



**Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board**

March 1, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board:

:Present:

Jeffrey Powers, Ken Palmer, Don Gardner, Chuck Grove, Pete Fellers, Beth Bays, Ken Newman, Sam Gardner

:Absent: Ronnie Gross, Pam Willoughby, Lindsay Tomlinson, Matt Baumgardner

Staff Present: Traci Blido, Scott Baker, Jessica Hupp

Staff Absent: Reid Wodicka

:Guests: None

(1) Approval of Agenda

Jeff Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the March 1, 2017 agenda.

A motion and a second were made to approve the March 1, 2017 agenda, as presented.

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 1, 2017

Mr. Powers asked for a review of the February 1, 2017 meeting minutes. Mr. Palmer stated that under Upcoming Events it should read Maury High School. Mr. Fellers stated on page six it should read Krantz Corner. Mr. Baker stated that in the third paragraph of his report it should read the grant is also for wells. Mr. Baker stated that under the farmers market report, the livestock grader's name is Morgan not Harman.

A motion and a second were made to approve the February 1, 2017 meeting minutes, as amended.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) County Administration Report

Mr. Wodicka was not in attendance. Ms. Hupp stated he had a meeting in New London this evening about the Forest Fire Station. Mr. Wodicka stated he wants to get in touch with Mr. Powers to set a meeting for further strategic planning discussions.

(4) Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido reported she recently met with the new CEO of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Stephen Moret at the office of the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance. Mr. Moret wants to increase the number of jobs per year brought to Virginia, increase growth rates, wants Virginia to be back at the number one spot for business, and overall just seems like a really nice guy.

Mrs. Blido stated she has a prospect for Montvale this month, and hopes it moves forward as we'd all like to see activity there. Mrs. Blido reported staff is still working through the LU and CAER New London deal, with the County's top priority being the existing tenants and keeping them in Bedford County.

Mrs. Blido reported that she attended the Women in Economic Development Network's annual conference with Jessica which gave them the opportunity to highlight the Bedford One Program.

Mrs. Blido stated she will be attending the Governor's Ag Trade Conference next week, and should have more to report on Virginia ag at the next meeting.

Dr. Gardner asked if anyone has an explanation for how the state's budget ended up in a shortfall. Mrs. Blido stated she thinks a lot of the shortfall has had to do with Virginia's economy being heavily dependent on government contracting, but feels that we've started to diversify and now we're seeing an increase in government contract work again.

(5) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Baker reported that there should be two grants Bedford is eligible for this Spring after meeting with the grant team on Monday. The 14-county grant for hay barns has been approved and they hope to begin meetings in May and take applications by June 1. This grant will be similar to others for a 33% rebate on eligible expenses of up to \$10,000. People can also apply for a cost share to put in a well for pastures they'd like to put in rotation.

Mr. Baker stated the second grant is a pilot project where farmers can apply to receive record keeping software like Quickbooks or CattlePro, or get an up to date laptop. Applications will likely be taken in April.

Mr. Baker stated he talked to the livestock grader, and plans to do an interest meeting in late March to see what people think of co-mingling cooperative marketing. There have been some farmers that have done it before, but there are several different ways of doing it. Mr. Baker stated the first sale would likely occur between mid-July and early August if they can get it together in

time. Mrs. Blido asked how it works. Mr. Baker explained they utilize a telephone auction system that allows people to bid. It has worked well in the past, and sometimes has gotten up to \$75 more per head than going to the livestock market.

Mr. Baker reported that the General Assembly finally passed its budget, and the proposed \$2 million cut for Extension is no longer the case.

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

Mr. Sam Gardner reported they just finished up the gun raffle. They have not set a hard date on the legislative meeting and tours, and are waiting to see what days will work for the representatives. The first proposed date conflicted with CVLS. Mrs. Bays stated some of them plan to go to Richmond to visit the Capitol and agriculture in the area around mid-August. A few from Farm Bureau are also going Saturday to meet up with Orange County to help them establish their Young Farmers group. Mrs. Bays stated they'll be cooking burgers at Turner's Dairy if anyone wants to come by next Thursday evening.

Mr. Powers reported that Beth Bays was recognized by the Virginia Farm Bureau in a feature story on their Facebook page.

(7) Committee Reports

a. Education & Events

(1) Upcoming Events

Mr. Palmer said the Beck's are hosting the Olde Liberty Fibre Faire on April 22, and they're expecting it to be bigger than last year. Mr. Powers received an email to attend their planning meeting, and unfortunately he can't attend, but he will send the email out in case anyone on the board wants to attend.

(2) County Fair update

Mr. Powers stated they had a fair committee meeting about a month ago, and since have scheduled a meeting with David Levine with the Roanoke Valley Horseman's Association about what they can do and bring to the fair. Mr. Powers said Dave is going to try to do a more educational type display at the fair to get kids interested in equine.

Mr. Powers reported there will also be racing pigs and racing goats at the fair this year. They're currently looking into the possibility of having fireworks on Saturday night. Mr. Powers stated one of the most exciting parts of the planning has been the pageant, since interest in it has exploded. Mr. Powers stated that our fair is now big enough with the LU sponsorship that our winner will be eligible for the Miss Virginia Pageant. Mr. Powers stated they plan to have gospel music on Sunday at the fair.

(3) Middle School Ag Program Update

Mr. Powers reported that things are moving forward, and he knows several individuals went and spoke to the School Board. The School Board went ahead and put it in the budget to have middle school ag for both Staunton River and Liberty. Staunton River's program will probably not happen as quickly as Liberty's, but it seems to be supported by all involved. Mr. Powers stated the Middle School program is a lot different than high school, since it's only one semester. They learn more about what ag is and they are prepared if they plan to take it in high school.

Mr. Palmer asked about the greenhouse project at Staunton River. Mr. Powers stated they ran into a lot of stumbling blocks. Dr. Gardner said every time someone picked out a spot, there were a million reasons why it couldn't be located there. They ended up putting it in a bad place and everything died. Mr. Powers stated that the program seems to have lost interest at the moment.

b. Marketing & Production

(1) Farmers Markets

Mr. Baker said they have hired someone to replace Paul Stern to manage the market this season. He will keep the board updated as he learns more.

(2) Coyote Lottery

Dr. Gardner stated as of today there have been very few checked in since the last meeting, which was 74. Dr. Gardner assumes about 80 total have been checked in for the season. Dr. Gardner said they will have the drawing on Saturday, and that he wants to get the winners together at Southern States and have John Barnhart come out there and do a story on the participants. The board discussed extending the coyote season.

Mr. Gardner made a motion to make the coyote lottery a year round event, with the discretion of Dr. Gardner and support of Southern States. Mr. Palmer seconded the motion. Board voted unanimously. Dr. Gardner will check in with Southern States to see if they're willing to support it year-round.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers stated he did not have anything to add. Mr. Powers stated that Ward Burton was coming to Powers Tractor tomorrow to talk and pick each other's brains. Mr. Burton's board needs some sponsorship from Kobota and he's going to see what going on with his foundation.

(8) Informational Items

Mr. Baker stated that March 21 is National Ag Day. Mr. Powers said that's the day where FFA and 4-H students usually go to the elementary schools and read books to students on agriculture.

Mr. Powers stated that Liberty FFA has been really active the past month, as they hosted the federation contest. All the schools had winners in competitions like small engines, tractor trouble shooting, and so on. Ms. Tomlinson took a team to the Stockman's contest last Friday,

but Mr. Powers hasn't heard any results yet. Joy also took a group to a judging contest, and the four same young men who won from the federation contest placed in judging as well.

Mrs. Bays said Huddleston Elementary put in a 21st Century grant to create an ag component in their math and science curriculum, so she's going to go in to help show how math is used in farming.

Dr. Gardner asked what ever happened with the zoning ordinance. Mr. Powers said Josiah hasn't gotten back to him yet, and that he will follow up.

Ms. Hupp stated she'd been working on the ag brochure and to let her know if they have any changes or suggestions. The board decided to keep the meeting time at 7 p.m. for April.

(9) Adjournment

-7:43 p.m.