



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
December 2, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board:

:Present:

Jeffrey Powers, Ken Palmer, Ken Newman , Pete Fellers, Don Gardner, Keith Tuck, Ronnie Gross, Pam Willoughby, Chuck Grove, Matt Baumgardner, Lindsay Tomlinson

:Absent:, W.P. Johnson

Staff Present: Jessica Hupp, Jerry Craig

Staff Absent: Carl Boggess, Scott Baker, Traci Blido

:Guests: John Graham, Joy Powers

(1) Approval of Agenda

Jeff Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the December 2, 2015 agenda. Mr. Powers stated that the Coyote Lottery needed to be added under Marketing & Production.

A motion and a second were made to approve the December 2, 2015 agenda, as amended.

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – November 4, 2015

Mr. Powers asked for a review of the November 4, 2015 meeting minutes. Mr. Tuck stated that the minutes should have read Shannon and Beth Bays in one section. Mr. Fellers stated the minutes should read the Tourism Appreciation Award was given to Ronnie Gross *and family*.

A motion and a second were made to approve the meeting minutes of November 4, 2015, as amended.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) County Administrator's Report

Mr. Boggess was not in attendance. Mr. Powers stated that he touched base with Mr. Powers and had nothing new to report.

(4) Economic Development Director's Report

Ms. Hupp reported they've been working on the department budget for 2016-2017 the past week and submitted it on Thursday.

Ms. Hupp reported that staff is planning to do a promotional piece with WFXR Fox 21/27 about buying locally this holiday season. It should be airing on their station through the end of January. WFXR is also hosting its open house next week on December 15 from 4:30 – 7 p.m.

Ms. Hupp reported that her Bedford One Program committee has wrapped up its student tours for this year. During the Fall of 2015, we hosted three tour dates at eight businesses with a total of 112 students in attendance. The committee will meet next week to begin planning the spring tours.

Ms. Hupp reported that the Christmas Tree Lighting downtown will be taking place on Friday at 6 p.m. and will be followed by SantaLand and carriage rides down by the market. The Bedford Christmas Parade will also be on Saturday beginning at 11 a.m.

(5) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Powers stated that Mr. Spencer Tinsley would like to come off the Ag Board and that he had contacted him in October about allowing someone younger to join the board that can focus on education. Mr. Powers stated that Lindsay Tomlinson's name came up, and Mr. Tinsley stated he supported that choice so Lindsay will be on the board starting this month.

Mr. Powers stated that Erica and Mickey from WFXR stopped by the other day and said the Ag Life segment is one of the most popular features they have.

Mr. Powers stated Scott Baker couldn't be here this evening, but sent two emails to share including that the Virginia Association of Biological Farming's Annual Conference is coming up January 29-30 at the Skelton 4-H Center. Scott stated that it's rare these conferences end up so close to our locality so it is an event you may not want to miss.

(6) Tourism Director's Report

Mr. Craig reported that he's been working with Mickey Johnson on more contacts related to the Ag Life segments and has connected Mickey with some names of regional foresters. Mr. Craig stated he also received an email from Virginia Tech that its Agritourism Conference will be taking place in South Boston April 5-6, 2016.

(7) Bedford County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Report

Mr. Johnson was not in attendance. Mr. Powers stated W.P. told him that Dr. Gardner's son, Sam, and daughter-in-law won the State Achievement Award at the Virginia Farm Bureau Conference. They will now be going to Orlando to compete on the national level.

Mr. Johnson also wanted the board to be aware that the hay bale and gun raffle are still going on.

(8) Committee Reports

a. Education & Events

(1) County Fair update

Mr. Palmer stated that for the fair last year he had wanted to have the Bedford County Hunt Club bring the hounds, however the policy of only allowing service dogs prevented this. Mr. Palmer stated that for this year, a Hunt Club member's daughter is putting together a video on fox hunting. The Hunt Club has agreed to come to the Fair and to show the video playing on a loop and to have someone there to answer questions about fox hunting.

Ms. Powers reported that last month the committee announced dates for the 2016 Bedford County Fair which will be September 1-4. The committee believes having a four-day event will allow them to do more than they were able to fit in last year. The committee is still working on specifics, but there should be some exciting add-ons this year including a Fair pageant. The fair will be held at the Glenwood Center again. As the committee begins to plan, they will start with remembering what they learned from last year's Fair on matters such as handicapped parking.

Ms. Powers stated the committee expects the Fair to grow and that many media partners have signed on again this year. Ms. Powers stated that the Virginia Association of Fairs 2016 Conference will be taking place at the Homestead on January 7-10. There are a total of 27 categories to enter for awards, and the Bedford County Fair has been entered into 18. A few board members will be attending.

Mr. Powers stated they have signed up again with Cole Amusements, who initially wanted a four-day event to begin with. The committee feels this will be a good way to fit in some field trips for elementary schools by having the Fair open on Thursday and Friday. There will be educational displays and animals for the kids to see.

Ms. Powers stated that Susan Epperly and some others have been working on getting the competition rules mapped out, and those should be ready in January. Mr. Powers stated Fox 21/27 is considering building a stage in order to do a live news broadcast from the Fair.

Dr. Gardner stated that at the West Virginia State Fair the local FFA Chapters sell sweet corn they have grown on their own and thought Liberty and Staunton River FFA Chapters may want to use that as a fundraising opportunity.

Ms. Powers stated they plan to increase vendor fees this year, although not by much as they are still concerned with the vendors making a profit. Mr. Graham asked if informational booths will be charged this year, to which Ms. Powers stated most likely not.

(2) Upcoming Events

A. Ag Expo

Mr. Powers stated there was a conflict on the date for the Expo to be held at CVCC Bedford. Mr. Powers stated he was contacted by Shannon Simmons about having the event on his property, and with J.D. Scott's Strawberry Festival probably not happening this year, they are hoping to turn it into a heritage event with seminars. Mr. Powers stated there will still be an opportunity for animal displays. They have secured the date of March 12, 2016. Shannon has agreed to work with them on contacting different organizations to participate and organizing where everyone will be set up. Mr. Powers stated they would have a lot more information about the Expo in January. Mr. Powers asked Jessica to put this on the event calendar.

Mr. Graham stated that he was contacted by an ag teacher from George Mason High School in Northern Virginia, which is located where I-66 and 495 intersect. Mr. Graham stated that this area is not your typical ag community, however they have a robust ag program in the school system. The ag teacher was awarded a USDA grant and is trying to put together an aquaponic system to grow lettuce for the cafeteria. Mr. Graham stated these grants typically go to some sort of food service or a food service entity at the school system, but the grant requires them to have someone "ag-wise" as a partner that will be a provider of whatever they need. Originally the ag teacher wanted to have a greenhouse but he couldn't get a permit to allow him to build one on school property, so he decided to go the aquaponic route.

Ms. Tomlinson stated that it is public speaking time of the year for FFA and that having the students give their presentations at the end of the Expo could be good practice for them. Ms. Tomlinson stated that many students are currently practicing for public speaking contests and if there are any local people who frequently speak to groups that would like to take a student under their wing they would love that. Ms. Tomlinson stated that there will be an FFA float in the parade this weekend and that their fruit sale is underway.

b. Marketing & Production

(1) Farmers Markets

Mr. Gross stated they went to the Lynchburg Community Market for the first time to be a part of the Wednesday market. He stated it was an interesting experience and that Channel 7 did an interview of what's available in the winter at the market.

Mr. Graham stated that the Forest Market is now down to once a month and it will be open next on December 12. The winter markets take place at the Forest Recreation Center.

(2) Coyote Lottery

Dr. Gardner reported there are currently 30-40 coyotes that have been checked in. So far, the sponsorships will amount to around \$3,000 with a Farm Bureau donation.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers stated he went to the Amherst Extension office for a farm transition workshop and it was packed. Mr. Fellers passed around a pamphlet from the workshop. Mr. Feller stated he felt it had very useful information. Mr. Powers stated that Mr. Baker had asked if this type of workshop would be something people would be interested in having in this area. Mr. Powers said he will let Scott know that this information is needed in the community to help people plan for the future of their farm.

(9) Other Business

Ms. Tomlinson stated something they started new this year at Liberty are ag internships through the ag department, added as part of the curriculum. Ms. Tomlinson stated that some kids by their senior year have taken all ag classes, but have to be enrolled in ag to stay in FFA. This is where the internships come in handy. There have been students at all kinds of establishments and if you or someone you know may be interested in helping next year, let her know by August.

Ms. Tomlinson stated that an ag curriculum has been put together for Bedford Middle School next year and administration is now doing what they need to do to get the kids interested in signing up for them. She will be running back and forth from BMS to Liberty to get the program going, then she plans to focus on a mutual ag building to be shared between the middle and high school.

(10) Informational Items

(11) Adjournment

-7:55 p.m.