



Meeting Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board

September 7, 2016 – 7:30 p.m.

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board:

:Present:

Jeffrey Powers, Pete Fellers, Matt Baumgardner, Don Gardner, Keith Tuck, Pam Willoughby, Ken Palmer, Ronnie Gross, Ken Newman, Lindsay Tomlinson

:Absent: W.P. Johnson, Chuck Grove

Staff Present: Scott Baker

Staff Absent: Carl Boggess, Jessica Hupp, Traci Blido

:Guests: John Graham, Joy Powers, Holly Tuck

(1) Approval of Agenda

Jeff Powers called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the September 7, 2016 agenda.

A motion and a second were made to approve the September 7, 2016 agenda, as presented.

Adopted Unanimously.

(2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 3, 2016

Mr. Powers asked for a review of the August 3, 2016 meeting minutes.

Mr. Baker stated under his report it should read WFXR reports on Thursday mornings, not Sunday mornings.

A motion and a second were made to approve the August 3, 2016 meeting minutes, as amended.

Adopted unanimously.

(3) County Administration Report

Mr. Powers stated that Mrs. Blido had sent him an email yesterday explaining that both she and Jessica would not be in attendance at tonight's meeting because Jessica is being recognized in

Lynchburg Business Magazine's Top 20 Under 40, celebrating the region's top up and coming young professionals, and the ceremony is taking place tonight during the Ag Board meeting. Mr. Powers stated he was very pleased with the news, and felt Jessica was very deserving of this award.

(4) Economic Development Director's Report

No economic development report.

(5) Cooperative Extension Report

Mr. Baker reported that the county is currently trying to update its emergency preparation plan, which each locality is required to have and update every four years. Fire and rescue called the entire county together to start that process. The plan includes who would be required to do damage assessments, how and where to house pets and livestock, nutrition assistance on how to keep food safe with loss of power, and so on. As the board can imagine, agriculture plays a big part in this process and Mr. Baker may call on some of the board members for damage assessment if such an event would occur.

Mr. Baker reported he has created brochures for the Farm Transition Workshop and has extras for people who may have friends with interest in the workshop.

In later October, the Extension Office is offering a new opportunity through a workshop on vegetable production industry. The workshop is good for people scaling up or getting into it from the beginning. This will take place October 27 in Appomattox.

Virginia Tech will be offering home water testing again, and has enough slots left for those interested in having it done in October.

Mr. Baker reported there is another pest affecting Emerald Ash trees. In a landscape setting, there are treatment options, but the pest has ticked up quite a bit this season and they've been getting reports from up and down the James River. Also, there is a new ag pest known as the sugar cane aphid that effects sorghum grain. It has only been in Virginia for two years now, but is slowly creeping this way.

(6) FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

Mr. Johnson was not in attendance. Mr. Baumgardner stated the Farm Bureau's Annual meeting will be on October 4, at the church in Thaxton.

(7) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

(1) Upcoming Events

a. Bedford County Fair summary

Mr. Palmer reported the equine events at the fair were a huge success, especially with the school kids. Many of the students asked great questions and were very attentive. Mrs. Shelton did a great demonstration on handicapped riding. Mr. Palmer stated that Sunday was a bit disappointing, as he had several people commit and not show up. However, John Graham was there and did a great fish demonstration.

Mr. Powers thanked all the board members that were able to attend and assist to make the fair great. Mr. Powers wanted to personally thank Bill Thomasson for putting on the car show and Lindsey for her large supervisory help over the duration of the fair.

Ms. Powers reported she felt the fair was an overwhelming success in many different ways. The fair was different from last year, and stated they are still working out some kinks. Ms. Powers passed out a handout with facts on the fair.

Ms. Powers stated all sponsors were listed on the handout and that each entity was vitally important in what they contributed. The fair would be hard to host without Curry and the Glenwood Center. Ms. Powers stated Aztec Rental was one of the largest supporters. Over the four days, attendance reached around 16,000, with the most people attending on Sunday. The onsite sales were estimated at \$70,000, and an overall economic impact of \$400,000. Holly distributed vendor surveys and found many vendors were very pleased with the results. They felt the audience was much more targeted this year, with more people spending time at the Extension booth, engaging in educational portions of the fair, and spending money on the rides as well.

Ms. Powers stated the volunteer hours mean a lot to the group, since most fairs are staffed with paid employees, and our community volunteers put on a great event for free.

Ms. Powers stated there were about 350 fourth graders plus 100 parents that came with them to the fair. Some of the first schools to respond with interest in attending were from the Forest area. Forest arrived at the fair and enjoyed it so much they didn't want to leave, so we had to adjust plans to make it happen.

The Miss Bedford County Fair Pageant had 22 girls compete, and hundreds of people were there to watch. Most of the girls had never competed in a pageant before. On Friday there were several equine demonstrations, as well as Southland Dairy's mobile dairy unit which was a huge hit. On Saturday, they held the Youth Livestock Show, and dedicated it to Lowell Gobbell. On Sunday, the fair held its Antique Car Show, which went really well and featured 62 cars. The Committee is already having vendors reserve spots for next year. The fair even had one vendor (Porter BBQ) that was successful enough from the fair to go out and buy a food truck. Mr. Porter sold \$30,000 worth of food this year!

Ms. Powers stated they had not anticipated having this year's fair on Labor Day weekend, and they don't plan to do it again. When the committee had picked dates with Cole Amusement, they were under the impression it was the only time Cole had and it would be the only fair it was

assisting on those dates. Unfortunately, Cole had rides in three different counties that weekend, which is why we didn't have a ferris wheel. That was a large complaint received as it's a part of our logo. When they were closing out the account, Cole stated there were fewer people buying wrist bands, and instead people were buying 3-4 tickets for one particular ride. This didn't affect the fair as much, but the experience working with them was different this year. Now that we have two years of numbers to show other amusement companies, we could end up using someone else next year.

Ms. Powers expressed the need for money to get 4-H and FFA students to the national competition. On September 17 they will be holding a donation breakfast, where all proceeds will go to helping these kids get to national convention.

Lindsey stated tomorrow 4-H and FFA will be hosting the South Ridge area for chapter and officer leadership training. There will be up to 140 kids at Falling Creek Park at the pavilion for this event. Lindsey stated they are really looking forward to working with chapters they haven't yet been able to work with. There will be about 14 different schools. They are very appreciative of Farm Bureau, as they are helping to prepare dinner for the students.

On the fair, Lindsey said she is preparing to send a document out to teachers who brought the fourth graders, to see how they think we can improve. Lindsey stated she forgot to mention that a huge portion of school board office employees attended that day as well. Mrs. Tomlinson stated she overheard people talking about how this fair really cleared up some misconceptions they had about agriculture, and felt that was huge for us as an ag county.

b. Marketing & Production

(1) Farmers Markets

Mr. Gross said things have been moving pretty well with the market, and that he was at five events this weekend. Sedalia really surprised him in a good way.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

1. Farm Transition Workshop update

Mr. Baker stated he had already mentioned flyers for the event, and that he hopes everyone will take some and help promote the event.

(8) Other Business

Dr. Gardner asked when we would be discussing the zoning topic again. Mr. Powers stated that they've been so busy with the fair, but we will discuss the matter in the October meeting. He will be sending out information for everyone to review soon.

Lindsey said she would like the board to keep the middle school issue top of mind, as they need to start focusing and moving full steam ahead to make this happen. Dr. Gardner asked if there has been a strategy laid out, to which Mr. Powers said that is what the task force has been assigned to take care of. Lindsey's Principal is also involved in the task force and they know to take this seriously since they've had two members of the board of supervisors behind the cause.

(9) Informational Items

Mr. Powers reminded the board to keep Dr. Gardner and his wife in our thoughts as they deal with some back issues, as well as Andy Dooley and Pam Willoughby.

(10) Adjournment

-8:07 p.m.