



**Meeting Minutes**  
**Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board**

**October 3, 2018 – 7:30 p.m.**

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

**Absent:** Chuck Grove, Beth Bays, Lindsay Tomlinson, Ronnie Gross, Sam Gardner

**Staff Present:** Pam Bailey, Scott Baker, Mary Beth Martin

**Staff Absent:** Traci Blido

**Transcriber:** Julia Peters

**Guests:** John Graham - Graham Bass Farm; Spencer Blankenship - Liberty High School; Cymber Stanley - Bedford Middle School; Andy Dooley - Board of Supervisors, District 6; Charla Bansley Board of Supervisors, District 3, Ken Palmer

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**(1) Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the October 3, 2018 agenda. There were no objections.

A motion and a second were made to approve the October 3, 2018 agenda, as presented.

**Adopted Unanimously.**

**(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes - September 5, 2018**

Chairman Powers asked for a review of the September 5, 2018 meeting minutes.

A motion and a second were made to approve the September 5, 2018 meeting minutes as presented.

**Adopted unanimously.**

**(3) County Administration Report**

No report.

#### **(4) Economic Development Director's Report**

Ms. Bailey reported that Mrs. Blido was on the Eastern Shore in Maryland at the VDACS conference. Next Tuesday is the joint meeting of the EDA and Board of Supervisors at the Welcome Center where they will talk about workforce development. Bedford ONE has some exciting tours coming up. Next week there will be a culinary tour at Liberty University at Sodexo where the students will have hands-on experience with a chef and will also tour the culinary arts school at CVCC. They will tour a solar farm in Bedford at the end of October. An Ag Tour of Gardner Heifers and Royal Oak Farm is being organized specifically for educators. Middle school and high school counselors will attend and they will be having lunch at Bedford Science and Technology Center (BSTC) where culinary students will prepare the meal. The guidance counselors will tour the school as well.

The EDA received a grant from the Tobacco Commission to construct a 40,000 sq. ft. shell building at the New London Business and Technology Center. Bids will be accepted within the next couple weeks and they expect to break ground early next year. They already have received some media attention regarding this project.

Mrs. Blido and Ms. Bailey attended the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance's Salute to Manufacturing Breakfast where seven Bedford companies were recognized for their growth and more than 100 jobs created. The companies were Bison, Blue Ridge Optics, Central Virginia Manufacturing, Custom Truck One Source, Smyth, Innovairre, and KMR Aviation. Lynchburg City had two companies recognized and Campbell and Amherst Counties had one company each. Blue Ridge Towers was selected to start building out the 11-site system of broadband in the county. The estimated date to be up and running is June 30, 2019.

#### **(5) Cooperative Extension Report**

Mr. Baker stated the recent feeder calf sale was successful. The calves averaged between \$30 net return to well over \$100 net return with the overall average of \$66 per head after deducting all costs. Since beginning the sales in July 2017, 1,872 head have been sold and have netted producers \$165,000. Mr. Baker also noted that the Cooperative Extension office is testing well water if anyone is interested. The boxwood blight is a fatal plant disease running rampant in Bedford. There is not much that can be done to stop the blight except disposing the affected plant so it does not spread to other boxwoods.

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

Mr. Baumgardner reported the Young Farmers had a safety day at Southern States on the September 22, 2018 and it was very successful. The Farm Bureau is having its annual dinner next Tuesday if anyone is interested. Local Farm Bureaus have tickets and the dinner is held at

the Church of Thaxton. Ms. Powers noted that the Farm Bureau Women's Committee helped staff the Old McDonald tent at the County Fair which was much appreciated.

## **(7) Committee Reports**

### **a. Education & Events**

#### **1. Upcoming Events**

Nothing to report.

#### **2. County Fair update**

Ms. Powers reported that this fair was the most successful fair even with a little rain. There were approximately 500 4th graders from the county that had educational tours on Friday. The Old McDonald Tent gave the fair goers an opportunity to see agriculture firsthand. The first horse show was a success and the demolition derby was a great event. Attendance may be down due to the rain, but the quality of the event was much higher and the fair is in a good position to continue to grow. A highlight for each Staunton River Middle School Special Ed student was catching a fish at the trout pond. Free admission and free parking to the fair was appreciated by many families where the children could enjoy themselves without the parents having to spend a lot of money. Ms. Powers will have more numbers to share regarding the fair in the future.

#### **3. School Ag Programs Update**

Spencer Blankenship, an agriculture teacher at Liberty High School, gave a report regarding the school ag programs. He is one of two ag teachers at the high school where he teaches the agricultural mechanics pathway to students. Ms. Tomlinson teaches the animal science/vet science pathway. They begin with basic shop projects and utilize most of the tools in the shop. The students can then have the option of taking welding and small engine repair classes. A new class at Liberty will be a second year of shop class, Introduction to Agricultural Power. They are excited to add this class because the students can now take an ag class in all four years at the school. The Ag Program tries to meet the needs of the students, the industry and the Department of Education requirements. The students work on projects and community projects are favored because they are real-life problems seen in everyday ag businesses. The FFA students will be participating in a tractor driving contest and they have other contests as well, such as small engine troubleshooting, tractor troubleshooting, and a welding contest. The students also worked on several projects for the Old McDonald Tent at the County Fair and they are going to the State Fair for a forestry contest.

Ms. Stanley introduced herself and said she teaches 7th and 8th graders in middle school ag classes. She has 120 students and the curriculum provides students with a little bit of everything ag-related to see what area may spark their interest. She works on crossing over ag curriculum with math, english or art classes to get students more involved and show them relevance. The

core classes teach the SOL's, but students actually use the SOL's in ag classes. She is taking 23 students to the State Fair and would love to take the students to a local farm if any Ag Board member would like to participate. Ms. Bailey offered her help in arranging a tour.

Ms. Powers said she will invite the Staunton River teachers to the next Ag Board meeting in order for them to give a report to the members as well.

**b. Marketing & Production**

**1. Farmer's Market Update**

Mr. Graham said this is the last month for the markets and they have been doing well. Attendance is usually lighter this month because there are many other activities people attend and produce is not as available. Forest will have an indoor market once a month beginning in November and ending in April. Forest will have markets before Thanksgiving and Christmas that are heavy with artisans for purchases of gifts. He has not heard yet if the Bedford Market will continue its online service during the winter. The online market did not receive as much participation this first year as they had hoped. It had several vendors, but not many consumers.

**2. Coyote Lottery Update**

Dr. Gardner reported the lottery is officially opened. He sent out a mailer to previous sponsors and has received about 50 percent back. The coyotes seem to be less brazen this year and believes the lottery is doing what it was created to do. He would like to get some new sponsors so he would not need to use the same ones each year. If anyone knows of someone willing to sponsor the lottery, please contact him.

**c. Land Protection & Conservation**

Nothing to report.

**(8) Informational Items**

Ms. Powers noted that the Education Committee of the Ag Board would like to make 2019 the year of Career and Technology Education (CTE). This would be a collaborative effort with the EDA, BOS and Ag Board to rebrand, highlight, and enhance CTE. Discussion followed.

A motion and a second were made to approve the creation of a subcommittee in cooperation with the EDA, BOS, and the Ag Board to advocate for strengthening CTE in Bedford County in 2019.  
**Adopted unanimously.**

Mr. Graham was unable to attend the conference regarding shrimp farming, but will provide more information in future meetings. VSU's Agricultural Department will have an open house on October 17. VSU is a leader in aquaponics and hydroponics. Mr. Graham plans on attending the open house and invited any others who may like to go.

New London Elementary School is having a fall festival on October 26 and is looking for someone to give hay rides to attendees. Contact Ms. Bailey if anyone is able to help.

Ms. Powers is going to the Governor's Rural Prosperity Conference in Staunton in a couple weeks and will report on it at future meetings.

Ken Palmer spoke about an incident in June where he could not stop to dial emergency 911 while holding back a horse that had injured his wife. He spoke into the phone and said "call emergency" which it was able to do. He said responders arrived at the site within minutes. He wanted everyone to know how this feature of newer cell phones could help in an emergency when you cannot physically dial the number yourself.

Mr. Dooley wanted the Ag Board members to know that if they needed a building/room for any community activity in the future on a Saturday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm they could contact him. He will put it on the schedule for use at no cost.

**(9) ADJOURNMENT**

9:10 pm