



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board

April 1, 2015 – 7:30 p.m.

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board:

:Present:

Jeffrey Powers, Don Gardner, Ken Palmer, Ken Newman, Matt Baumgardner, W.P. Johnson, Pete Fellers, Keith Tuck, Spencer Tinsley, Pam Willoughby

:Absent: Chuck Grove, Ronnie Gross

Staff Present: Scott Baker, Traci Blido, Jerry Craig, Jessica Hupp

Staff Absent: Mark Reeter

Guests: Paul Stern, Dorothy McIntyre

(1) Approval of Agenda

Jeff Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the April 1, 2015 agenda.

A motion and a second were made to approve the April 1, 2015 agenda, as presented.

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2015

Mr. Powers asked for a review of the March 11, 2015 meeting minutes.

Dr. Gardner requested two changes to the minutes, including a change in the Economic Development Director's report to read "Dr. Gardner asked if anyone had discussed the money we lost when western ports had to be shut down" and a change to Mr. Fellers report to read "He stated he wouldn't start a land trust now because there are not as many tax credits".

Mr. Craig asked to be listed as present in the previous meeting minutes.

Mr. Baker stated that under informational items it should read "Brook Hill also hosts one of the Bedford 4-H Equine clubs".

A motion and a second were made to approve the meeting minutes of March 11, 2015, as amended.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) County Administrator's Report

No report was given as Mr. Reeter was not present for the April 1, 2015 Ag Board meeting.

(4) Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido reported that the Bedford Grown directories were reprinted because the producers' names were not printed in alphabetical order. With that, our department plans to send out these brochures to grocers, restaurants, and a variety of retail shops so they know where they can source locally grown products.

Mrs. Blido stated that Gov. McAuliffe recently appointed Cassidy Rasnick as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry. She is originally from Botetourt County and most recently served as the Director of Member Services for the Virginia Manufacturers Association and the Virginia Craft Brewers Guild. Previously, she served in a number of posts for Sen. Mark Warner.

Mrs. Blido stated she toured Eco-Friendly Foods last week to get some details squared away for the Virginia-Maryland Ag tour coming up on September 29 through October 2. Mrs. Blido commented on the attention to detail Eco-Friendly Foods puts into the process of making sure each animal is raised and processed in the way each chef wants their product.

Mrs. Blido reported that the Annual Bedford Chamber Awards took place this past Thursday. This year's awards included Fostek as Best Large Business, Town Kitchen as Best Small Business, the National D-Day Memorial as Best Non-Profit, and the Bedford Farmers Market at the Y as Best Agri-Business.

(5) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Baker reported that Brent Wills called to inform Scott that he would not be able to make the meeting tonight, and although Brent and John Graham are not members of the board, they're frequent enough guests to feel obligated to call when they're not going to be in attendance. Mr. Baker stated that Mr. Wills stated his appreciation for being included in this group.

Mr. Baker reported that there are 17 youth signed up to participate in the Central Virginia Livestock Show on Friday, May 2. The planning committee met this past Monday, and details seem to be tying up well.

Mr. Baker reported that the grant oversight committee had a meeting recently on a recent grant providing funding for projects such as hay barns, grain bins, etc. Previously, they opened up the first round to participants with 7-9 slots available. The committee plans to re-open entry for a second time and will host informational meetings where participants can sign up. Round two

should be open until mid-May. Mr. Baker reminded the board that this is a 14-county grant but should still have enough funding to get 4-5 more projects out of it.

Mr. Baker reminded the board that the next ag production meeting will take place April 21 at Springlake Stockyard at 6:00 p.m. The focus will be on beef cattle health with a special presentation from Dr. Whittier. The meetings have been well received so far. Simmons Insurance has offered to support that meeting.

Mr. Baker stated that the group in the county that worked on fundraising for the Bower Center's Bedford's Finest Faire intends to hold another event this year on September 13 in the later afternoon/early evening. Last year, tickets were capped at 200 and sold out, so they plan to sell 300-450 tickets this year. They will also have more chefs (5-6 total) and will be looking for additional food suppliers. This is a great event to help support local food.

Mr. Baker stated it is once again 4-H camp time, which will take place June 22-26 for ages 9-13 for kids interested in spending the week at the W.E. Skelton Smith Mountain Lake 4-H Center.

(6) Tourism Director's Report

Mr. Craig asked the board where he could get his hands on a state statute that discusses non-liability for ag related events. Mr. Baker stated it was in the code. Mr. Craig stated that the fear of liability for many interested in agri-tourism is a large deterrent.

Mr. Craig reported that Virginia is fifth in the country for wineries, with 267 wineries total across the state. Over 8,000 acres of land in Virginia belong to vineyards.

Mr. Craig stated they had their first equine meeting this past week and it was a very productive meeting. Mr. Palmer stated that there were several people who were very excited to be there, and weren't able to make it so they plan to hold another meeting in order to include everyone.

Mr. Craig stated that there was a lot of collaboration from just this one meeting, and people began sharing their different resources across the equine agri-tourism "spoke". The meeting as a whole stated they want to brand the Equine "spoke", brainstorm different types of agri-tourism events, and form a mission statement at their next meeting.

(7) Bedford County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Report

Mr. Johnson reported there was no new news from the Farm Bureau's Young Farmers.

(8) Committee Reports

a. Education & Events

(1) Ag Complex

Mr. Palmer asked that those who aren't already involved in the county fair process to get out and beat the bushes to get sponsorships to support the event. He recently met with Curry Martin and

they discussed the price of admission, any profit after expenses are paid will go to the FFA and 4-H clubs in the county. Mr. Palmer has lined up music entertainment including country gospel, bluegrass, and gospel music free of charge.

Mr. Palmer stated Homestead Creamery would be a vendor at the event and that he was looking for a local pizza vendor. He's also talking with Fat Daddy's and hoping to get fried apple pies from Gross's Orchard. Mr. Craig asked how many food vendors there would be and Mr. Palmer stated 5 or 6. They discussed charging \$10 a car load instead of charging by each individual entry. Curry said there shouldn't be any issue with parking. Mr. Powers stated Curry came to see him personally to make sure everyone would be able to make the meeting tomorrow night and show his complete support for making this event happen.

Dr. Gardner asked to define the sponsorship. Mr. Palmer stated money, or contribute to supplies, Joy said during her internship she put together their fair book, put together a list of rules, plans to bring it to the meeting to look at divisions and see what they'd like to do. Mr. Powers stated they can set up a budget with levels of sponsorship. He said it could be as little as putting up a tent at the event. Dr. Gardner asked if there was an itinerary. Mr. Powers stated that will probably take place at the meeting. The BEA has members interested in draft horses and they offered to put on a display of what farming was like using a horse, such as plowing, and have a parade of breeds.

Meeting will take place at Glenwood at 6 p.m.

- Final report on Ag Expo

Mr. Baker reported that so many people made this event happen and sent a letter to the editor to thank everyone who took part in the process. He said it went well and there was time for vendors to participate and they really benefitted from the event. Mr. Powers stated that Jennifer Ligon and Lindsay Baum had a really great presentation that stuck with those who were listening. Mr. Johnson stated the board should start thinking about themes for next year's event and present these ideas at the May meeting. He said to put the same weekend on the 2016 calendar and place it on the website.

b. Marketing & Production

(1) Farmers Markets

Mr. Paul Stern reported that he would act as the Market Manager this year for both the Y Market and Centertown Bedford Market. He has been the market manager at the Y for the past year. Mr. Stern stated that he has been working towards coming together in a coalition of town and county organizations to help both markets thrive. Mr. Stern stated that although there are two locations, there are four total markets, including the Friday market at the Centertown Pavilion from 7:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., the Y Market at the Y Pavilion on Tuesdays from 3 – 6:30 p.m., the winter market at the Y that begins November through March, and the first Saturday of the month market at the Centertown Pavilion.

Mr. Stern invited everyone on the Ag Board to come see him at one of the markets and stated he likes to encourage local farmers to participate. Mr. Stern stated his first task this year is getting more vendors down at the market. The market has 13 farmers already signed up for this season.

Mr. Stern reported that the markets will open next Tuesday at the Y, and on Friday, April 24 Bedford at the Centertown Pavilion. Mr. Stern stated there will not be an Easter market this year. Mr. Stern stated that he hopes to make a better presence with marketing. They have set many goals, one of which is to have Goose Creek Studios as an artisan at the market. Mr. Stern reported that they have a brand new farm participating in all three markets this year known as Whistle Lane Farms. The market management team will be finishing early season pricing on April 6, to find the best and most affordable rates.

Dr. Gardner asked if Mr. Stern believed the market location is the best it could be, to which Mr. Stern stated that it is what we have and we have to do the best we can. Mr. Stern stated that our local Lowe's has rebuilt all the planters, put in a handicap accessible ramp, added hanging baskets, and is adding new signage to the pavilion. He has heard from a number of vendors that believe the market should be on Main Street, but he personally likes the existing location because there is plenty of parking, it's surrounded by many established businesses, and he hopes it will help everyone thrive.

Dr. Gardner asked if there was an opportunity for signage out on the Bedford bypass, to which Mr. Stern said he would love to have signage out there, and has tried to do it for the Y, but they can't put up a sign and leave it there. Mr. Stern stated he has a grower that says he's going to assist them with signs. Mr. Stern reported that many media contacts have followed up with him, including one from *Lynchburg Living* who has asked to put the market's makeover in their magazine.

Mrs. Blido stated the market hours are posted on bedfordeconomicdevelopment.com. Mr. Tinsley suggested Mr. Stern reach out to the Ruritan or Lions Clubs for more people that may be interested in participating in the markets.

Dorothy McIntyre reported that last year, she made the Forest Farmers' Market an LLC, and gave an update on how it's been succeeding. Mrs. McIntyre reported she had an average of 26 vendors last year, with her highest number of vendors at one point being 37, and 18 at a low point. Over the course of the season, she had a total of 58 different vendors. She stated she can see as many as 200-400 people on any given Saturday during the season. Mrs. McIntyre reported that she asked her vendors for a quick estimate of their profits from the last season, and projected that the Forest Farmers' Market as a whole earned around \$300,000 in total sales this past year. Two years ago the market profited around \$125-\$175,000.

In the past, Mrs. McIntyre worked with multiple entities within the County, including the Society of St. Andrews which gleans the market of any leftover produce and takes it to the Salvation

Army soup kitchen. Last year, 2,000 pounds of donated fresh foods were gleaned from the market.

Mrs. McIntyre stated she is regularly marketing. She stated that Keller Williams has offered to pay for music at the market, and the Neighborhood Walmart has asked to do blood pressure screenings a few days this year. Mrs. McIntyre stated there will be two bloodmobiles at the market, and Kathy Driskoll who has done a lot of Nature's Own programs in Lynchburg city, is starting a new program and will be at the market to talk about littering and watershed programs. Mrs. McIntyre stated she has talked about getting some ag at the market, where kids can interact with some of the animals and their farmers once a month. The Master Gardeners come every third Saturday to do a children's program.

Mrs. McIntyre has started SNAP (food stamps) programs at the market. She stated that to be successful with the SNAP program, you need to have additional funds for "double bucks". Since the Forest Farmers' Market is an LLC, she can't go after those grant funds. However, the Bedford Community Health Foundation committed \$500 last year in order for the market to provide "double bucks" up to \$20 dollars a piece. Mrs. McIntyre stated there is not a huge need for this in Forest, but they did about \$300 worth last year and it was very important for those that used them. The Bedford Community Health Foundation agreed to help with the SNAP program again this year.

(2) Coyote lottery

Dr. Gardner reported that the final check in was 115 coyotes. Dr. Gardner reported that Shenandoah County plans to emulate our coyote lottery, but plan to run theirs year-round. Mr. Powers stated they have coyotes running between the houses and killing calves. Mr. Craig asked how many farmers carry a fire arm on their tractors. Dr. Gardner said you can buy a sheepskin scabbard in order to hold your gun without it rattling against the tractor.

Mr. Baker stated that we do have access to USDA technical assistance for specific issues with coyotes. Dr. Gardner said the Virginia Trappers Association is doing a study they hope will get the snare law changed in Virginia. The way the snare law is written now is relatively ineffective for coyotes, and snare trapping is one of the best ways to catch them, as they work despite the season or environment. Dr. Gardner asked Mr. Baker for any data he may have to submit to help the association on their study. Mr. Powers stated that the coyote lottery has become so widespread that vendors in Roanoke are now becoming interested in sponsoring next year's lottery.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers reported nothing new to report on for Bedford County.

(9) Other Business

A. Land Use taxation report

Mr. Johnson stated that the committee discussed the land use taxation topic over email, and don't believe they really need to address it any further. As far as the farming community is concerned, everyone has all their ducks all in a row. They will look into addressing it in the future if needed.

Mr. Tinsley asked if Bedford County has a land use taxation ordinance. Mr. Johnson stated that the Board of Supervisors either accepts SLIAC or they don't, and then it is up to Bedford County's staff to enforce those rules.

(10) Informational Items

Dr. Gardner stated that he emailed a link to an e-newsletter he found and believes it is incumbent on members of the board to be as informed as possible about a group that is trying to establish dietary guidelines that aren't friendly to animal feed.

Dr. Gardner highlighted a few of the article's key points. One of the ethical reasons people claim to choose vegetarianism is that they believe that by eliminating animal products, more plant based foods will be made available globally because animals are inefficient in converting feed to product. This idea ignores that the production of animal food creates by-products not edible to people but consumable by animals. The value of by-products from soybeans are \$4.40 per ton, corn is \$2.35 per ton, and most other by-products average \$200 per ton. The value of these products consumed here or sold by export amounts to \$27.2 billion a year to the U.S. The edible portion of these plants varies. At the lowest, 20% of soybean products are edible, and up to 75% of wheat is edible. When you consider over half of most crops are by-products, any left overs not consumed by animals become waste. In the U.S., 136.7 million tons of human food was produced from primary crops, and almost equal amounts of by-products were created from human food and biofuel products combined. These by-products typically comprise 20-25 % of the animal diets in the U.S., however the number of days a beef animal is on a feed lot is just a small portion of an animal's life. Animals spend 11-12% of their lives on these lots before slaughter. The U.S. produces more than 25 million pounds of beef and 200 million pounds of milk per year in a system that uses 16-17% grain to maximize the utilization of by-products and forages.

The flow of municipal solid waste into landfills from 2008 to 2012 was 134 million tons annually. Disposing of by products by landfilling would double that flow. Poultry and livestock, especially cattle, are great recyclers of the by-products of human food production. For every one pound of human food produced and processed, another pound per ton is generated. The amount of by-products is larger than the amount of municipal solid waste going to landfills. The most economically and environmentally sustainable way to dispose of these by-products is in animal feed.

Mr. Palmer stated that most anti-GMO people that virtually everything they consume at one point in time was genetically modified by selection or cross breeding or something else. Mr. Tinsley stated that if they hadn't crossbred pineapples you wouldn't be able to eat them today.

Mr. Newman said he met with Fred Connor and a few of the administrators and teachers about the possible greenhouse. The overall budget of the greenhouse is estimated to \$15,000. Fred said the next step would be for Mr. Newman to meet with the county maintenance guy and put an action plan together, including budget, phases, additional block walls and concrete pads to review with him. Mr. Newman stated Fred thinks he can come up with maybe all of the \$15,000, but most likely up to \$10,000. Mr. Newman stated they would like to start construction on it as soon as school is out, and have it done by the end of August. By the next Ag Board meeting they should be seeking volunteers for construction and donors for blocks and cement or other products that will be needed. Everyone is onboard for this project and Farm Bureau has donated \$1,500 for the base. The board asked if it would be made from glass, to which Mr. Newman stated it was going to be polycarbonate panels so that it has a 10-year warranty. Mr. Newman also stated that it would require propane heat.

Dr. Gardner asked if anything came out of the local organization that makes grants for this type of product. Dr. Gardner stated that they should contact Mr. Walton who recommended speaking with this board of directors.

Joy reported that she took 18 kids to Virginia Tech to compete in the Block and Bridle Livestock Judging contest. She stated that they had missed most of scheduled practices this year due to snow, however the Junior team finished 3rd in the state. Kaley Green finished 4th and Andrew Tuck won High Individual for the junior category for the state.

Joy reported that the senior team lost three of their more experienced judges this year, but Hunter Woodford won 3rd High Individual in the state in only his 2nd year of judging. Hunter is planning to go to Virginia Tech and will be graduating with honors. He plans to study Agricultural Economics. Hunter Whimmer finished 7th overall, and the team was High Team in the entire state. Ethan Jackson was also a part of that team.

Morgan Meadows and Hunter Whimmer both went to the Virginia Institute of Cooperative Education last weekend, where Morgan finished 3rd and won a \$1,000 scholarship. She will go to the National Institute of Cooperative Extension this summer. Hunter Whimmer finished in top 10.

Joy reported that Erica Tuck went to a dairy judging contest Erica where her team won high team, and Erica placed 7th.

Mr. Palmer stated he was asked about if there were any emergency contacts or number for assistance when a trailer gets stuck to move livestock. Mr. Baker stated that some counties have worked through emergency services to create a list of farmers willing to receive those calls. Mr. Tuck said that he knows Campbell County has done something similar. Dr. Gardner stated that it would make sense to form a list of names that could help and set a flat fee for making the run to go help someone. Mr. Powers stated the board should ask Campbell how it has worked for them. Mrs. Willoughby suggested asking Springlake in Lynchburg about their experience with it.

(11) Adjournment

8:13 p.m.