



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board

June 7, 2017 – 7:30 p.m.

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board:

:Present:

Jeffrey Powers, Don Gardner, Chuck Grove, Pete Fellers, Ken Newman, Sam Gardner, Pam Willoughby, Lindsay Tomlinson, Matt Baumgardner

:Absent: Beth Bays, Ronnie Gross

Staff Present: Traci Blido, Scott Baker

Staff Absent: Jessica Hupp, Reid Wodicka

:Guests: Joy Powers, Brent Wills, Tim Overstreet – BCPS Director of Instruction

(1) Approval of Agenda

Mr. Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the June 7, 2017 agenda.

A motion and a second were made to approve the June 7, 2017 agenda, as presented.

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 3 2017

Mr. Powers asked for a review of the May 3, 2017 meeting minutes. A motion and a second were made to approve the May 3, 2017 meeting minutes, as presented.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) Bedford County Public Schools guest – Tim Overstreet

Mr. Powers introduced Tim Overstreet, Director of Instruction for Bedford County Public Schools. Mr. Overstreet stated that both middle schools will offer Agri-science classes this upcoming school year, with 38 students currently enrolled at Bedford Middle, and 50 students enrolled at Staunton River Middle. The program will allow students to participate in FFA as

well. Lindsey will be teaching at Bedford, and Heather McAndrew will be teaching one course at Staunton River Middle, along with Dave Watts.

Mr. Overstreet reported that the numbers were higher when they first did sign ups in January, but the students can always change their mind as time progresses. With that being said, there are still two classes of 19, and a lot of excitement in both school zones. Mr. Overstreet stated they lost a veteran teacher at one of the schools this year (Diane Poole), so they are posting the job and beginning the interviewing process for that position. They need to find someone fully credentialed, but are at least aware of a former LHS student applying.

Mr. Overstreet reported that student numbers for agriculture classes at the high school are still full, and they can't put more than 20 students in each class. Dr. Fred Conner is no longer the CTE Director, as he has since moved to Human Resources. Tony Francis is now taking over that role and has been doing very well. They just received a Perkins Grant approved to support ag and other CTE courses. This grant will allow us to repair, replace, and add new machinery for those classes.

Dr. Gardner asked if the schools have made any provisions for a land lab or outside area for kids to work at the new middle school. Mr. Overstreet stated that there is a considerable amount of open space, but he's not in charge of facilities, so he will pass the idea along to operations for consideration.

Mr. Powers asked if there was any interest in hiring an additional person for agriculture classes. Mr. Overstreet stated that staffing standards were sent to the Board of Supervisors. Once the money was allocated, they had to cut certain aspects of original budget including staffing standards at the high schools. They did get more favorable staffing for the middle schools. When you're growing a program, staffing standards are created by the Department of Education. If you can show increased enrollment over time, you can get additional funding for those positions. That's how Spencer Blankenship's position was created at LHS.

Ms. Powers stated that fourth graders will be participating in the Bedford County Fair this year, and it correlates well to what they're being taught. Mr. Overstreet stated it is much easier with a universal age group. Ms. Powers stated they had overwhelmingly received positive feedback from students, teachers, and parents. She added that many students from the Forest district had never seen a cow up close before, and they loved it.

Dr. Gardner stated that it seems like the decision on what classes are offered occurs really late in the school year. Mr. Overstreet stated that unfortunately they create curriculum before the budget is approved, and it can be approved late. Once the schools realize they are receiving less money than requested, they have to cut programs and staff because of a late budget based on student enrollment.

(4) County Administration Report

Mr. Wodicka was not in attendance. Mrs. Blido stated tomorrow there is a broadband advisory committee meeting discussing who to choose for the engineering consulting company to create a broadband plan for the County.

(5) Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido reported tomorrow is the Business Appreciation event, which has 130 people signed up to attend. Beale's is not yet open, but there's already a lot of interest. Staff expects it to be open in another two weeks. They will be selling their Beale's Gold lager and food from Chef Jared Srcic, who is also chef at Town Kitchen Provisions and Millstone Tea Room. So far, the brewery and restaurant has hired 22 people.

Mrs. Blido stated that staff had several tours last month, including one from VEDP who brought 30 people to the region to tour both our County's breweries, Simplimatic, and other business assets. The following day, we also had a group of four magazine manufacturing writers taking tours of industry in order to write articles about our business assets in the region.

Last week in South Boston, Microsoft and Mid-Atlantic Broadband announced they are bringing free internet service to school students in Halifax and Charlotte County. The company that provides the white space equipment for that project will be locating to Bedford County to create an east coast location and test site at the CAER in the near future.

Liberty University, which bought the CAER building and Lot 1, will be building a 30,000 square foot education facility to fill out the original master plan on that lot that was created by the EDA. In addition, Nanotouch is also building on Lot 3A and staff just received a Tobacco Commission grant for Lot 3B in order to grade that lot for future prospects. The EDA is also getting ready to sell a lot in Montvale, which will be determined by a Board vote in a few weeks to approve a Special Use Permit.

(6) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Baker reported that the 37th Livestock show went very well. There was a great showing from all the kids, and certainly from the 16 from Bedford County. Among the 16, Bedford County took away the grand champ hog, reserve champion hog, champion lamb, and many other species. Mr. Baker stated this event would not be possible without all the volunteers in the community. The market sale generated just under \$95,000, which is the most market sales in the history of the event.

Ms. Powers stated they continue to be proud of the kids participation in the event, and they have great animals they put a lot of work into. The biggest show was the swine show on Friday, and everyone from Bedford County placed higher than any other locality in the region. There is a lot of interest now from parents and community members to put together a support co-op to raise money for helping the kids raise the animals.

Ms. Powers thanked those that helped support the lamb Josh was donating to raise money for a library in Malawi.

(7) Bedford County Farm Bureau Young Farmer's Report

Mr. Gardner stated they hosted the legislative tour, which went well but didn't have as big of a crowd as they expected. Delegates Garrett, Byron, and Sutterline were in attendance. Overall, it was well received and they received a lot of positive feedback. Mr. Gardner stated they discussed having to cross small bridges with farm equipment, which the Delegate stated rescue services have also had trouble with, so it is appropriate to take on that cause together. Dr. Gardner stated Delegate Garrett put together a meeting with Senator Newman and three Virginia Department of Transportation directors out of Salem to go over agricultural issues of small bridges. It was a very productive discussion and they were surprised to hear how big of an issue it was.

Mr. Baumgardner stated the Farm Bureau had a dinner meeting for Tracy Zimmerman, who is retiring from Farm Bureau after 30 years of service.

(8) Committee Reports

a. Education & Events

(1) Upcoming Events

Mr. Baumgardner reported that Virginia Tech is having a farm tour for the first 200 people that sign up. Mr. Powers stated that the Young Farmers nominated Joy again this year for the Agriculture Excellence Award. Mr. Gardner stated that Farm Bureau would be hosting a Summer Expo in Roanoke this year, where they will have a panel of the governor's candidates to answer questions related to ag. This will be a good opportunity to see your candidates up close and personal on July 28-30.

(2) County Fair update

Ms. Powers reported she had a productive conversation with Liberty University about supporting the pageant. They will create a promotion for staff and students to promote the fair throughout all their media outlets. The fair theme this year is "Let the Good Times Grow". Plans are moving forward smoothly, and several demos have been lined up for kids coming to the fair. There will be cooking demonstrations every day. The fair will be held September 28 - October 1.

Ms. Powers stated they are about to launch the competition books. This year, they invested in software that would do automatic entries with barcodes, which will make everything much easier. It will also allow kids to do online registration for livestock shows. The fair will have a one-day antique equipment show this year. The Roanoke Valley Antique Automotive Club will help run it for the fair this year, and the antique tractor and engine show will be on Sunday near the livestock tent.

(3) Middle School Ag Program Update

Ms. Tomlinson stated she put together a pacing guide for the new eighth grade class, Agri-Science and Technology. This year during her planning period she will go to Bedford Middle School to instruct this class.

Ms. Tomlinson stated she did a little homework on what can be done to help. The schools can't hire a teacher until they have more than one class to be taught. This year, she plans to propose that they offer 6th graders "Intro to Agri-Science" and 7th graders "Agri-Science Exploration." Ms. Tomlinson believes we need to have those classes going in order to get another teacher. In October when the schools start asking for changes, she will ask that they add the 7th grade level class.

b. Marketing & Production

(1) Farmers Markets

Mr. Baumgardner stated that Virginia farmers can now apply for tax credits for any donated food they give after selling at a farmers market. You have to go online to get the paperwork.

Mr. Baker had no news on the market. Mr. Powers suggested inviting Jana Fedele to talk to the Ag Board about what she's been doing at the Bedford Market. Mrs. Blido stated we should invite Dorothy McIntyre from the Forest Farmers Market as well.

(2) Coyote Lottery

Dr. Gardner said he did not have any numbers to report on.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers stated the new subdivision off 221 has been approved.

(9) Informational Items

No news to report.

(10) Adjournment

-8:48 p.m.