



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board

April 5, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board:

:Present:

Ken Palmer, Don Gardner, Chuck Grove, Pete Fellers, Beth Bays, Ken Newman, Sam Gardner, , Pam Willoughby, Lindsay Tomlinson, Matt Baumgardner

:Absent: Ronnie Gross, Jeffrey Powers

Staff Present: Traci Blido, Scott Baker, Jessica Hupp

Staff Absent: Reid Wodicka

:Guests: Joy Powers, Brent Wills

(1) Approval of Agenda

Dr. Gardner, Vice Chairman, called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the April 5, 2017 agenda.

A motion and a second were made to approve the April 5, 2017 agenda, as presented.

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 1, 2017

Dr. Gardner asked for a review of the March 1, 2017 meeting minutes. A motion and a second were made to approve the March 1, 2017 meeting minutes, as presented.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) County Administration Report

Mr. Wodicka was not in attendance. Mrs. Blido stated he was planning to attend, but came down with the bug that's been going around the administration office. Ms. Powers said Jeff had talked to Reid this past week and they are planning a joint work session with the board on May 8.

(4) Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido reported staff has had a rough month with the announcement of TEVA's main plant closing in 2020. TEVA is already starting to look for another pharmaceutical company to come in and continue operations as usual. TEVA is looking for something similar to what they did when Barr Labs was closing. Mrs. Blido is working with the region and the state to help find a suitable buyer. TEVA currently employees more than 300 and makes generics and control 2 substances among its long list of products.

Mrs. Blido also was saddened that Mr. Garbarini of Bedford Weaving Mills passed away last week, but his son has reported the operation will continue with business as usual.

Mrs. Blido stated she attended the Virginia Ag Trade conference in Richmond last week and heard some interesting information about the state's ag industry and other NAFTA changes.

Next week, Mrs. Blido will be at the Craft Brewer's Conference in Washington, D.C. The regional alliance had a video created spotlighting several companies in Bedford County, including Sentry Equipment that makes bottling equipment, Apocalypse Ale Works and Beale's breweries, and Smyth that creates bottling labels for the industry, to show off at the conference.

(5) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Baker reported there are two tobacco grants available. One grant is for computer record keeping systems and has not been released yet. The other is a rebate program for hay barns, grain bins, and livestock equipment. It passed final approval and there will be an informational night on May 16 at the Lynchburg Livestock Market at 6:30. The informational night is a prerequisite to be eligible for the grant. The next step after the informational night is filling out an application, which will begin June 1, 2017.

Mr. Baker stated that he helped Region 2000 make an agricultural strategic plan a few years ago, so they are now reevaluating to see what adjustments might be needed. They will be sending a survey of five to six questions that will start being distributed in the next few days.

Mr. Baker reported that they had a cattle marketing effort meeting with about 25 people and the state grader there. They had a follow up meeting with Brandon at Springlake and the state grader, and would like to have another about creating a feeder calf sale soon. This would allow farmers to have cattle graded in the field and taken straight to market. This meeting will take place Thursday, April 20 at 6:30 p.m. at Springlake Stockyard. This meeting will help them gauge how serious people would be to selling like this.

Mr. Baker stated that in just a few weeks they will hold the livestock show. Mr. Baker has gone through the entries and there are 77 total kids participating with 140 head of livestock. From Bedford County, there are 20 participating, 6 of the 20 are first timers. The market hog show will be the biggest it has ever been with 40-head. Twelve of those market hogs are from Bedford County kids. In addition, there are four lambs, two steers, one goat, and the rest are breed

animals. If anyone is interested in supporting or buying animals he knows the kids would be very appreciative.

(6) Bedford County Farm Bureau Young Farmer's Report

Mr. Sam Gardner reported they have a legislative tour planned for May 13 in the afternoon. They will be touring a couple different farms, including Gardner Heifers and Beth's place. Mrs. Bays reported there is not much else going on. Mr. Gardner said he spoke at a Heritage High School government class, which was an interesting experience since most students had no clue about ag in the region or ag in general. The class had some really great questions.

Mrs. Bays stated that Friday at 6 p.m. at the Springlake Stockyard they will be hosting a benefit auction for those affected by wild fires in the heartland. They've received a lot of wonderful donations from local businesses so far. There will be a chili dinner and live auction. Mrs. Bays stated a group of people from Bedford drove out to Kansas to spend the week tearing down burned down fences that were devastated by the wild fires. Thousands of head of cattle had been burned. In Clarke County alone, 30-some houses had burned down. The farmers there were so appreciative of the help.

(7) Committee Reports

a. Education & Events

(1) Upcoming Events

Mr. Palmer thanked Beth and her crew for all they did in Kansas to help the farmers there. Mr. Palmer reported this Saturday is the Gross' Apple Festival and later this month is the Olde Liberty Fibre Fair on April 22.

(2) County Fair update

Ms. Powers stated they've had really productive meetings and are really excited about this year's fair. Spencer Blankenship is taking over the Old McDonald's Farm Tent, which will be a standing livestock display throughout the fair, with funding by Farm Bureau. The education components are going to be bigger and better this year, and they have been meeting with a new midway company. Vendor and sponsor applications are open now. Mr. Palmer stated they had a productive meeting with the Roanoke Valley Horseman's association and welcomed them aboard as volunteers.

(3) Middle School Ag Program Update

Ms. Tomlinson stated that she hasn't heard much about the middle school ag program recently. As far as the last meeting, she was told if she knew anyone interested in the position that they should send a letter of intent to apply. Ms. Tomlinson stated it was put in the budget to hire someone, but that's the last she's heard. Ms. Tomlinson sent an email out to Virginia Tech to see if they have any openings so hopefully they will find someone to teach it. The only problem at

this point is she does not see the position posted on the county schools' website. They've also been watching the new middle school building in progression and have composed a pretty good list of possible suggestions for why a small land lab would be beneficial to the property. A discussion followed on the potential hiring of an ag teacher.

Ms. Tomlinson reported they have gotten the liberty alumni association of FFA off the ground. Ms. Tomlinson stated you do not have to have attended Liberty High School to be a part of it. The group is open to anyone who wants to support the chapter. They have people from other states who have moved here that take part. Meetings are held the third Thursday of each month, and they are currently working on getting basic by-laws laid out, working on officers, etc. This group can be very helpful with holding contests, creating events and fundraisers, and serving as an advisory council.

b. Marketing & Production

(1) Farmers Markets

Mr. Baker said the Bedford market is opening back up for regular season on May 2. They will continue Tuesday afternoon and Friday morning markets, as well as first Saturday of the month. A new market manager has been hired. There will be a market managers meeting tomorrow so we'll get an update then. The Economic Development office provided cutting boards again to be used as giveaways for the Bedford and Forest Farmers Markets for their season openings.

(2) Coyote Lottery

Dr. Gardner went to Farm Bureau board of directors to see if they'd be willing to fund the \$1,000 matching grant for the lottery. Dr. Gardner then went back to Southern States to see if they'd be willing to check coyotes in year round, and they felt that wouldn't be a big deal for them to do. Dr. Gardner said the winners this year were Kyle Crickenberger, Brent Dooley, and Alex Poole. Dr. Gardner stated 84 coyotes were checked in this year, but a number of the participants said they probably didn't check in half of what they killed, so there's really no telling how many were actually killed. Dr. Gardner said you could find the whole story in the Bedford Bulletin.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers stated he had nothing new to report.

(8) Informational Items

Ms. Powers said the 4-H club did something fun. They got Scott Baker a cake for his work anniversary as the extension agent for our county.

Mrs. Blido stated that Reid Wodicka got four RFP's back to choose an engineering firm to create a broadband plan to fill in gaps. A discussion followed about the importance of broadband in the county.

(9) Adjournment
-8:03 p.m.