



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
September 5, 2018 – 7:30 p.m.

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

Absent: Ronnie Gross, Beth Bays, Sam Gardner, Lindsay Tomlinson

Staff Present: Traci Blido

Staff Absent: Scott Baker

Transcriber: Julia Peters

Guests: John Graham - Graham Bass Farm

(1) Approval of Agenda

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the September 5, 2018 agenda. There were no objections.

A motion and a second were made to approve the September 5, 2018 agenda, as presented.
Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes - August 1, 2018

Chairman Powers asked for a review of the August 1, 2018 meeting minutes.

A motion and a second were made to approve the August 1, 2018 meeting minutes as presented.
Adopted unanimously.

(3) County Administration Report

Mrs. Blido stated that four RFP responses for building up broadband were received and Mr. Boggess is reviewing them now. A selection committee will decide who will receive the work. They hope to build up to 95% of the county with broadband internet.

(4) Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido reported she and her office have joined together with the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership to begin meeting with meeting with companies in Bedford County as part of the Business Retention and Expansion program. She noted that the companies they've met with so far have had some struggles with retaining and attracting employees. Mrs. Blido sited some discussion at these companies about the FFA program and encouraged them to seek out FFA students due to their hard-working and reliable nature. Discussion followed regarding the overall need for good workers and how Dr. Francis and the school system are trying to address the issue. She shared the County Tourism newsletter which lists many activities coming up such as Touch a Truck on Saturday, September 8 from 10 am to 3 pm at the Sims Farm in Forest. The Johnson family is doing the "Long Strange Night on the Mountain" where you can camp out and spend the night. This will also be September 8 and will have live music, craft foods and wine. Bedford's Finest Fair is this Sunday with artisan craft foods and brewers in the county. The Layman Family Farms will start their fall festival on September 15. Centerfest, Taste of the Trails, and the County Fair are also coming up, making September a very busy month.

(5) Cooperative Extension Report

Nothing to report.

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

Mr. Baumgardner reported that the Farm Bureau is holding its annual meeting on October 9. The Young Farmers had a great trip to the coast and it was reported in the Bedford Bulletin. The Young Farmers are cooking tonight for the FFA Leadership Conference. The Bedford Farm Bureau was invited to the Central Virginia Spotlight on Agriculture. Secretary of Agriculture, Bettina Ring, came to Bedford today and spoke about agriculture and forestry. She is supportive of economic development and was very impressed with our farmer's market. Congressman Scott Garrett and Board of Supervisors members Tuck, Bansley and Dooley were also there. There will be a Safety Day later this month on a Saturday at Southern States. Ms. Powers reported that Ethan Jackson was a state finalist in the Virginia Farm Bureau Outstanding Agriculturalist Contest last month and Amy Johnson gave a fire safety workshop at the Young Farmer Expo.

(7) Committee Reports

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming Events

Ms. Powers reported that next week both Smith Mountain and Liberty FFA students will be attending the Big E Competition in Massachusetts. Smith Mountain has a team competing in horse judging and Liberty has a team competing in the vet science competition. It is rare to have

both high schools attending. Both FFA's held very successful mum sales this year. Both schools have eight students each going to the National Convention this year and they will be working together as one large group. Ethan Jackson received the bronze national proficiency award through FFA for his swine entrepreneurship project. He will be going to South Africa representing the national FFA this January.

There will be an all-you-can-eat breakfast on September 22 to benefit the Smith Mountain FFA chapter. The schools have good alumni groups that help to raise funds for the chapters since the competitions and conferences can be costly. Liberty will be having a quilt auction and both chapters will be fundraising at the county fair.

4-H is going well and their meetings are being rescheduled to the third Monday of every month.

2. County Fair update

All planning for the fair is going well. They currently have 378 fourth graders signed up to attend the educational day Friday, September 28. There will be a feature event every night and there are many vendors. The big media partners are 94.9 FM Star Country and WDBJ7/WZBJ24 TV. Each year the fair has been able to donate funds to the schools' FFA and 4-H groups.

3. School Ag Programs Update

Ms. Powers reported two Staunton River students attended the Washington Leadership Conference. Josh Powers was able to meet with Congressman Goodlatte's staff and took a gift basket and a thank you note on behalf of the Bedford agricultural community. It was a good opportunity and great week for the students.

Discussion followed regarding the need for 12-month ag teacher contracts at each high school, and the work release and internship programs available for the high school students.

Mr. Graham suggested the Ag Board plan to have its next meeting at the Liberty Middle School Ag Classroom so the members can tour the new space. The board members agreed and they will notify the public and also invite Dr. Francis and the Board of Supervisors.

b. Marketing & Production

1. Farmer's Market Update

Mr. Graham reported that all is going well. Mrs. Blido stated that the Bedford market will be looking for a vendor that grows its own produce or livestock for next year's market.

2. Coyote Lottery Update

Dr. Gardner has contacted the Farm Bureau to see if they will support the matching funds again this year, but it will need to be formally cleared through the Board of Directors first.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Nothing to report.

(8) Informational Items

Mr. Graham will be attending a conference about farming shrimp at Kentucky State University. It has a lot of promise for profitability for indoor production. He will report back to the members once he attends the conference.

Discussion followed regarding the difficulty in finding a large animal veterinarian. Mrs. Willoughby stated she knows of only one that will come out to the farm. Mr. Grove said that if beef is the largest part of the county agriculture, it should have more than one large animal veterinarian willing to travel to farms and suggested the Ag Board try recruiting a large animal vet to practice in Bedford County. The board members agreed to investigate the process and report findings at future meetings.

Mr. Baumgardner reported the USDA is part of an incentive program for hog, dairy, soybean, wheat and grain producers. There is stimulus money to counteract the tariffs if anyone is interested and asked members to pass the information to anyone who may qualify.

(9) ADJOURNMENT

8:40 pm