



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
July 3, 2019 – 7:30 p.m.
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek Complex
1257 County Farm Road, Bedford, VA 24523

Present: Pete Fellers, Sam Gardner, Chuck Grove, Ken Newman, Jeff Powers

Absent: Matt Baumgardner, Beth Bays, Don Gardner, Ronnie Gross, Joy Powers, Lindsay Tomlinson, Pam Willoughby

Staff Present: Scott Baker, Traci Blido

Staff Absent: None

Transcriber: Julia Peters

Guests: Carolyn Fellers, Brandon Strosnider - Ag Teacher, Staunton River High School; John Graham - Graham Bass Farm

(1) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order and noted that a quorum was not obtained. He asked the attending members to review the July 3, 2019 agenda.

(2) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - June 5, 2019

Chairman Powers asked attending members to review the June 5, 2019 meeting minutes but said that without a quorum the minutes could not be approved. The minutes and/or amendments will be held for approval at the August meeting.

(3) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Mrs. Blido reported that the broadband meeting went very well and we received the money we asked for from the Tobacco Commission. The groundbreaking event at Big Island went well and Del. Kathy Byron attended and praised the County for its broadband work. By the end of this year we will have 10 new towers along with the two existing towers to provide a 12 tower

network for broadband service in the county. Comcast is continuing to build out 7,000 homes at Smith Mountain Lake and offering free ice cream at Scoops Ice Cream Parlor in Stewartsville. Mrs. Blido and Mr. Hiss have met with two prospects interested in the New London Business and Technology Center. We also received a \$30,000 grant through the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance (LRBA) to upgrade the Montvale Center for Commerce and work toward getting the due diligence done. She noted that good things are happening for Bedford County.

(4) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

Mr. Baker reported that the next weaned and vaccinated feeder calf sale is scheduled for July 19, 2019, at Springlake Stockyard. The sale starts at 5:30 p.m. and they have had a good response and he will report about it at the next meeting. The 15 applications for the current Tobacco Commission grant were reviewed and we had 10 approved and the remaining five are on a waiting list. First-time applicants get priority and nine or 10 of our applicants were first-timers which shows we are getting new participants in the grant program. Last meeting we talked about the vegetation management program along fence rows. Data from the Soil and Water Conservation District shows in the past seven years, 242 miles have been fenced out, which is a large amount to maintain. If the Ag Board decides to pursue some sort of cost share assistance program to help with vegetation management in fence row areas, we would have some strong numbers to support the effort. He will try to get some paperwork/information from Wytheville that could be used as a guideline and share the information at the August Ag Board meeting.

4-H Camp starts in a couple weeks.

(5) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMER'S REPORT

Sam Gardner said they are looking at different trips and the national meeting will be in Charleston, SC in February 2020 and they hope to organize a group to attend. They are wrapping up the cookbook to make it available for sale in late summer/early fall around the time of the county fair. Samantha Holdren gave her FFA State Convention practice speech on the blight on American citrus trees to the meeting attendees and she did very well. She finished fourth at the State Convention.

(6) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming Events

The Virginia Cattleman's event is on Friday. Horse and Hound event is next Saturday. The Ruritans will be hosting an FFA Pasta Dinner that same Saturday from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The Peach Festival is the fourth Saturday of July.

2. County Fair update

Carolyn Fellers said a new website is being set up. They will be e-mailing the fair rule book out to last year's participants and have added some new contests. Overall, everything is moving along.

3. School Ag Programs Update

Mr. Strosnider reported that approximately 50 students went to Virginia Tech for the State Convention, where everyone competed very well. Smith Mountain alone had eight out of the nine qualifying teams among the top five in the State. Liberty had a state winning science team and placed fourth in livestock. Fifteen students received their state degrees and Ethan Jackson retired as State President. Mr. Strosnider will be taking 10-12 students to FFA Leadership Camp next week. All teaching positions are filled now. Mrs. Blido suggested a press release about increased interest in the school ag program and its growth which she can then share with others and would give the program good exposure.

b. Marketing & Production

1. Farmer's Market Update

Ms. McIntyre and Ms. Witt emailed summary reports of their Farmers' Markets to the Ag Board members.

Chairman Powers noted that there is no longer a Tuesday afternoon market in Bedford due to lack of participation.

2. Coyote Lottery Update

Nothing new to report.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Nothing new to report.

(7) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Chairman Powers approached Kubota about a billboard ad regarding a farm safety message in partnership with the Farm Bureau and hopefully they will go nationwide with it. He will keep the Ag Board members posted on any progress.

Mr. Baker was contacted by Legacy International, a non-profit organization that is bringing a group of high school age ag leadership students and adult chaperones from Turkey to our area. They will be here for the last two weeks in July and are looking for educational opportunities. He had suggested they go to Virginia Tech, but if anyone knows of any opportunities for them,

notify Mr. Baker. Mrs. Blido suggested the Peach Festival and the D-Day Memorial. Mr. Strosnider said the Virginia Agriculture Association's Teachers' Conference is being held in Roanoke the week of July 22 and will have workshops and farm tours which may interest them.

(8) ADJOURNMENT

8:00 p.m.