(10) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

Chairman Powers reported that Bob Davis called him regarding one of his constituents. The constituent reported that a wildlife biologist working for the VDIF, had told the landowner, who was leasing his land to a farmer, that the only way to have good wildlife is to keep the livestock out. Chairman Powers has left a message for this individual and is awaiting a callback.

Gov.-elect Youngkin has selected a friend of Bedford, Matt Lohr, to become the next Secretary of Agriculture in Virginia. In addition, Youngkin has chosen Joe Guthrie as commissioner of the Virginia Agriculture and Consumer Services Department. Both men are from southwest Virginia.

Mr. Newman stated that Valley Proteins has been bought out by Darling Ingredients, Inc.

Supervisor Tuck stated that Springlake Stockyard is considering hosting the National Auctioneering Contest in 2024. It is expected that we will have national coverage for the stockyard and for our county.

## **(11) ADJOURNMENT**

8:14 p.m.