



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
June 1, 2016 – 7:30 p.m.

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board:

:Present:

Jeffrey Powers, Ken Palmer, Ken Newman, W.P. Johnson, Pam Willoughby, Lindsay Tomlinson, Chuck Grove, Pete Fellers

:Absent: Ronnie Gross, Matt Baumgardner, Don Gardner, Keith Tuck

Staff Present: Scott Baker, Jessica Hupp, Traci Blido

Staff Absent: Carl Boggess

:Guests: John Graham, Gabrielle Miller

(1) Approval of Agenda

Jeff Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the June 1, 2016 agenda.

A motion and a second were made to approve the June 1, 2016 agenda, as presented.

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 4, 2016

Mr. Powers asked for a review of the May 4, 2016 meeting minutes.

A motion and a second were made to approve the May 4, 2016 meeting minutes, as presented.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) County Administrator's Report

Mr. Boggess was not in attendance. Mrs. Blido reported that Mr. Boggess asked for her to pass around a printed report. The report stated the county has hired a new Assistant County Administrator, Reid Wodicka.

Wodicka formerly served as Town Manager of Woodstock, and previous to that as Town Manager of Elkton, so he seems to have some ag background. Mrs. Blido stated that Mr. Wodicka will not start until August 1, but she is sure the Ag Board will be meeting him soon.

Mrs. Blido reported that the county has also hired a new IT Director that will be announced soon. He has worked mostly on the private sector side running his own company.

(4) Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido stated she would like to encourage board members to take the broadband survey on our Facebook page. The governor's office is canvassing Virginia to see what areas have broadband, what areas don't, and satisfaction with existing service. To take the survey, visit RUonline.virginia.gov or go to BedfordEconomicDevelopment.com to click the link.

Mrs. Blido reported that her office has been actively engaging UK and German companies that are looking for where they can locate in the U.S. Staff has also been showing site selectors around the region who have prospects looking to relocate.

Mrs. Blido stated the county received a Tobacco Commission grant this month to help establish a cyber security firm that will be located at the CAER. This company will work with energy companies on the new Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) cyber security requirements and offer credentialing and other member services to its clientele.

(5) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Baker introduced Gabrielle Miller who will be the new Extension Office intern this summer. Gabrielle graduated in December with a bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech in Animal Science. Gabrielle plans to pursue agriculture as a career, specifically in Cooperative Extension. She will be here until the end of July, and they have already met with W.P. to target the Young Farmer's age group. Mr. Baker stated he appreciates any opportunity that may present itself for her to visit some of the Ag Board member's farms.

Mr. Baker reported that they do still have money available through the Tobacco Commission for a cost share program which can cover creep feeders, hay wrappers, mix wagons, and cold storage units. It seems like most interest is in creep feeders. Mr. Baker stated there should be enough money for each county to do around six projects.

Mr. Baker reported that they recently completed the Central Virginia Livestock Show. They had a really great show this year, which was the 36th year. Mr. Baker stated they had the most market hogs they've ever had (36). In 2010, there were only 14. They added guilds for the first time this year, with 5 total. Mr. Baker stated the market sale broke all history's records with \$94,545. Last

year was the previous record at \$85,000. The animals in general brought in some pretty good money for the kids.

Mr. Baker stated that the Bedford contingent did very well, as they had the grand champion market hog, reserve champion market hog, grand champion market lamb, grand champion ewe lamb, both guilds and a heifer. The students obviously worked very hard and were rewarded. Mr. Baker stated this show wouldn't be possible without lots of help from businesses and individuals.

Mr. Powers stated Scott and all other extension agents in the area need to be commended for their hard work. Mr. Powers stated there was an issue with the animal carcasses, and Green Valley really stepped up to help process animals because Peaks had encountered some facility issues. Green Valley had to have workers work over, and reschedule all of his customers for that week to make it happen. They definitely went above and beyond to help.

Mr. Baker stated that each state is expected to develop a pollinator protection plan. There is now a draft out for Virginia. There is an advisory group the state has put together and they will make recommendations for the plan. At least some of our extension people will be there. The plan is a voluntary one, with recommendations about spraying and so on. Mr. Palmer asked if there is a requirement in Virginia to be certified as a beekeeper. Mr. Baker reported he knows that VDACS has investigators for pesticide usage and can also inspect hives if there may be infection, but he can't say for certain about needing certification.

(6) Tourism Report

Mr. Powers reported that most people know by now that Jerry is no longer with the County. Mr. Powers stated he received an email from Mr. Boggess a week after our last meeting that he had been terminated. Mr. Powers stated he felt from an agriculture standpoint, Jerry was the best they ever had because he is the only one that showed up for a meeting. Mr. Powers stated his challenge to Mr. Boggess and the Board of Supervisors is that whoever is considered as the next Tourism Director should have knowledge and interest in agriculture, and would like to be included in the process.

(7) FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

Mr. Johnson reported he was very impressed by the Central Virginia Livestock Show. Farm Bureau is planning a meeting that will include the Sheriff's Department to discuss gun laws. Mr. Johnson stated they are planning a trip on August 12-13 to the Eastern Shore to see hogs, oysters, clams, and green beans, and also a trip to Chincoteague to see the ponies and potentially potatoes and tomatoes.

(8) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

(1) Upcoming Events

a. Bedford County Fair update

Mr. Powers said there is a fair committee meeting next Tuesday. He stated that Holly has indicated that money is coming in at a nice rate, and that vendors are coming in, but not as quickly as we thought. They still have a lot of verbal commitments that just need paper work to come in. Mr. Palmer verified that a chainsaw carving man will be at the fair and that Merle Hickman from David James Homes will have some tractors there. Mr. Powers stated they should have more reports after next week.

b. Middle school Ag program update

Mr. Powers stated there will not be a middle school ag program next year, however we still have people's attention. The Board of Supervisors is not very happy about it. Dr. Whitehurst has been very open with Jeff and stated that sometime after the school year starts she will put together a task force to get middle school ag at the middle school by the following school year, and hopefully in every middle school in the county eventually. So far, the task force will include Dr. Whitehurst, Dr. Dills, Lindsay Tomlinson, Andy Dooley and Jeff Powers.

Ms. Tomlinson stated that the reason for not moving forward with the ag program was due to student numbers. Mr. Powers stated that his understanding previously was that they only had 50 students signed up, but it was actually capped at 50 so who knows how many kids would have signed up.

Ms. Tomlinson reported that what they mean with numbers being low is that there is a lower number of incoming freshman, and lower number of overall kids. Ms. Tomlinson believes a huge portion of that is because more and more kids are becoming homeschooled, and a huge chunk of homeschooled kids have a farm background, so adding an ag program may be more appealing to those families, and could increase enrollment numbers. Ms. Tomlinson stated they had several students transfer from JF to Liberty this year because they want to be in FFA.

Ms. Tomlinson stated that they are having a 21st Century Ag Summer Camp the week of June 13-16 for LHS and Staunton River kids. During those days they will be going to Virginia Tech, touring a feed mill in Vinton, and a couple other things. She is hoping for 10-15 kids for the camp. Ms. Tomlinson stated if they need someone to coordinate an ag expo for the fair, she can do that, she just needs to know who the right person is to sit down and talk to.

b. Marketing & Production

(1) Farmers Markets

Mr. Graham reported that the Friday market in downtown Bedford is doing very well, but the Tuesday evening one is still struggling a bit. The Forest Farmers Market is doing very well.

They've had a lot of weather issues in May, but last weekend's market was packed even with all the graduations going on.

Mr. Baker stated Food Truck Friday has been hugely successful in drawing people to the Friday Bedford market. Ms. Tomlinson stated that the Farm Bureau's Women's Group will be at both markets Friday and Saturday to celebrate dairy month.

Mr. Powers reported that Josiah was here last month, and since then Mr. Baker has shared a link from Fairfax County which has a type of livestock ordinance that could be a good start. Mr. Powers would like to invite Josiah back next month to get some further input from him after he reads the Fairfax ordinance.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

1. Farm Transition Workshop update

Mr. Fellers stated that the workshop plans are going pretty smoothly. Anne Green is officially on board to do some of the presenting and the agenda is set. The rest of the agenda will be covered by the farm business management person they've hired and another attorney. There will be a slight fee to participate in order to help cover lunches. The date is tentatively scheduled for Monday, Nov. 14 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Bedford CVCC.

(9) Other Business

Ms. Tomlinson stated that on June 18 at Southern States from 8 - 10:30 a.m. students will be hosting a Bluegrass Breakfast to raise money to go to states and national convention. They hosted one last year where they made pancakes and some breakfast meats and it turned out to be a really nice time. Ms. Tomlinson stated they have 17 Liberty FFA kids actively competing in states this year.

Mr. Johnson stated that Governor McAuliffe has asked every state to make a storm water management plan by the end of his term. The Planning Commission currently has it, but those familiar with the plan know it could have a drastic impact on agricultural practices. Mr. Johnson would like the Ag Board to have some input to that draft such as a re-read.

(10) Informational Items

Mr. Powers stated he will have a summer intern working at Powers Tractor this year.

Dorothy has asked the 4-H club to come to the Forest Farmers Market, so they are planning for August 6.

(11) Adjournment -8:28 p.m.