



Meeting Minutes

**Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek
1257 County Farm Rd., Bedford, VA 24523**

September 1, 2021 – 7:30 p.m.

Present: Pete Fellers, Don Gardner (by Zoom), Ken Newman, Jeff Powers, Joy Powers (by Zoom), Dorothy McIntyre, Lindsay Tomlinson (arrived 7:50 p.m.)

Absent: Matt Baumgardner, Chuck Grove, Sam Gardner, Ronnie Gross, Pam Willoughby

Staff Present: Scott Baker (by Zoom), Pam Bailey, Amanda Kaufman (by Zoom). Brian Martin, Wyatt Woody

Staff Absent: None

Transcriber: Julia Peters

Guests:

Beth Gillespie - Smith Mountain FFA member, Sarah Tuck - Smith Mountain FFA member

(1) CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m..

(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Powers asked for a review of the September 1, 2021 agenda. There were no objections.

A motion and a second were made to approve the September 1, 2021 agenda, as presented.

Adopted unanimously

(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - July 7, 2021 and August 4, 2021

A motion and a second were made to approve the July 7, 2021 and August 4, 2021 meeting minutes, as presented.

Adopted unanimously

(4) SPECIAL APPEARANCE

a. Cannery Status Update - Wyatt Woody, Director of Parks and Recreation

Mr. Woody introduced himself and also introduced Mr. Brian Martin, Parks Maintenance Superintendent, who has overseen the activities at the cannery. Mr. Woody noted that the cannery is not operational at this time due to a breakdown of the canner capper equipment. It is not easily repairable and a new capper has been purchased, but delivery is several weeks away. The cannery typically has three staff members, but it is down two staffers currently which also affects the cannery's operation. Mr. Woody said that when the cannery is in operation, it handles both pint and quart-sized cans only, it does not have the capacity to use glass jars. The active season is July through December and it is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30 a.m. to roughly 11:30 a.m. throughout the growing season and into the hunting season when people can deer. He asked the Ag Board members to spread the word about the cannery, which is located behind New London Academy, so County citizens are aware of its operation. Information about the cannery can be found on the Parks & Rec Facebook page or at BedfordCountyVa.gov. County residents bring their own product to the cannery and prepare it for canning. They are charged \$.75 per pint can and \$1.00 per quart can and staff puts the cans into the steam lines and caps them. Mr. Woody said the cannery is a great service to the community and he hopes to have it back in operation by October. Mr. Woody and Mr. Martin answered questions from the meeting attendees and Mrs. McIntyre invited them to advertise the cannery at the farmers' markets in the County and Chairman Powers said they could advertise at the upcoming County Fair.

(5) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Ms. Kaufman had nothing new to report.

(6) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Ms. Bailey reported that last week Sentry Equipment in Forest hosted gubernatorial candidate Glenn Younkin on a tour of its facility. Sentry Equipment has been impacted by shortages of parts and price increases of materials. She also had a business retention and expansion visit with Intercon, Inc. which is a growing company with 115 employees. Region 2 of the GO Virginia initiative is working on a growth and diversification plan. She will be brainstorming with the site readiness and development team regarding the focus of the 2021 plan. Lots 10a and 12a in the

New London Business and Technology Center are being graded for potential use by future prospects. The County Administration is in the process of applying for a Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant. A letter of support from the Ag Board has been signed by Chairman Powers and will be included in the grant application. Ms. Bailey said she would be interested in talking to anyone whose business has been negatively impacted by the lack of internet in the County so his/her story could be included in the grant paperwork to strengthen the County's application.

(7) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

Mr. Baker reported that he spoke last month about the Spotted Lanternfly and now the featured pest is the Army Worm. Dr. Gardner contacted him regarding a hayfield on his farm that went from green to brown overnight. There is an outbreak of this pest all over the Southeast including Bedford County, plus Tennessee and Ohio are affected. Typically these outbreaks don't come this early, usually it is late September and then they die out during cold weather because the worms are sensitive to cold. He also knows of two fields that were decimated on Horseshoe Bend Road and he wanted to make Ag Board members aware. They have always been a problem in row crops but it is unique to see them affect hayfields. He is not sure how widespread the outbreak is since it has only been seen southside, but it could get to other parts of the County. Anyone who may have questions or sees a field or pasture going from green to brown very quickly can contact him.

Dr. Gardner noted how devastating the Army Worm is to hayfields and how they were not expecting such a problem at this time. He also wanted to make the attendees aware of the Sugar Cane Aphids that have come up from the South and have been found in some of his fields.

Mr. Baker also reported that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) will be asked to adopt a resolution asking the Governor to seek a drought declaration. Damage was done early in the season and crops and hay have suffered. Information has been given to the County Administration and the BOS will take up the matter at their September 13 meeting.

There will be another weaned and vaccinated cattle sale at the Springlake Stockyard on September 17, 2021.

There is no news yet on the Tobacco Commission grant. The Commission will review the proposals this month. If granted, the program will roll out this Winter or the Spring of 2022.

The Bedford Bulletin newspaper ran an article about Ag Board member, Dr. Don Gardner, who was named the Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient by Oklahoma State University. Mr. Baker read the news article to meeting attendees. Dr. Gardner will be recognized at the college's award luncheon in Oklahoma on Friday, November 5, 2021.

(8) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU/YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

Chairman Powers reported that Beth Bays, a former Ag Board member, was recognized for her hay bale creation, Will Hay Nelson, which is now in the Guinness Book of Records and has been posted on Facebook.

(9) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming Events

See below.

2. County Fair Update

Ms. Tomlinson announced that there will not be a Miss Bedford County Fair Pageant this year. There will be a scholarship contest instead. It is open to both boys and girls ages 14 – 19 years old. Eligible students must submit an application, a resume and recommendations, and present a small speech. They will also be interviewed. The contest is open to Bedford County students only. The first prize is a \$750 scholarship award and the second place prize is a \$500 scholarship with third place receiving \$250. Ms. Bailey will share the information on the Economic Development website and social media.

Chairman Powers reported that preparations continue for the County Fair at the Moose Lodge. Meetings will be held with VDOT, the police, and the fire department to coordinate coverage. There will be fireworks and live music to entertain everyone. Ms. Tomlinson said the livestock show will be expanding and will include dairy animals and poultry. Bussing students to the fair is still being discussed and will be determined by future outcomes of the Covid pandemic.

3. School Ag Programs Update

Ms. Tomlinson reported the 4-H group is doing great and the 4-H and FFA livestock judging teams are doing well. They will be raising money to attend a contest in Nebraska. Beth Gillespie and Sarah Tuck reported that they are holding practices for the contests for the State Fair. They are also planning a golf tournament as one of their fundraisers to be held in November. Ms. Tomlinson noted that her ag students are holding a mum sale. The mums were grown locally at Turkey Mountain Farm and anyone interested can reach out to her. There are numerous festivals in the County that 4-H and FFA students will be attending, including the Sedalia Country Fair, Centerfest, the Bedford Fire Festival and the Bedford County Fair. Their participation in these events promotes community involvement. National convention is coming up and hopefully both chapters will be sending some students. State officers are out doing visits and Bedford Middle School's chapter has been recognized at the state and national level for their efforts.

b. Marketing & Production

1. Farmers' Market Updates

Ms. McIntyre reported that the outdoor winter markets in Forest will be held from 9 a.m. to noon on the Saturday before Thanksgiving and the second Saturday of each month thereafter. She also noted that the Smith Mountain market has a couple new vendors including a honey vendor.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Nothing new to report.

(10) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Chairman Powers informed everyone that Ag Board member Pam Willoughby's husband passed away and Ms. Bailey sent flowers to the family on behalf of the Ag Board. Mrs. Willoughby sent a note thanking the Ag Board for their condolences.

Chairman Powers also announced that Ag Board member Ronnie Gross resigned. He has spoken to some of the BOS and they hope to have a replacement approved at their September 13 meeting.

A meat processor is still interested and is looking at a possible facility.

The Farm Bureau continues to work on their annual dinner, which may be a drive-through this year.

Sam Williams from Southern States will be retiring. He has dedicated many years to the ag industry and Mr. Baker suggested the Ag Board send him some kind of letter of recognition. Chairman Powers stated he would speak to the BOS about a County recognition for Mr. Williams at a future BOS meeting. Consensus from the Ag Board members was agreeable.

(11) ADJOURNMENT

8:22 p.m.