



Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek
1257 County Farm Rd. Bedford, VA 24523
Wednesday, June 7, 2023
7:30 p.m.

Agricultural Board

Present: Jeff Powers (District 1), Joy Powers (District 2), Don Gardner (District 3), Ethan Tanner (District 5), Melody Divers (District 6), Pete Fellers (District 7), Sam Gardner (At-Large), Lindsay Tomlinson (At-Large), Dorothy McIntyre (At-Large) Ken Newman (At-Large)

Staff Present: Pam Bailey, Scott Baker, Trish Luger

Absent: Chuck Grove (District 4), Justin Stauder, Deputy County Administrator

Guests: Mickey Johnson, Josh Powers, Johnny Divers

(1) CALL TO ORDER

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

(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Newman moved, seconded by Ms. McIntyre to approve the agenda.
Adopted Unanimously

(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a. May 3, 2023

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the May 3, 2023, meeting minutes. Mr. Newman moved, seconded by Ms. McIntyre to approve the meeting minutes.
Adopted Unanimously

(4) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Mr. Stauder was not in attendance due to a conference.

(5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Ms. Bailey attended a GO Virginia-Region 2 meeting with focus on rural communities and how we differentiate ourselves from an urban core. Most of the funded projects to date have been workforce development related. Priorities and challenges were identified with apprenticeships, entrepreneurship, post pandemic on site employment, childcare, pro-growth sites and infrastructure, housing, K12 career exposure and soft skills were among the top issues discussed.

The childcare center in Moneta that recently closed will be reopening in August or September with a capacity for 80 kids, infants to 12 years old. The Bedford YMCA will have their opening/ribbon cutting within the next couple of weeks.

The 2023 Consultants Forum in Virginia Beach was attended. A highlight from the conference was the need for suitable sites for buildings. We are in the rebirth of the industrial revolution so manufacturing utilities need to be in place along with workforce development. They also covered the housing crisis and affordability, and share the following data:

- A household income of \$4,300, or \$24.85 per hour is needed to afford a 2-bedroom rental, or 90 hours weekly at minimum wage.
- A shrinking workforce, especially men, is due to burn out, work life balance, child/elder care issues, and redefining success.

Additionally, there are two current prospects for the Teva building and we hope to know more between the next few months and year-end.

(6) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

The 2023 Central Virginia Livestock Show is completed and was very successful. This was the 42nd year and 15 exhibitors from Bedford, and we had champion animals and/or champion showmen. Support from Farm Bureau, Young Farmers, Spring Lake, Bedford Beef Producers, Farm Credit VA and so many other companies significantly helped.

The County passed the budget and funds of \$1,500 have been allocated for the stream exclusion/weed management cost share program. It is a 50% cost share up to \$125 per producer to buy herbicides.

The next weaned/vaccinated feeder calf sale will be held September 9 at Springlake Stockyard.

A Centra patient outreach educator in Lynchburg has interest in serving the Ag community. Dehydration and heat stroke for farmers and farm workers are of concern and funds will be used to purchase cooling bandanas.

Virginia Dept of Agriculture does a pesticide disposal program targeted for commercial businesses including farmers, golf courses, and landscapers that generate a lot of pesticides. They will be located at the Lynchburg Livestock Market on Sept 26. Anything will be taken with no questions asked. Scott will update with a flyer.

(7) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

Mr. Sam Gardner had no current updates.

(8) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming events

Mr. Powers stated that a public survey will be sent to the community for feedback on their desires for the fair.

2. School Ag Programs update

Ms. Tomlinson stated the CDLS was very successful and had representation from Bedford County 4-H and FFA, along with new faces.

A good number of kids have signed up for the Pittsylvania 4-H camp.

Staunton River and Liberty High Schools, as well as middle schools, will be gearing up for the FFA state convention and leadership camp in July.

State officer Makenna Garrett will be giving her retiring address Tuesday June 13 at Virginia Tech.

b. Marketing & Production

Mr. Newman did not have any updates.

1. Farmer's Market updates

Montvale – business is picking up and has vendor availability.

Moneta – Eighteen vendors (15 from Bedford) and 500 customers made a strong opening. Sales on June 7 were the same but less customer count as the prior week. Ms. McIntyre will move forward advertising with rack cards, etc. WDBJ 7 ran an article, along with News and Advance taking pictures and an article coming in Smith Mountain Eagle.

Forest – average 1,200 people with close to 50 vendors.

An update on the USDA meat handlers permit – it does not apply to meat being sold directly to the consumer.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers stated Virginia's Land Preservation Tax Credit that gives tax credits to landowners for easements began in 2000. Twenty-three years later, more than 1,275,000 acres have been conserved statewide, making Virginia a national leader in private land conservation.

(9) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Dr. Gardner spoke about the process of fake meat and how it is supposed to be more environmentally sound than traditional beef production. Depending on the methodology, University of California at Davis found that artificial beef creates up to 20 times the greenhouse gas than regular beef production. Fetal calf serum is required to make the fake beef and there is no alternative, so a real beef animal is needed.

(10) ADJOURNMENT

8:03 pm