



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board

August 1, 2018 – 7:30 p.m.

Present: Pete Fellers, Ken Newman, Pam Willoughby, Don Gardner, Sam Gardner, Chuck Grove, Lindsay Tomlinson

Absent: Jeff Powers, Joy Powers, Ronnie Gross, Beth Bays, Matt Baumgardner

Staff Present: Traci Blido, Scott Baker

Staff Absent: None

Transcriber: Julia Peters

Guests: John Graham - Graham Bass Farm; Jana Fedele - Bedford Farmer's Market

(1) Approval of Agenda

Dr. Gardner called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the August 1, 2018 agenda. There were no objections.

A motion and a second were made to approve the August 1, 2018 agenda, as presented.
Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes - July 11, 2018

Dr. Gardner asked for a review of the July 11, 2018 meeting minutes. A correction was made to the minutes under subtitle **Land Protection & Conservation**.

A motion and a second were made to approve the July 11, 2018 meeting minutes as amended.
Adopted unanimously.

(3) County Administration Report

Mrs. Blido said that an organization to help screen county administrators for interviews will be meeting with all the county directors for comments and input. If anyone would like to comment, they can contact Carl Boggess who will be collecting this information until August 15.

(4) Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido reported that Beale's Brewery had sales of \$1 million last year. United Way of Central Virginia will be holding a Bedford launch for their upcoming campaign on September 12 at Beale's. It will be an information session for businesses from 3 - 4 p.m. if anyone would like to attend. The Governor made two announcements regarding Bedford companies. Blue Ridge Optics has invested \$750,000 and will retrain seven employees and Smyth has invested \$6.5 million dollars and will retrain 28 employees. These two companies had recently expanded within the last two years and are now expanding again which is very good news for Bedford. Mrs. Blido also submitted a grant application to the Tobacco Commission to build a 40,000 sq. ft. shell building in the New London Business and Technology Center to attract other companies to the county. It is on the Board of Supervisors Agenda for approval.

(5) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Baker reported that we had our second special feeder calf sale on July 27. There were 325 head total. The premium after deducting costs for weaning and vaccinating was \$30-\$70 net return for heifers and \$85-\$105 net return for steer. It was a successful sale and had repeat consigners. The third sale this year will be September 14 and there will be another sale in January for producers that have spring born calves to be weaned this fall. We have a summer intern this year who is from a dairy farm in Franklin County. She is a rising junior in dairy science and she had an ag awareness booth for a community day in Bedford. Claytor Nature Center was inquiring whether the Ag Board had any contacts with producers who do custom farm work, such as a service provider list. Mr. Baker is bringing this subject back up for discussion to see if the board would want to revisit the issue. Discussion followed and the consensus was that it would be hard to keep a list current from year to year and therefore not enough interest to attempt.

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

Sam Gardner said he was not on the Bay tour so he cannot report. Saturday August 11 is the legislative tour, but he has no further updates to share.

(7) Committee Reports

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming Events

Nothing to report.

2. County Fair update

Ms. Tomlinson said that everything is still moving along. The School Education Day is being held for fourth graders again this year. They are still working on ironing out the specifics for the

day. Mrs. Blido said the fair website needs updating because it still shows information from last year. Adult education will also be addressed with some agricultural displays. The Farm Bureau Women's Committee will have goody bags and have acquired more signage this year which they plan to show throughout the fair.

3. School Ag Programs Update

Ms. Tomlinson said the FFA leadership camp was held. Josh Powers went to the Washington DC Leadership Conference and had an amazing time. The attendees learn a lot about lawmakers and policy making at the conference. Another school year is approaching and the new Bedford Middle School Ag Lab is great with multiple classrooms. Cymber Stanley graduated from Liberty High School in 2012 and is the new middle school ag teacher.

Ag 1 is now exclusively taught in the middle school which helps in teaching the high school programs students already have an idea of what ag pathway they want to follow and can hone in on specific skills. Discussion ensued regarding the community college certificate program. No new information has been received since spring and follow up is needed.

b. Marketing & Production

1. Farmer's Market Update

Ms. Fedele reported that next week is Farmer's Market Week and Bedford will celebrate that week from August 4 through August 9. August 7 is their big event from 3 - 9 p.m. The Bedford Town Police Department is having a National Night Out event and will be filming their lip sync competition. There will be many other activities such as face painting and many vendors are coming. Gross's Orchard will have their peach sale at \$0.99 per pound that week. Three voter registration events are coming to the market in September and October. The market's sales year to date are \$31,000 and \$663 for the online market. There have been 4,237 visitors to the market and \$1,040 in SNAP sales which have actually generated \$1,670 in sales at the market. There are 35 vendors of which 16% are minority-owned and 42% are women-owned. Thirteen percent of the vendors are under 35 years old, but Ms. Fedele would like to improve that statistic. The Bedford Market has 730 acres cultivated in the area and 30 workers are employed with market vendors. The average distance to market is 12 miles.

2. Coyote Lottery Update

Nothing new to report.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Nothing new to report.

(8) Informational Items

Mr. Graham reported that the Boones Mill initiative to have a year-round farm product outlet did not open as planned on June 1. It is still struggling with contracting, decreasing grant money, a small customer base, and few producers that can do year-round production. There is a grass roots co-op opening in downtown Lynchburg within the next few weeks on Main Street. It will be another avenue for producers to sell their product. More information can be found on grassrootslocalmarket.com.

(9) ADJOURNMENT

8:27 pm