



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

Wednesday, February 8, 2023
7:00 p.m.

Agricultural Board

Present: Jeff Powers (District 1), Joy Powers (District 2), Don Gardner (District 3), Chuck Grove (District 4), Melody Divers (District 6), Pete Fellers (District 7), Matt Baumgardner (At-Large) Sam Gardner (At-Large), Dorothy McIntyre (At-Large), Ken Newman (At-Large), Lindsay Tomlinson (At-Large)

Absent: Ethan Tanner (District 5), Scott Baker (Ext. Agent)

Staff Present: Pam Bailey, Justin Stauder, Trish Luger

Guests: Mickey Johnson, Logan Morris, Johnny Divers, Josh Powers, Carolyn Fellers, Bob Davis

(1) CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Mr. Baumgardner moved, seconded by Mr. Newman, to approve the January 4, 2023, agenda
Adopted Unanimously

(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a. January 4, 2023

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the corrected January 4, 2023, meeting minutes

Mr. Newman moved, seconded by Mr. Baumgardner to approve the January 4, 2023, meeting minutes
Adopted Unanimously

(4) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Mr. Stauder mentioned staff researching the extension farm use tax. Mr. Baumgardner stated there was no need to move forward at this time as it has been postponed for another year. It is expected to go into effect July 2024.

A copy of strategic priorities from the Board of Supervisors was shared. An emphasis was to *create a plan for collaboration opportunities with the agricultural community, school systems and other essential partners*. This information was shared some time ago and Mr. Stauder discussed member's brainstorming ideas so there are no missing gaps or programs, and what areas can be expanded on.

(5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Ms. Bailey attended VEDA Day (Virginia Economic Developers Association) at the Capitol. Ms. Bailey was able to meet with local legislators about economic development initiatives, which included Montvale Terminals. Delegate Matt Farris & Senator Steve Newman requested approximately a half million dollars for Bedford County to complete a redevelopment plan for the 141 acres in Montvale. Information on this project can be found through VDHCD, item #1154H.

The Town of Bedford EDA was awarded a GO Virginia grant to study the need of a metal works training facility at the former Winoa facility. Mary Zirkle is currently working on the RFP and Bedford County EDA is joining in as a partner on the project.

The Virginia Business Ready Sites (VBRS) grant was approved. This will allow phase 2 in New London to become a Tier 3 site. Ms. Bailey is working with the EDA to select an engineering firm.

An emergency services tour was completed last week with Bedford County Fire & Rescue, 911 Communications and the Sheriff's office. All three offices did a fantastic job, along with Fire & Rescue using animal parts to inflate lungs and dress wounds.

Next month's Bedford One tour will be at Virginia Technical Institute. Students will have an opportunity to bring their resume with the possibility of being hired on the spot. An agricultural tour is scheduled this November at Chapel Creek Farms.

Ms. Bailey shared a flyer regarding a business roundtable to learn about the state's apprentice program that her office has scheduled on February 23. Crystal Thrower with the Virginia Dept of Labor and Industry will be speaking, along with Paul Denham from Southern Air about their apprentice program. All Bedford County businesses are welcome to attend.

(6) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

The Central Virginia Livestock Show is scheduled May 6 – 7.

(7) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

Mr. Gardner stated Young Farmers will be meeting Thursday, February 9, 2023, at the County Farm Bureau office with Curt Martin as the new Chairman. Competitions are theoretically geared for ages 18-35, but not limited to.

Mr. Newman mentioned the Board is beginning their legislative discussions for the year. Any items needed for Farm Bureau to review should be presented.

The VAFB Young Farmers Winter Expo is February 24-26 at Berry Hill Resort, South Boston, VA.

Registration can be completed by calling Dottie, Kirk Martin, or anyone on the Young Farmers board.

The Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Conference will be held at The Westin Virginia Beach Town Center, March 10-12, 2023.

(8) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming events

Ms. Powers continues discussions about fair logistics, having been contacted by vendors and the midway provider, who are eagerly waiting a response.

2. School Ag Programs update

Students are gearing up for FFA week February 18-25 and preparing animals for the Central Virginia Livestock show in May. FFA students will be at Southern States on February 18 and Tractor Supply February 19. Liberty FFA is serving a pancake breakfast at Bedford Baptist before the Welcome Home parade as well as participating in the parade. Kids are getting in order their state degrees and proficiency award applications, as well as participating in other organizational activities.

b. Marketing & Production

1. Farmer's Market updates

Ms. McIntyre has been in discussion with Mr. Tuck regarding a possible farmers' market at SML, preferably in the Eastlake area. An area without asphalt is beneficial for the vendors and their products. Mr. Johnson will share contact information for George Aznavorian, owner of the land near the pavilion, but will speak with him first to introduce the idea. Mr. Gardner will put Ms. McIntyre in contact with Ronnie Sutton regarding a future farmers market on Hwy 460 in Montvale.

Vendor pricing varies but currently in Forest the market is \$325 for the season.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers stated the \$25,000 fee for easements, which was discussed at last month's meeting, was a little high. He will be in touch with those contemplating this decision.

Mr. Powers spoke about Mecklenburg County having moved forward with solar. Although plenty of stipulations were put in place, the county has regrets. The solar company is not holding up their end of the deal with buffers or upkeep of the property. There is discussion of shutting down the solar project.

(9) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Mr. Don. Gardner:

- Older, larger oak trees dying. Researchers are at a loss as to their demise. It is possibly due to insects, extended periods of drought or waterlog, above or below ground diseases, or reaching their life span. Cattle that run in the woods stain the wood and timber is reduced in value.

- USDA approved the first vaccine for honeybees to protect against American foul brood, available in the US in 2023.
- Gossypol is a toxic chemical in the cotton plant that helps the plant protect against pests. Cotton seed is a very valuable feed commodity used for dairy cattle and adult beef cattle. Cattle under 500 lbs. should not be fed whole cotton seed as it is toxic. A new variety has reduced levels of gossypol 97% while the foliage and floral parts contain normal levels to protect against pests.

Chairman Powers:

- A meeting with Mr. Johnson, Sheriff Mike Miller, US Representative Morgan Griffith and Chairman Powers was held January 17 at Power's equipment dealership. Discussions included the lack of large animal veterinarians, the need for telehealth for large animal producers, higher beef prices not benefiting the farmer, and food security; America being bought up by other countries. Mr. Griffith can be contacted through his assistant, Jackson.
- Virginia Agriculture Commissioner Joe Guthrie appointed Chairman Powers to the newly formed VDACS animal health laboratory system advisory committee. Chairman Powers represents the Ag Board, Bedford & Campbell Counties, and the whole region in discussions of the Lynchburg animal health laboratory and its possible closing.
- The highly pathogenic Avian influenza had an outbreak in NC, SC, and Virginia. An outbreak near Harrisonburg caused several thousand turkeys and chickens within a 10-mile radius to be tested. Due to the influx, the laboratory was not able to handle testing of cattle and they were brought to the Lynchburg facility.

Mrs. Divers inquired about the county fair and the collaboration from the Tourism Department. The Tourism Director is to serve as an advisor on the fair board. That was not the case at one time, but the last meeting was attended well by many departments.

Simms Farms and Montvale were two areas mentioned that could be used for the county fair. Chairman Powers will have the fair board meeting with administration and will update with information.

Chairman Powers noted the recent passing of Ken Palmer. As one of the first Ag Board members, we paused for a moment in silence to honor Ken.

**(10) ADJOURNMENT
8:16 pm**