



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
May 1, 2019 – 7:30 p.m.
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek Complex
1257 County Farm Road, Bedford, VA 24523

Present: Matt Baumgardner, Pete Fellers, Chuck Grove, Ken Newman, Jeff Powers, Joy Powers, Lindsay Tomlinson, Pam Willoughby

Absent: Beth Bays, Ronnie Gross, Don Gardner, Sam Gardner

Staff Present: Scott Baker, Sheldon Cash, Robert Hiss

Staff Absent: Traci Blido

Transcriber: Julia Peters

Guests: John Graham - Graham Bass Farm; Dorothy McIntyre - Forest Farmer's Market; Brandon Strosnider - Ag Teacher, Staunton River High School; Tamara Witt - Bedford Farmer's Market

(1) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the May 1, 2019 agenda. There were no objections.

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

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - April 3, 2019

Chairman Powers asked for a review of the April 3, 2019 meeting minutes.

A motion and a second were made to approve the April 3, 2019 meeting minutes as presented.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Mrs. Blido was unable to attend and sent an e-mail of her report to the Ag Board Chairman which Ms. Powers read aloud. Mrs. Blido has a VDACS AFID grant she is working on and hopefully can report on it in a month. She put \$1,500 into the EDA yearly budget for the Ag Board to use to attend conferences or events. She hopes to have Ag representatives attend a couple of the state events this coming fiscal year and she will have some ideas to present to the Ag Board at the next meeting. She will be attending the Virginia Agricultural Directors/Officers meeting in Blackstone on May 23. With Forestry 101, Mrs. Blido will tour a state-of-the art sawmill, ArborTech, and hear from Secretary of Agriculture Bettina Ring and State Forester Rob Farrell regarding the state of the forestry industry in Virginia, what resources are available for local governments and landowners, and ways to support and grow agriculture locally. She will also learn about Orange County's forestry pilot program protecting water quality and connecting forest landowners to the carbon credit market. She also invited Mr. Baker to attend if he is available.

(4) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

Mr. Baker reported that last week he sent the updated census to the Ag Board members. The census is done every five years. He has received the final details regarding the Tobacco Commission grant. Informational meetings will be held in May and once the informational meeting has been attended, an application will be available. Applications will be accepted in his office beginning Monday, June 10. This grant will cover hay barns, grain bins, feed bins, cold storage, and some production and processing equipment. The grant funds will be split evenly between the 14 southside counties and based on the many inquiries he has received, there will be a waiting list. The livestock show is this weekend on Friday and Saturday at the Lynchburg Livestock Market. There are six Bedford 4-H students showing and nine Liberty High School students. There will be seven lambs, five hogs, and four steer for market from Bedford county and available for purchase if anyone is interested in buying locally grown meat. The dinner is on Saturday at 6:00 p.m. and the auction begins at 7:00 p.m.

County Administrator, Robert Hiss, reported that the .50 cent real estate tax rate was passed by the Board of Supervisors. Staff are still working on the budget to be passed in June. The broadband project is in progress and moving quickly and internet service should be delivered to our citizens by the end of the calendar year. They hope to have a groundbreaking ceremony some time in June when they begin building the towers. Comcast is ahead of schedule at Smith Mountain Lake and internet access should be available there by the end of the year as well.

(5) RED BARN UPDATE - Sheldon Cash, Public Works Director

Mr. Cash said \$50,000 was previously set aside by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for renovating the barn but it is not enough. This past budget year another \$30,000 was set aside,

giving them \$80,000 total. The biggest concern is to weatherproof the barn so it doesn't deteriorate further. There is lead in the paint and roof. Asbestos has also been found in the roof and the removal of the lead and asbestos complicates the painting and disposal processes and involves extra costs which will likely exceed the \$80,000. The BOS has asked staff to figure the cost of restoring the 10 original to be restored. They will be going back to the BOS for approval on whether to restore or side over the rotted windows. The barn was built in 1936 and is a two-level 30' x 70' structure. Betty Gereau the local historian, says it is not a Sears barn and the Virginia Tech report from 2008 also questions if it is a Sears barn as some people have suggested. Price Buildings is experienced in restoration and renovation and they have been selected to complete the barn restorations. The roof is actually in fairly good shape other than the asbestos being present. They are only dealing with stabilization of the barn at this point and not ready to consider usage yet. Mr. Cash will provide regular updates to the Ag Board as work progresses.

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

Mr. Baumgardner said the Bedford Farm Bureau meeting is next Tuesday. The Young Farmers are still looking for recipes for their cookbook. Jessie Turner from the Farm Service Agency is the contact person if anyone has favorite recipes to share.

(7) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming Events

Ms. Tomlinson stated the Central Virginia Livestock Show is gearing up. The Smith Mountain FFA had an excellent banquet and Liberty will have their banquet on May 15. Both chapters are getting ready for State Convention and Leadership Camp in the summer.

2. County Fair update

Ms. Powers said sponsors and vendors are being accepted. The demolition derby has been moved to Thursday night to be the headline event. The same circus as last year is coming back. They added a new act and were a big hit last year. They voted to move the pageant to Liberty High School due to the large number of participants and attendees. It will be held the Sunday before the fair. Ms. Tomlinson said they are putting together an event called the Friends of the Fair and it will be held in July at the Glenwood Center. They will be raising funds for the youth programs at the fair such as the pageant and the livestock show. Since it is a free-gate fair and free parking it would help if they could raise money for the children's activities and they know the community will support the event.

3. School Ag Programs Update

Ms. Powers noted that Staunton River High School has added a part-time ag teacher and Ann Jones has been offered the position. Ms. McAndrew is leaving Liberty High School and going to Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy. The position at Liberty is still posted. Teachers with Ag experience are in high demand and they need qualified applicants. Chairman Powers said he spoke with Dr. Francis about an Ag program for Jefferson Forest Middle School and he is still dedicated to getting that program started. Ms. Powers said that the new positions being added are only 200-day contracts and middle school teachers have 200-day contracts which limits the capability of teachers to be compensated for anything under the FFA umbrella. These are stand-alone programs and FFA is not an option for Ag ed but is legally required because of the federal charter. She would like to see the conversation started to increase some positions to full 12-month contracts. Chairman Powers would like to add a couple members to the Education and Events Committee to come up with some recommendations and go before the school board. Discussion followed regarding acquiring support from the Farm Bureau and FFA alumni chapters and the possibility of an option of an FFA stipend similar to a coaching stipend.

Ms. Powers reported that four 4-H and FFA members attended the Virginia Institute of Cooperative Education. Two were invited to the National Institute of Cooperative Education and Andrew Tuck won a \$1,500 scholarship. Josh Powers won the state 4-H and FFA contests in tractor operation. Staunton River had 12 FFA state degree recipients and two state proficiency winners, Andrew Tuck and Josh Powers, who will now advance to national competition. We have one area star in ag placement for Virginia which is Josh Powers. Staunton River has 25-35 students attending and competing at State Convention. Spring Valley Farm had a free ag camp over spring break and approximately 200 kids attended and they are already planning for next year. Sam Levine is a member of the state 4-H horse team and competes all over the country. Ethan Jackson, Virginia FFA President, is preparing for a trip to Scotland and Ireland where he will be competing this summer.

b. Marketing & Production

1. Farmer's Market Update

Ms. McIntyre reported this past Saturday the Forest Farmer's Market opened its ninth season and had an amazing crowd with 35 vendors. More than half of the vendors were from Bedford County. On Wednesday, Channel 13 aired a segment on "Living in the Heart of Virginia" and it was viewed more than 2,000 times. She has 25 full season vendors and 79 full active vendors. June is dairy month and music is scheduled for twice a month. The Parks and Rec tables are in and were used throughout the day. Ms. Witt reviewed her Progress Summary Report that was e-mailed to all Ag Board members. She noted that for the first time, the Bedford Farmer's Market will participate in CenterFest. The ribbon cutting with the Chamber of Commerce will take place

on Friday, May 3 at 12 noon and they have a great weekend of events planned and encouraged everyone to come.

2. Coyote Lottery Update

Nothing to report.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Nothing to report.

(8) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Mr. Fellers will be taking a trip to France and will tour some farms there.

Ms. Powers said the Bedford Farm Bureau is advocating for farm safety and some related segments have aired on local news stations. The Ackenhead's solar farm was filmed for a story but she does not know whether it aired yet. Ethan Jackson went to Nashville and filmed episodes of "FFA Today" which should air in the next couple weeks on RFD TV.

(9) ADJOURNMENT

8:41 p.m.