



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
October 2, 2019 – 7:30 p.m.
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek
1257 County Farm Road, Bedford, VA 24523

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

*Arrived 7:35 p.m.

Absent: Beth Bays, Sam Gardner, Ronnie Gross

Staff Present: Scott Baker, Traci Blido, Robert Hiss

Staff Absent: None

Transcriber: Julia Peters

Guests: Erika and Steven McFaden - Bedford Farmers' Market Managers; John Graham - Graham Bass Farm

(1) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice Chairman Gardner called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the October 2, 2019 agenda. There were no objections.

A motion and a second were made to approve the October 2, 2019 agenda, as presented.
Adopted unanimously.

(2) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - September 4, 2019

Chairman Powers asked for a review of the September 4, 2019 meeting minutes.

Mrs. Blido noted that a second email containing the revised minutes was sent to the Ag Board members for their review and paper copies handed out.

A motion and a second were made to approve the September 4, 2019 meeting minutes, as presented.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Mrs. Blido said we had a great fair and thanked the Ag Board members for all of their hours volunteering which helped make the fair a success. She has applied for a grant with the Tobacco Commission to extend Meade Road to serve the shell building currently under construction. The subcommittee met and recommended we receive the full amount requested. The D-Day Memorial has also applied for a Tobacco Commission grant and received a partial amount of their total requested but were invited to apply again in the future. The Blue Ridge Community Church has bought the old Winn Dixie shopping complex and has some interesting plans for the space. They have a real estate company that will manage the property so Central Virginia Manufacturing (CVM) will stay where they are and the church will build a firewall and the church will be next to CVM. We have had some business expansions with new jobs, including SML Packaging and Valtim, and have another one coming up, so all is going well.

(4) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

Mr. Baker reported that there will be a meeting on October 8 regarding hay quality and beef cattle nutrition at Springlake Stockyard if anyone is interested in attending. On October 10 there will be a meeting in Tightsqueeze at Sta-Bull where they make their own cattle handling equipment. The meeting will be at 6 p.m. and will pertain to cattle handling and safety. If anyone is interested, let Mr. Baker know because the deadline is today. The weaned and vaccinated feeder calf sale on September 13 was a success with 400 cattle in the barn and 425 cattle sold on the phone in the field totaling 825 cattle, which is the largest sale this year. Since July 2017, there have been eight sales with 3,148 head sold for a net return of \$214,000 to producers, after expenses. If we stay on schedule, the next sale will be sometime in January 2020. He received the information from Wythe County about their pesticide cost share program for controlling vegetation along fence lines, buffering creeks and streams. If the Ag Board wants to pursue a similar program, it will need a funding source. Discussion followed regarding the program and how it would encourage landowners to spray their fence lines, as well as save costs on fence replacements if invasive vegetation is kept off the fence rows. Mr. Baker will get further details from Wythe County so the Ag Board can decide whether to approach the Board of Supervisors (BOS) with a proposal to include funds in the county budget. Mr. Hiss recommended that any proposal be made by January for approval by the BOS to be included in the FY 2021 budget.

Mr. Baker noted that a handout from the Farm Bureau Women's Committee at the County Fair was very informative regarding the impact of agriculture. They had taken the statistics he provided and formatted them into images and graphics making the information easier to read. A banner was made as well. He suggested that the Ag Board may want to have the graphics reproduced and disseminated for other people to see.

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

Mr. Baumgardner said the Young Farmers were planning to attend the Sta-Bull event next Thursday. The Farm Bureau annual meeting was last night and was well attended and members came up with several resolutions that will benefit farmers.

(6) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming Events

See **Ag School Programs Update** below.

2. 2019 County Fair Report

Ms. Powers noted that the middle and high school students volunteered many hours to the fair and the fair would not have been a success without them. She also thanked all others who helped. Thursday during set up, the main performing motorcycle/stunt rider for the circus received an electrical shock as a result of a freak accident. He had to be airlifted to a burn unit at Wake Forest University, but will recover from his injuries. According to comments of some fair attendees, the Midway was not liked as much as last year's company and people complained about the heat. They are already planning for the 2020 fair and want to keep the educational day for the 4th grade students. They are considering moving the fair dates into October. The headcount was down from last year, but was still estimated between 16,000-18,000 and the parking lot was packed for the Demolition Derby Thursday night. Overall it was a good fair.

3. School Ag Programs Update

Ms. Tomlinson reported the school programs are doing great. There are three teachers at Liberty and three at Staunton River High School (SRHS) with one teacher at each middle school and she would like to see Jefferson Forest move forward with ag class teachers also. They have had some great accomplishments. Two boys traveled to the State Fair for the Tractor Troubleshooting Contest. One student has been accepted at the Teen Excellence Leadership Institute (TELI). On Friday Ms. Tomlinson will be traveling with the Smith Mountain FFA. The Liberty Alumni will have a yard sale on Saturday on Route 460, next to the Moose Lodge, to raise funds for the national convention. A raffle is being held with prizes of beautiful quilts and a Stihl chainsaw.

Ms. Powers said another student got into TELI today so the county has two students attending TELI. Staunton River High School actually has 2-1/2 teachers because one teacher has finance classes to teach, besides the ag classes. The Chapter is growing and the third teacher will need to be full-time next year so we hope to make that happen. Thirty kids from SRHS and SRMS will be going to the Virginia Tech Leadership Conference this month. The 4H has been very busy. Charlie Moser has been selected for the state 4H livestock judging team as a junior which is a big achievement. He has traveled throughout the East Coast and will go to Louisville for the national contest in November. Students from both high schools are going to national convention at the end of this month. Having two teams from Liberty winning at the state level for Vet Science and Tractor Troubleshooting is a great achievement and should be acknowledged. Ms. Powers recommended that Ms. Tomlinson invite her students to come to the Ag Board's November meeting to receive an accommodation.

A motion and a second were made to acknowledge the state level achievements of Liberty's Vet Science Team and Tractor Troubleshooting Team with an accommodation from the Ag Board. **Adopted unanimously.**

b. Marketing & Production

1. Farmers' Market Update

Erika McFaden noted she and Steven will attend a conference on Friday to learn more about the SNAP program so they can institute the program for the 2020 market season. On October 11, there will be an apple festival at the market. She has asked the vendors to bring some type of apple product that day. There will be an old fashioned cider press, a raffle with gift baskets from the vendors, an apple butter cooking demonstration, a food truck and almost 20 vendors. They are looking forward to growing the market next year and would like to get more produce vendors.

2. Coyote Lottery Update

Dr. Gardner mailed out sponsor letters in mid-September and has received four back. A flyer is going up at Southern States to advertise the Coyote Lottery. He asked again for suggested sponsors so he does not have to ask the same sponsors every year.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

1. Airport Public Hearing Update

Mr. Fellers went to the airport public hearing with about 200 people attending. There were many speakers and 18 residents have hired a lawyer who argued that this type of act is spot zoning which is against Virginia code. Mr. Fellers said this situation will not go away and will probably end up in the court system to be resolved. At the direction of the Ag Board with a majority

voting, Chairman Powers put together a letter and recommends the letter be ratified by the Ag Board as part of the record.

A motion and a second were made to ratify the subject letter as the Ag Board's position regarding the rezoning of land around the New London Airport.

Adopted unanimously.

Mr. Hiss stated that the Planning Commission has tabled the subject and by ordinance, has 90 days to make a decision to either recommend or deny approval. If the Commission does not make any decision within the 90 days, the rezoning is assumed approved. The Community Development staff is researching the subject to finely tune the draft ordinance and will probably need another public hearing in December. Drafting of a revised ordinance will look considerably different from the first draft and will be consistent with Ag Board and citizen concerns, but allow some changes to be made by Liberty University. The Smith Mountain Lake Airport owner chose not to be included in the rezoning change because he saw no benefit to either himself or the property owners around that airport.

Mr. Hiss also reported that the County landfill will be full by December 2020. The solution for the foreseeable future is to expand an existing small transfer facility and take waste off-site to keep the existing cell open as long as possible to accept and dispose of certain waste locally. We will be engaging in a cost analysis study to look at the various options and come up with a long-term solution. He and staff will be talking with the BOS this month and making some decisions within the next couple months. Mr. Hiss answered the Ag Board members' questions about the rezoning matter, landfill matter, recycling, and composting. Chairman Powers and Dr. Gardner thanked him for attending the meeting and his efforts to keep the Ag Board informed.

(7) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Gross's Orchard apple festival is October 19.

Big Otter Mill's annual fundraiser is this weekend.

(8) ADJOURNMENT

8:46 p.m.