



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

**Wednesday, August 3, 2022  
7:30 p.m.**

**(1) CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM.

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

**Absent: Sam Gardner, Dorothy McIntyre, Melody Divers**

**Guests: Supervisor Mickey Johnson, Josh Powers, Johnny Divers**

**(2) Organization**

- a. Recognition of new Board member, Melody Divers, District 6
- b. Election of Secretary

Chairman Powers called for volunteers or nominations for the position of Secretary of the Ag Board.

**Ms. Powers moved, seconded by Mr. Newman, to nominate Dorothy McIntyre as the new Ag Board Secretary.**

**Voting yes – Jeff Powers, Joy Powers, Don Gardner, Chuck Grove, Ethan Tanner, Pete Fellers, Matt Baumgardner, Ken Newman, Lindsay Tomlinson**

**Voting no - none**

**Adopted Unanimously**

**(3) APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

**Mr. Baumgardner moved, seconded by Mr. Newman, to approve the August 3, 2022, meeting agenda.**

**Voting yes – Jeff Powers, Joy Powers, Don Gardner, Chuck Grove, Ethan Tanner, Pete Fellers, Matt Baumgardner, Ken Newman, Lindsay Tomlinson**

**Voting no - none**

**Adopted Unanimously**

**(4) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

- a. April 6, 2022

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the April 6, 2022, meeting minutes.

**Voting yes – Jeff Powers, Joy Powers, Don Gardner, Chuck Grove, Ethan Tanner, Pete Fellers, Matt Baumgardner, Ken Newman, Lindsay Tomlinson**

**Voting no - none**

**Adopted Unanimously**

#### **(5) ADMINISTRATION REPORT**

County Administrator, Robert Hiss, introduced the Public Information Officer for the County, Shelley Basinger. Ms. Basinger shared some of the projects that she is working on including Broadband, developing a county-wide Social Media policy, and revamping the County's website.

Mr. Hiss also shared information about three different fiberoptic Broadband projects the county is involved in with ZiTel, Shentel, and Riverstreet. The goal of this project is for Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to provide internet service to unserved citizens in the county. Mr. Hiss also stated that this is a multi-year project funded by the county through grants.

He shared that a lot of his time this summer has been spent on interviews for current openings within the County.

#### **(6) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Ms. Bailey shared that the Office of Economic Development recently launched its newly redesigned website. The Agriculture section remains on this site and includes information on growers and producers that participate in the Bedford Grown directory.

She shared that recently she toured Liberty University, CVCC, and Sentry Equipment with representatives from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP).

On September 15, there will be a Business Roundtable with Tim Saunders from Virginia Career Works and JD Fedor from the Department of Corrections who will be sharing creative approaches to hiring and recruitment of employees. This opportunity is open to all Bedford businesses.

Ms. Bailey has also been working on Tourism Zone guidelines which will focus on the Smith Mountain Lake area of the county, as well as some advertising plans for the year.

The Motiva site in Montvale is for sale and is currently zoned Agriculture. However, because it was a tank farm, the land is not able to be used for growing or production. One point to note is that it does have a 7,200 sq. ft. building on the property and could be utilized as an industrial site.

#### **(7) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT**

Mr. Baker shared that the 4-H camp was very successful. This was also the first year that a Sheriff's Deputy stayed the entire time with campers and was a positive experience.

Last night there was a Bedford beef producer meeting at Ethan Tanner's farm. There was a good turnout, and this was a good networking event for cattle farmers. Dr. Taylor Young with Riverside Veterinary Hospital, based in Goode, attended the meeting and is enthusiastic about serving the farming community. He is a beef cattle farmer.

Mr. Baker reminded the Board of the stream exclusion cost-share program that focuses on weeds. There is limited funding allocated for this program and applications are still available.

A value-added cattle sale was held at Springlake Stockyard last Friday. There were 300 cattle that came through and were sold on Friday morning. Overall, the sale yielded about \$100 in net return after costs. An additional sale will be held in late September.

Mr. Baker contacted several localities that recently held farm tours to get a pulse on how well those were attended. He shared that they had several farms offering simultaneous open houses, but the consensus was that most families prefer to only attend one farm tour. This is the model that Mr. Baker recommends in the event the Board would like to resurrect this event in Bedford County.

He also stated that the quarantine area for the Spotted Lantern Fly has been extended to the City of Lynchburg. Another invasive insect that he noted was the Asian Jumping Worm. The Asian Jumping Worm was spotted in Bedford in the summer of 2021 and is not considered to be a threat at this time.

## **(8) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT**

Mr. Baumgardner stated that Farm Bureau's Customer Appreciation Day will be held on Saturday, August 13 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Falling Creek Park. Springlake Stockyard is also hosting their Appreciation Day on Saturday, August 6.

## **(9) COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

1. Upcoming events – Several board members attended the Horse and Hound Festival.
2. County Fair update – Ms. Powers stated that there has been a lot of misinformation regarding the Fair. She shared that the Fair was never canceled but rather it was put on pause for several reasons. A sustainable plan needs to be put in place moving forward to execute the Fair long-term. The Fair Committee will be meeting at the end of this month and multiple stakeholders will be invited to attend. This prompted a discussion among Board members about possible options for a permanent location to hold the Fair.

3. School Ag Programs update – Ms. Tomlinson shared that in July, students attended a Leadership Camp at Graves Mountain Lodge. Students from LHS and SRHS both won awards at camp. It was also reported that Josh Powers will be working as a long-term substitute at LHS for the first semester to fill a current vacancy in the Ag program.

Ms. Powers also addressed concerns regarding middle school Ag teachers not being fairly compensated like their high school counterparts. She is hoping for an amicable resolution with the school division.

### **b. Marketing & Production – Nothing new to report**

1. Farmer's Market updates – Nothing new to report

### **c. Land Protection & Conservation – Nothing new to report**

## **(10) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

Mr. Don Gardner shared several informational items regarding dairy farming, especially the perceived attack on dairy farmers who produce whole milk. He also spoke on the decreasing number of dairy farms in Denmark, Canada, and Ireland due to increasing emissions regulations and other restrictions that are forcing cattle and dairy farmers out of business. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) are also affecting farmers in the United States. The number of dairy farms in the U.S. has decreased by 60% in the last 8-10 years according to one of the articles that he shared with the board.

## **(11) ADJOURNMENT**

8:45 PM