



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
June 5, 2019 – 7:30 p.m.
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek Complex
1257 County Farm Road, Bedford, VA 24523

Present: Don Gardner, Ronnie Gross, Ken Newman, Jeff Powers, Joy Powers, Pam Willoughby

Absent: Matt Baumgardner, Beth Bays, Pete Fellers, Sam Gardner, Chuck Grove, Lindsay Tomlinson

Staff Present: Pam Bailey, Scott Baker

Staff Absent: Traci Blido

Transcriber: Julia Peters

Guests: John Graham - Graham Bass Farm; Samantha Holdren - President, Bedford 4-H and Livestock Club and Smith Mountain FFA Chapter; Dorothy McIntyre - Forest Farmer's Market; Brandon Strosnider - Ag Teacher, Staunton River High School; David Wells, Candidate, Bedford Sheriff

(1) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the June 5, 2019 agenda. There were no objections.

A motion and a second were made to approve the June 5, 2019 agenda, as presented.

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - May 1, 2019

Chairman Powers asked for a review of the May 1, 2019 meeting minutes.

A motion and a second were made to approve the May 1, 2019 meeting minutes as presented.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Ms. Bailey reported in Mrs. Blido's absence. Mrs. Blido was attending the Tobacco Commission's meeting regarding funding of the county-wide rural broadband system. Ms. Bailey noted there will be a groundbreaking ceremony for the first tower on June 19 at 10:30 a.m. at Big Island Elementary. Mrs. Blido also participated in the Virginia Ag Development Officers' Group (VADO) meeting at Fort Pickett. She enjoyed learning more about forestry in Virginia and some new programs and saw a log loader and toured the whole process from logs to chips and boards. She learned that China was Virginia's largest buyer of logs and lumber, but due to higher tariffs, shipments have dropped by 60%. There have been some prospect visits in the county and we are awaiting Bobblett Gap's new building being constructed in Montvale. We have also been working on the new 40,000 square foot shell building in New London and the building permits have been signed off today and will be recorded tomorrow. Ms. Bailey reported she will be volunteering at the D-Day Memorial tomorrow for the 75th anniversary. She will be helping with social media, web updates and push alerts through their app. Lindsey Broman, Robert Hiss' summer intern will also be helping. The website will have details regarding parking and the shuttle. Once the gates are closed there will be no exiting until 1:30 p.m. due to security, since the Vice President is attending.

(4) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

Mr. Baker said we have completed the 39th year of the livestock show which was a successful event with many new first-time participants and exhibitors. Roanoke and Franklin County do not have a market animal sale while Bedford does. This gives Bedford an advantage as evident in the steady increase in the price of our market animals. Ms. Powers noted the high quality of our livestock. Many of the students invest their money back into their animals or save it for school or college. This year's intern is Rachel Burks, a graduate student from Virginia Tech who began this past Monday and will be introduced at an Ag Board meeting in the future. Discussion followed regarding the milk market in the country, school nutrition programs, and unpasteurized versus pasteurized milk. Mr. Baker also reported about a cost share program in Wythe County that assists producers in buying herbicides to help control invasive plants. This program has been well received and he wanted to make the Ag Board members aware to ascertain if Bedford should pursue something similar, since there are many miles of fence row in the county due to stream exclusion projects. Discussion followed regarding funding of such projects, their risks, and some new programs/opportunities currently available. Mr. Baker will get more information for the Ag Board's next meetings for review and possibly approve a resolution if the Ag Board is interested.

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

Chairman Powers reported that the Farm Bureau funded some billboards about farm safety. He would like to see a national program and will go to Kubota to see if he can get some co-op funding for farm safety advertising. The Farm Bureau has also awarded their scholarships to area seniors which included Andrew Tuck, Madison Overstreet, and Josh Powers.

(6) SPECIAL GUEST, SAMANTHA HOLDREN - President of the Bedford 4-H and Livestock Club and Smith Mountain FFA Chapter

Chairman Powers introduced Samantha Holdren, who won the area public speaking contest and would like to speak to the Ag Board as practice for her competition at the FFA State Convention. She completed an informative talk about an invasive blight on American citrus trees, answered questions, and received applause from the meeting attendees.

(7) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming Events

Nothing new to report.

2. County Fair update

The website is currently down due to switching servers and a Google form for public comment will be added to the site for feedback. Several competitions have been added and the demolition derby will occur Thursday instead of Friday. Sponsorships are still needed for some events.

3. School Ag Programs Update

Joy Powers reported that Liberty High School now has three full-time Ag teachers and the Staunton River positions are also filled. They continue to work on upgrading some 10-month contracts to 12-month contracts with a goal of at least one 12-month position per school. Fifty students are going to the FFA State Convention with Liberty and Staunton River sending several teams. Both schools are sending students to leadership camp this year. There has been a lot of success this year and growth in the school ag programs. There is also a growing interest and several requests for an affordable Artificial Insemination (AI) class opportunity for students. Discussion followed regarding the possibility/problems of holding such a class.

b. Marketing & Production

1. Farmer's Market Update

Ms. McIntyre reported that May was a very strong month, averaging 35 vendors. June is Dairy Month. She had a young vendor who sells plants and she completed an age-appropriate business plan and did very well on market day. The SNAP sales are up and a native plant sale is

scheduled. She receives three or four vendor calls per week and has veterans coming to sell t-shirts to support a veterans program.

Mr. Gross said the Bedford market is doing well. There have been 12-14 vendors and they will begin opening on Tuesday mornings starting next week. There will be a Peach Festival the last Saturday in July. There is a good crop of fruit this year, but plums have been damaged by a late cold snap and the bear population has damaged some cherries.

2. Coyote Lottery Update

Nothing new to report.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Nothing new to report.

(8) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

The Liberty FFA will have a float in the D-Day Anniversary parade planned for Saturday.

There will be an official open house and ribbon cutting for the new Cooperative Extension offices at the Falling Creek Complex on June 11 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The BSTC Culinary Program will begin using the commercial kitchen located at the Falling Creek Complex during their fall semester.

The Virginia Association of Agriculture Extension Agents are holding a raffle drawing for a new John Deere Gator. Proceeds support their national meeting in 2020 at Virginia Beach.

The Bedford Beef Producers and the Cooperative Extension will have an informational meeting at Terrell Mays' Farm on June 18 at 7:00 p.m. regarding participation in the value added cattle sales.

The Virginia Cattlemen's Association will be hosting an event on July 12 in Chatham.

New name placards will be made for the Ag Board members.

(9) ADJOURNMENT

9:08 p.m.