



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board

March 7, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.

Present: Jeff Powers, Joy Powers, Pete Fellers, Ken Newman, Don Gardner, Sam Gardner, Matt Baumgardner

Absent: Chuck Grove, Pam Willoughby, Lindsay Tomlinson, Ronnie Gross, Beth Bays

Staff Present: Traci Blido, Reid Wodicka, Scott Baker

Staff Absent: Pam Bailey

Transcriber: Julia Peters

Guest: John Graham, Gregg Zody - Director of Community Development, Kyra Thompson - Liberty University Student

(1) Approval of Agenda

Mr. Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the March 7, 2018 agenda. There were no objections.

A motion and a second were made to approve the March 7, 2018 agenda, as presented.

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes - February 7, 2018

Mr. Powers asked for a review of the February 7, 2018 meeting minutes.

A motion and a second were made to approve the February 7, 2018 meeting minutes as presented.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) Special Appearance

- a. **Gregg Zody to discuss solar farms**

Mr. Zody requested input from the Ag Board members regarding a special use permit for solar farms. He asked for general opinions of impact to farmers for small, middle or large scale operations. Discussion followed regarding loss of pasture and land use taxation. Also discussed was the negative impact on neighbors, size of the farm and protection of land value. Mr. Zody stated he can come to next month's Ag Board meeting with a possible draft of the zoning ordinance.

(4) County Administration Report

Mr. Wodicka reported that county staff are developing the annual budget. This is a tough budget year with less revenue growth. Broadband hired an engineer to design a county wide broadband network which is in its fourth draft and is close to being done. The county would construct nine towers throughout the county. The total price tag for this project is \$3.5 million and they have budgeted \$1.5 million for next year and will be asking the Tobacco Commission for the other half of the money to continue the project. They are making progress and will possibly have completion by 2020. The broadband advisory committee will be meeting tomorrow and they hope to have a report ready for the Board of Supervisors soon.

(5) Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido reported on the announcement for Innovairre with two more company announcements coming. The staff have been heavily involved in workforce development for companies that are expanding. Go Virginia has brought some funding to our workforce investment board which will give some training monies to Bedford county companies. LU's CERE just received \$300,000 from Go Virginia to do some training at their Engineering School in New London. Mrs. Blido and Ms. Powers attended the Governor's Ag Trade Conference. Ms. Powers said the Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agriculture Affairs at USDA, Ted McKenney, was there and spoke about how this administration pulled out of TPP, but now that they have reworked it, we may be interested in getting back into TPP, but there would have to be more negotiations. The ambassadors from Mexico and Canada attended and spoke about NAFTA. The ambassadors said that NAFTA was good for American farmers and they appreciate farmers speaking out for other farmers. The American Farm Bureau noted that this will be a low year for farm income. The economic development office sponsored a student so Ethan Jackson was able to attend the conference as well. It was an interesting conference and we will see how these trade agreements go. Mrs. Blido stated that the guidance counselor farm tour had to be cancelled due to the changed school schedule, but will be rescheduled for another date. She thanked Sam Gardner and Ken Newman for volunteering for this tour. Business Appreciation Week is coming up in May. If anyone knows of an ag business that should be recognized, please let Mrs. Blido know.

(6) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Baker stated that on February 20 there was a public meeting for area cattle producers at Springlake Stockyard. Dr. Bain Wilson from Virginia Tech spoke about vaccine management. The meeting was an effort to advocate and grow the cooperative cattle marketing program and served as a sign-up for the local beef cattle producers association. The meeting had a good turnout of approximately 90 people. July 28 and September 14 are the upcoming dates for cattle sales. The steering committee working on the CVCC career certificate will meet a week from Friday to finalize the survey that will be sent to employers that could employ people in an ag capacity. The survey should be short and internet-based so hopefully we will get a positive response to move forward. The career certificates are one year programs so dual enrollment would be possible, hopefully beginning in the 2019 school year. The new beekeeper association meetings in the county have been very well attended. The beehive grant program has been reinstated and refunded by the House and Senate and should be available again this year.

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

Mr. Sam Gardner had nothing new to report for Young Farmer's. He said the Women's Committee gave out 500 greenhouse packets to elementary school students. The theme was bee education. Mr. Baumgardner reported that the Beales' meeting was well received. The Farm Bureau will have a March 26 meeting at 7:00 pm for its members in the Training Room of the County Administration Building. The theme will be "What is your issue?" He encouraged all Farm Bureau members to attend. Ms. Powers stated that four people attended the Young Farmer Expo at Natural Bridge.

(8) Committee Reports

a. Education & Events

(1) Upcoming Events

Both FFA chapters will be participating in Ag Literacy Week. The students are competing in dairy judging in Rustburg on the 29th and Liberty has a cattle working team that is going to a regional cattle working contest. CVLS, the local livestock show, is coming up on May 5.

(2) County Fair update

The county fair is set for the last week of September. Curry Martin has worked on property remodeling and added two acres of usable land to the fairgrounds. Old McDonald's Farm and a circus have been scheduled for this year.

(3) School Ag Programs Update

Ms. Powers reported that the Bedford team won for the first time at the Block and Bridle - livestock judging competition. There were about 50 teams in the senior advance category and both Liberty and Staunton River students worked together on the team. The younger team of freshman finished sixth place. Clay Jackson is 10 years old and competed as freshman and won

the whole junior swine division. Four other students competed in the regular junior contest. Sam and Norah Ackenhead and John and Erin McGuire finished sixth in their contest.

Middle school ag was not being mentioned in the superintendent's reports. The Ag Board will want to make sure the Board of Supervisors are aware before any budget cuts are made since they were adamant about wanting these programs. The Assistant Principal of Bedford Middle School asked Ms. Tomlinson to look at the new plans of ag classrooms at the new school.

Staunton River and Liberty students were at Block and Bridle participating in horse judging and did very well. FFA member Kaylee Green attended the Teen Excellence In Leadership Institute. The state FFA officers do a goodwill tour every year and they toured Liberty High School. They had a national officer with them so it was a great opportunity for the students to interact with a national officer.

b. Marketing & Production

(1) Farmer's Market Update

John Graham stated there will be an indoor market this Saturday from 8:00 am to 12 noon in Forest. The Bedford Farmer's Market is developing an on-line store offering all local products. The first meeting was last week with the software developers. The customer would log in, place an order and pay on-line and pick up the products on Tuesday at the Bedford Farmer's Market. They hope to have this available this market season.

(2) Coyote Lottery Update

Dr. Gardner said there were 86 coyotes checked in this year. Some people have killed more, but did not check them all in. There is over \$3,000 in the account and Dr. Gardner suggested a \$1,000 grand prize with four \$500 prizes as an incentive for people to check in all coyotes and also generate more interest. He also suggested running the lottery from the beginning of hunting season in the fall through March 1, since people for whatever reason, do not shoot them in the summertime. Mr. Baumgardner suggested that you could spread the prizes further with one \$1,000 grand prize, two \$500 prizes and ten \$100 prizes.

A motion and a second were made to have the prize drawing on Saturday with one \$1,000 grand prize and four \$500 prizes. Discussion followed and a motion to amend and a second were made to change the cash awards to one \$1,000 prize, two \$500 prizes and four \$250 prizes.

Adopted Unanimously as amended

Mrs. Blido will post the names of the winners on the Economic Development webpage under Ag News.

(3) Bedford County Code for dogs killing livestock review

The Board of Supervisors asked the Ag Board to review the county ordinance regarding the killing or injuring of livestock or poultry. It only pertains to dogs that kill or injure, not to other

predators such as coyotes. To determine what killed the livestock may take a necropsy test which would cost \$100 and would require a trained individual with knowledge of kill effects. The \$100 fee may also be more than the killed animal is worth. Discussion continued about who is responsible for the compensation of the owner of the killed animal and what agency would make the determination. When the ordinance was originally written, there was not a problem with coyotes as we have today. No solution or consensus was made, but the issue will be discussed further as local and state agencies are contacted. The Board of Supervisors will be notified that the Ag Board will continue discussion and readdress the ordinance at their next scheduled meeting.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers said the budget was cut due to the two pipelines and politicians. The pipeline companies put up a lot of money to both Virginia and North Carolina knowing land conservationists like the Virginia Outdoors Foundation would not get any of it.

(9) Informational Items

Mr. Powers said the annual report is scheduled to be given on March 12 at 7:00 pm. The rough draft is almost ready. The resolution for special recognition of Brandy Ferguson at Springlake Stockyard will also be presented.

An article highlighting Ken Newman and his operation was published in the March edition of the Southside Electric Cooperative magazine.

(10) ADJOURNMENT

8:54 pm