



**Meeting Minutes**  
**Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board**  
**Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek**  
**1257 County Farm Rd. Bedford, VA 24523**  
**Wednesday, October 5, 2022**  
**7:30 p.m.**

**Agricultural Board**

**Present:** Jeff Powers (District 1), Joy Powers (District 2), Ethan Tanner (District 5), Melody Divers (District 6), Pete Fellers (District 7), Matt Baumgardner (At-large), Ken Newman (At-large), Dorothy McIntyre (At-large), Lindsay Tomlinson (At-large)

**Absent:** Don Gardner (District 3), Chuck Grove (District 4), Sam Gardner (At-large),

**Staff Present:** Pam Bailey, Holley Scheffel, Scott Baker, Robert Hiss

**Staff absent:** None

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

---

**(1) CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

**(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the meeting agenda.

**Mr. Baumgardner moved, seconded by Mr. Newman to approve October 5, 2022, meeting agenda.**

**Adopted Unanimously**

**(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

a. September 7, 2022

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the September 7, 2022, meeting minutes.

Mrs. McIntyre indicated that the Bedford Farmer's Market runs through October 29<sup>th</sup>, not October 8<sup>th</sup> as indicated in the minutes.

**Mr. Baumgardner moved, seconded by Mr. Newman to amend and approve the September 7, 2022, meeting minutes.**

**Adopted Unanimously**

**(4) ADMINISTRATION REPORT**

Mr. Hiss shared that property reassessment is ongoing and is done every four years. There is a third-party company hired to complete this task which will be finalized within the next 30-45 days.

The Board of Supervisors is working on several key priorities including Broadband and other specific legislative priorities. The county is looking at some infrastructure opportunities.

The Town of Bedford has a potential boundary adjustment coming in July 2023. If implemented, this would affect several individuals who are not currently in the town now but would be under the potential boundary adjustment. This would impact those citizens who would then have to pay the additional tax imposed by the Town in addition to the county tax they are already paying.

The Board of Supervisors is considering applying for a planning grant for the old Montvale Elementary School. There is a non-profit community group interested in preserving the school and would like to partner with the County. If successful in winning this \$100,000 Department of Housing and Community Development grant, the group will then be eligible to apply for a renovation grant through the same department. The renovation grant could include up to a million dollars for the project.

Justin Stauder has been hired as the Deputy County Administrator; he will begin on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **(5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Ms. Bailey formally introduced Melody Divers, the newest member on the Ag Board. Mrs. Divers shared a little about herself and her family. She and her husband own Chapel Creek Farms and their home base is Montvale. They are primarily a beef-cattle farm, but they also have a storefront where they sell other goods, including fresh cider.

There are new rack cards available for Bedford Grown which are available at the office. There is a QR code on the handout which will direct people to the website.

A business roundtable was held on September 15<sup>th</sup> with JD Fedor from the Department of Corrections and Tim Saunders from Virginia Career Works who spoke on creative ways to hire and recruit employees.

On Saturday, the Healthy Foods Group will be holding its event from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. in the Elba parking lot.

The Board of Supervisors and Economic Development Authority have their joint meeting scheduled for October 11<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Bailey shared that she has hired Trish Luger, a new Administrative Assistant, who will start on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Trish will attend Ag Board meetings, prepare meeting agendas, and take minutes.

## **(6) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT**

Mr. Baker shared that there has only been one sighting of the Spotted Lantern Fly thus far in Bedford County; that sighting was in Forest. He recently learned that this invasive insect does not appear to be a tree fruit threat.

The last value-added calf sale yielded about 600 head in total. The sale overall for in-barn cattle brought approximately \$65.00 premium per head and those that were sold virtually brought about \$125 per head.

Campbell County Cattlemen's Association will be holding its fall meeting at Springlake Stockyard on October 25<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. Bedford producers are invited to attend the event. There will be a meal and an educational meeting to follow that evening.

On Monday, Mr. Baker attended the Central Virginia Livestock Show at the Lynchburg Livestock Market. This is a five-county show held at this central location.

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

Mr. Baumgardner shared that there were about 200 people in attendance at their meeting this week. At that meeting, resolutions were discussed that are to be put forward to the board this year. New members of the board were also elected.

## **(8) COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**a. Education & Events** – On October 15<sup>th</sup> there is a benefit breakfast at Bedford Baptist which will start at 7 a.m. There is also a Stihl 351 Firewood chainsaw raffle occurring as well. A quilt raffle was also held. These fundraisers will help students get to the national convention. Ms. Powers requested that the vet science team attend the next meeting so that students can be recognized.

Lastly, there will be a citrus sale starting next week which will run through the week before Thanksgiving. The fruit will arrive the first week in December.

**1. County Fair update** – Ms. Powers shared that the county fair committee hopes to meet again this month. Mr. Hiss stated that he recently updated the Board of Supervisors regarding the idea of locating the fair next to the Sheriff's Office in the large field. The Board of Supervisors suggested moving forward with some due diligence and research. They will await additional details before committing to this option.

**2. School Ag Programs update** – Ms. Tomlinson stated that there were some great opportunities recently at the state fair for FFA students. They are currently preparing for National Convention. The state vet science team, from Liberty High School, took their national test and math practicum yesterday. They will complete the hands-on portion of the contest in Indiana. They are also practicing for their area federation and area forestry contest.

**b. Marketing & Production** – Mr. Baumgardner spoke on the new law regarding Farm Use tags that will go into effect July 1, 2023. Under the new law, farmers will have to register their vehicles with the DMV and pay taxes on those vehicles that have not been taxed previously. He stated that some counties will allow farmers to bring their Schedule F to the Commissioner of Revenue's Office to be exempt from paying taxes on those Farm Use vehicles and he encouraged Bedford County to do the same. He suggested that the Ag Board write a letter of support to the Board of Supervisors regarding this measure.

Chairman Powers indicated that the Lynchburg Lab will remain open. He was not able to share the details of that proposal, but he did say that he will have more to share in the coming months.

**A motion was made by Mr. Bumgardner, seconded by Mr. Newman, to write a letter of support to the Board of Supervisors and Commissioner of Revenue to allow farmers to submit their Schedule F to be exempt from paying taxes on Farm Use vehicles.**  
**Adopted Unanimously**

**1. Farmer's Market updates** – Mrs. McIntyre indicated that most markets canceled the past weekend due to the hurricane. Both Bedford and Forest markets will go through the end of October. She indicated that it was a very strong market this season.

**c. Land Protection & Conservation** – Mr. Fellers stated that the Land Trust in Roanoke Blue Ridge Land Conservancy recently held its annual fundraising event at the War Memorial in Vinton.

## **(9) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

There was a lengthy discussion about the Agricultural Village (AV) Zoning designation and the by-right permitted uses under that category.

Mr. Hiss indicated that the Code is 24 years old and needs updating. The Planning and Zoning Commission will be reviewing the AV-permitted uses and making recommendations to the board as they deem necessary.

Ms. Powers shared information about a new mobile veterinarian who is based out of Roanoke. Dr. Hannah Varnell specializes in preventative equine medicine. She also works with other large herd animals and offers free initial consultations and telehealth appointments. For additional information on the services her office provides, their website is [WellFarm.org](http://WellFarm.org).

## **(10) ADJOURNMENT**

8:47 PM.