



**Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board**

July 1, 2015 – 7:30 p.m.

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board:

:Present:

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

:Absent: Ronnie Gross, Chuck Grove

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

Staff Absent: Carl Boggess, Jessica Hupp

(1) Approval of Agenda

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

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

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – June 3, 2015

Mr. Powers asked for a review of the June 3, 2015 meeting minutes.

A motion and a second were made to approve the meeting minutes of June 3, 2015, as presented.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) County Administrator's Report

No report as Mr. Boggess was on vacation.

(4) Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido stated staff has been busy closing out the end of fiscal year 2014-2015. Mrs. Blido reported that the EDA held their annual planning day on June 26. The EDA heard from Bob

Bailey and Megan Lucas during the planning day, who discussed marketing for the region and recent work on getting B&W's steam loop up and running again with a potential Department of Energy (DOE) grant.

Mrs. Blido reported the EDA recently completed a master plan by Draper Aden Associates for the Bedford Center for Business (BCB). The BCB has been a great asset to the EDA, and it generates revenue from CVCC and East Coast Fabricators. Both are doing well at their location in the park. Mrs. Blido stated that during planning day the EDA also discussed how to use Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF) grants and how to approach various redevelopment efforts.

Mrs. Blido attended a Tobacco Commission meeting recently about agricultural grants. At the meeting they discussed a new Governor's Agriculture Fund, which is much like the Governor's Opportunity Fund. She is hoping the locality will be able to utilize one this year.

Mrs. Blido reported that the Broadband Authority will be meeting on July 13 at 6:45 p.m. prior to the Board of Supervisor's meeting to execute a memorandum of understanding with Mid-Atlantic Broadband (MBC) for bringing high speed internet to the Montvale area. MBC will build a tower in Montvale, and will allow internet service providers to pay rent for access to the tower. After the county sees how well the Montvale tower works out, they'll be looking at other areas of the county.

(5) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Baker reported he had a broadband advisory group approach him to inquire about the potential benefits for agriculture as it relates to broadband coverage. Once this group has gathered their information they plan to make a case to expand broadband and redefine what audiences it can help.

Mr. Baker reported that the grant funds Mrs. Blido mentioned earlier from the Tobacco Commission are being increased this year from \$1 million to \$2 million. These are usually meant for regional projects or can be used as facility and planned grants with local governments. The Extension Office has been bouncing around ideas of how this grant funding could be used. Grant proposals are due sometime in the fall.

Mr. Baker asked the Extension Office's intern, Sara Jane, to report on the class she taught at FFA Camp. Sara Jane stated the class she taught at FFA Camp focused on how agriculture affects people's lives, basic agriculture, animal science, and topics from the Department of Forestry. At the end of the class, campers wrote thank you letters to local farmers. Sara Jane passed some of the cards around to ag board members. Mr. Baker mentioned putting the cards on display at the fair would be great for showcasing FFA Camp. Mr. Baker stated there will be another FFA day camp coming up at the end of July that will take kids to local farms.

Mr. Powers asked Erica Tuck to talk about what they did at FFA camp. Erica stated that the first day they worked cattle, the second day they went to Mr. Grahams fish farm, they saw Wipledale's greenhouse and they rode horses. Erica said it was cool seeing all the diverse ag industries in the county.

Mr. Powers stated that this is the first year that Staunton River and Liberty have 100 students enrolled in the Agriculture 1 class.

Joy reported that the state convention was last week, and that Hunter Wimmer was elected state secretary which is the second highest office in the state. To her knowledge, this is the highest office the county has ever had.

(6) Tourism Director's Report

Mr. Craig reported that he's been working a lot on the wine garden and antique car show. Mr. Craig stated he has also picked up one or two more vendors. Mr. Craig stated that if the board was interested he could get a blacksmith to have at the fair giving demonstrations. Don asked if there had been any thought towards showcasing real agriculture in Bedford, other than the beef cattle show, like a booth to show off what agricultural enterprises are set up in Bedford County. Mr. Baker said he believes there is a tent meant for that type of information, and the different types of ag may have their own individual tents.

Mr. Tinsley stated he believed it would be good to show the public the numbers of how much money ag generates for the county. Mrs. Blido suggested a marketing piece that would show all those bullet points, such as how many farms and how much money is generated.

(7) Bedford County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Report

Mr. Johnson reported that Farm Bureau is looking into doing ag pac interviews, which will take place during the next two months, and then they will either choose to support or abstain from certain in-kind contributions from across the state.

Mr. Johnson stated that July 22 would be customer appreciation day. There will be refreshments there and people to talk to about membership benefits from 12 – 4:00 p.m.

(8) Committee Reports **a. Education & Events**

(1) Ag Complex

Mr. Palmer said no new news on the ag complex.

(2) Upcoming events **- County Fair**

Mr. Powers stated by the end of this week everything should be well in line for entry forms and poster design. Mr. Powers stated that they have a radio agreement with a Lynchburg group that covers four stations and reaches a large part of the region. They also offered \$5,200 worth of free advertising if the committee didn't make an agreement with any other stations. The station will try to do onsite broadcast, and plans to interview Joy or Keith. They also want to do a giveaway for rides over the radio. The fair committee has WSET covering the fair on television.

Mr. Powers stated they will no longer be having a Saturday evening concert in order keep the weekend long vendors in place, however there will still be live music throughout the duration of the fair. Equine events will take place on Friday, the youth livestock show will take place on Saturday, and the antique car show will take place on Sunday. The wine garden will last from 3 - 6:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Mr. Powers stated there will be a petting zoo and pony rides the entire duration of the fair, as this was something the public showed the most interest in having.

Mr. Powers thanked everyone who has helped to make this event happen. Mr. Palmer encouraged everyone to get out and try to get sponsors for the event. Mr. Palmer stated he has been getting very positive feedback, and has secured \$3,100 sponsorships just by making a phone call. David James Homes committed on the phone to \$500. Mr. Palmer stated that on Sunday he was at the Bedford County Hunt barbeque and spoke to 65-70 people in attendance, who were all were very excited about the fair.

b. Marketing & Production

(1) Farmers Markets

Mr. Graham stated that the markets are doing very well this season. They finally have good produce coming in for purchase and they are typically well attended. Mr. Graham explained that the Town has two markets this week, one on Friday morning and the first Saturday community market the following day. The First Saturday Community market is a more family-oriented market and has activities for kids. Bedford Main Street is starting up their 2nd Friday efforts again beginning on July 10. Mr. Graham is organizing vendors with value added farm products to be at the market pavilion that evening, in addition to wineries and a few local caterers. This will take place from 4 – 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Graham said he had a great experience with the FFA kids that came to his farm during 4H camp and that they were all very respectful and diligent.

Mrs. Blido mentioned to the board that Jessica was planning a Cornhole Tournament for Main Street to take place on 2nd Fridays if anyone is interested in participating. There is a small fee for teams that sign up which will go to support Bedford Main Street and its mission.

(2) Biosolids Complaint

Dr. Gardner stated that Jeff brought to his attention that some Bedford County residents went to speak with Curry Martin about their concern of biosolids being used in the County. Dr. Gardner said he plans to meet with Curry to speak with him about bio-solids so he is more informed on the topic.

Dr. Gardner stated that he has discussed a certain mechanism to fix this type of problem for the county, however the old county administrator never addressed it. Apparently work with bio-solids is being done right below Curry's house and many residents have come to him to complain. Dr. Gardner expressed the importance of the subject matter being addressed in favor of the agricultural community. Members of the community are coming to present to the Board of Supervisors against the use of biosolids in the next month.

Joy stated that she believes the lady that complained is most likely the same lady who messaged the fair committee about getting it stopped before the fair. Mr. Tinsley said the last two or three weeks he's ended up behind some of the bio-solids trucks and followed them out of curiosity and found that the trucks were being handled correctly.

Mr. Powers stated they might need to schedule some kind of work session to discuss with the board the importance of biosolids and the science behind their use. Dr. Gardner said the only issue that continues to be a problem is the odor. If there's a way for it to be de-odorized that would be the end of discussion on the topic. Dr. Gardner stated that most compounds nutritive to soils are usually odiferous and that scientifically speaking there is no health risk or environmental risk if the correct procedures are followed.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers had nothing new to report.

(9) Other Business

A. BOS Resolution for J.D. Scott

Mr. Powers stated they the Ag board voted last month to have the Board of Supervisors pass a resolution to honor J.D. Scott. Mr. Baker kindly drafted this resolution for the ag board and it is being presented at the next Board of Supervisors meeting on July 13 at 7 p.m. Mr. Powers asked if anyone on the board knew his widow well enough to invite her. Mr. Baumgardner stated he would be willing to contact her. Mr. Powers encouraged ag board members to attend.

(10) Informational Items

(11) Adjournment

8:28 p.m.