



**Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board**

June 3, 2015 – 7:30 p.m.

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board:

:Present:

Jeffrey Powers, Ken Palmer, Ken Newman , Pete Fellers, Pam Willoughby, Chuck Grove, Keith Tuck, Spencer Tinsley, Matt Baumgardner

:Absent: Ronnie Gross, Don Gardner, W.P. Johnson

Staff Present: Scott Baker, Jerry Craig, Jessica Hupp, Traci Blido, Carl Boggess

Staff Absent: None

(1) Approval of Agenda

Jeff Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the June 3, 2015 agenda.

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

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 6, 2015

Mr. Powers asked for a review of the May 6, 2015 meeting minutes.

Mr. Palmer stated on the third page, the vendor fees should be changed to \$75 for regular vendors and \$100 for food vendors.

A motion and a second were made to approve the meeting minutes of May 6, 2015, as amended.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) County Administrator's Report

Mr. Boggess stated there was nothing new to report.

(4) Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido stated the EDA will have a new District 7 representative as of this month. Kristy Milton was appointed by Tammy Parker, and is a real estate appraiser in Bedford. Mrs. Blido stated it would be good to have her expertise on the EDA since Raymond Sellers left in December and represented real estate. Mrs. Blido stated the EDA Planning Day will be on June 26, which will orient some of our new board members to recent EDA business and help set plans for the next fiscal year.

Mrs. Blido reported that Apocalypse Ale Works of Forest made the Top 10 list of Best Craft Breweries in Virginia this week out of almost 100 breweries in the state.

Mrs. Blido reported Economic Development's Business Appreciation event was held on May 26. From that event, it was communicated by our businesses there has been a lot of growth in our area. Mrs. Blido stated Ms. Hupp recently ran an ad in the Bedford Bulletin supporting this message, which showcased recent statistics including over 1,600 jobs created in Bedford County in the past year, over 200 new businesses created, and over 60,000 tourists visiting.

Mrs. Blido stated that Blue Ridge Optics recently bought the Longwood Industries building on route 122. They plan to invest in the building and make improvements and will also lease space in the facility for Longwood Industries to continue working in the building. Mrs. Blido also shared that NanoTouch Materials won a \$2 million Tobacco Commission R&D grant for further research and expansion on their proprietary products, which are adhesives placed on surfaces that prevent the spread of illness. These adhesives can be seen in our region, on the doors at our County schools, at the YMCA, and at other facilities.

(5) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Baker introduced Sara Jane Thompson, a junior from the University of Georgia studying Animal Science, who will be the extension office's summer intern. Sara's father works with our local Department of Forestry. Sara will be with the Extension Office through the end of July and will be teaching a class at 4-H camp on Agricultural Awareness.

Mr. Baker reported that the most recent Tobacco Grant held a second phase of sign-ups last month, and Bedford County managed to fill all of its spots. This grant will service at least four other projects in the county this year.

Mr. Baker reported they are two and a half weeks out from the beginning of 4-H Camp. One of the Extension Office's 4-H agents is currently on medical leave, but they continue to press on to get things done in time. Mr. Baker also stated their long-time Administrative Assistant will be retiring in July, and they hope to get her position refilled as soon as possible.

(6) Tourism Director's Report

Mr. Craig reported that the Equine Association has not met since his last report, but is scheduled to meet June 17 at 7 p.m. in the ground floor training room of the County Administration building.

Mr. Craig stated he has been working to line up contact information for the Fair wine garden and car show. Mr. Craig has also been lining up potential vendors, including the Sedalia Center, Department of Forestry, and Agri-Artisans. Mr. Craig is waiting on committee approval to move forward with his selections.

(7) Bedford County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Report

Mr. Powers stated that W.P. called him before the meeting to state he would be late. Mr. Baker stated Farm Bureau will be having a meeting tomorrow night about a product coming out of Georgia Pacific. Mr. Baker explained that the company with the contract is coming to a Young Farmers meeting to discuss what they plan to do with the product, and they're currently looking for land close to the plant for application.

(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 he recently got a visit from a resident of Bedford County who has known J.D. Scott for a long time, and asked if the Ag Board would see that the Board of Supervisors recognize J.D. Scott for all that he contributed to the community. Mr. Palmer made a motion to request that the Board of Supervisors recognize J.D. Scott. The board voted unanimously. Mr. Powers stated he would let Carl put the request on their agenda, but would contact Bill Thomasson himself.

Ms. Powers showed a PowerPoint presentation on the County Fair, showing the Bedford County Fair Facebook page and Bedford County Fair website. Mr. Powers pointed out that the logo was created by a local ad designer and stated that it was the committee's idea to shape the logo like the Bedford Grown logo. Mr. Powers stated he believes the logo is a good representation of what the County wanted and can be used for years to come.

Mrs. Blido asked how Ms. Powers managed to get so many likes so fast on the Fair's Facebook page. Ms. Powers said she shared the page with her friends first and they shared it with others, and they received over 1,000 likes by the end of the night. Mr. Powers said they are just now setting the schedule which will be posted on the website soon. The committee has been more

focused on getting sponsorships so that marketing materials can be created. Ms. Powers stated that more and more people are signing up on the webpage to receive the newsletter.

Ms. Powers reported that as soon as Ms. Hupp sent the press release out, multiple channels and magazines had contacted her to cover the story. Mr. Powers secured WSET as their coverage affiliate with a sponsorship spot. They will do a live broadcast from the fair during that weekend.

Ms. Powers stated the sponsor and vendor forms have been created and sent out and she encouraged board members to reach out to local businesses to acquire sponsorships. Mrs. Blido Virginia Fairs may be a good organization to contact as they sometimes provide sponsorships to events like this.

Ms. Powers stated that the Bedford County Sheriff's Department and Fire and Rescue have been very helpful in providing volunteers and safety coverage for the event. They will cover traffic going to and from the location, will have a first aid center set up, and provide additional assistance for parking cars.

Ms. Powers stated that the Roanoke Valley Horse Show Association volunteered to let the Bedford County Fair use their PA system.

Mr. Powers stated that John Graham offered at the last meeting to take on organizing a farmers market at the Fair. Ms. Powers stated there have been a lot of requests from different people for different types of events, including a County Pageant and wrestling tournament, however they don't want to attempt to take on too many events and let other events fall flat. Ms. Powers said that Staunton River High School is looking to send their first year ag students to the fair as a field trip.

Mr. Fellers asked if they needed volunteers. Ms. Powers stated she has been contacted by several different organizations willing to provide volunteers, but the committee still needs to decide exactly what volunteers will be needed for and how many will be needed for the duration of the event.

Mr. Powers stated he believes we will have a much larger crowd than expected. Mr. Powers stated that Franklin County had 6-7,000 attend their fair which was only a two day event. If Bedford County does as well, we should see around 10,000 people over the course of three days. Franklin County had a relatively small fair, but they won an award from the Virginia Fairs Association. Mr. Palmer stated they have a location advantage over us. Mrs. Blido asked if the committee had formed a budget, to which Ms. Powers responded that they haven't formed a budget yet, because all the expenses they've come across so far has been met with a donation of services or donation of funds. Joy stated that because this is a fair for the County put on by the County, they are depending heavily on County support to make this event happen and continue.

b. Marketing & Production

(1) Farmers Markets

Mr. Graham reported that the Bedford Community Market is this Saturday. The Community Market did well last month, and is primarily a family event held at the Centertown pavilion from 8 to noon. Mr. Graham stated the other markets are also going about their regular seasonal hours.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers stated there was nothing new to report.

(9) Other Business

(10) Informational Items

(11) Adjournment

8:28 p.m.