



Agriculture Economic Development Advisory Board
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek
1257 County Farm Rd. Bedford, VA 24523
August 2, 2023
7:30 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), Sam Gardner (At-Large), Dorothy McIntyre (At-Large), Ken Newman (At-Large)

Staff Present: Pam Bailey, Justin Stauder, Scott Baker, Trish Luger

Absent: Ethan Tanner (District 5) Lindsay Tomlinson (At-Large), Matt Baumgardner (At-Large)

Guests: Mickey Johnson, Bob Davis, Johnny Divers, Andy Dooley, Carol Fellers, Stephen Orange

(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 agenda. Mr. Newman moved, seconded by Ms. McIntyre to approve the agenda.

Adopted Unanimously

(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a. June 7, 2023

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the June 7, 2023, meeting minutes. Mr. Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Powers, to approve the meeting minutes as corrected.

Adopted Unanimously

(4) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Mr. Stauder thanked the fair committee for the recent meeting.

(5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Ms. Bailey presented the new Bedford County brochure, which will aid companies and prospective employees new to the area, by giving an overview of Bedford County. Compliments were made on the brochure but there was concern that Agriculture and its benefit to the county was overlooked. Ms. Bailey made note of this and will update the brochure.

There is still a need for CVCC to fill positions for Career Coaches. The coaches are essential in helping coordinate Bedford One tours. Funds are needed to cover this expense and Ms. Bailey is confirming CVCC has exhausted all avenues before presenting to EDA and Board of Supervisors.

Discussion led to the importance of Agriculture, which is not just farming but includes science, technology, engineering, math, horticulture, vet science, and biology. Due to shortages in areas of agriculture and skilled labor, a suggestion was made to send a letter to the Board of Supervisors, school board, and administration to promote training and hands-on skills. Chairman Powers stated the board would work on a plan the next thirty to sixty days to make suggestions to the Board of Supervisors.

(6) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

August 11th is the Central Virginia Crops Expo at Hatcreek Farms, Brookneal, 8:30 a.m. -1:30 p.m. The spotted lantern fly has been identified six or eight times in the Forest area. It hatches late May and continues until frost.

The Campbell County Cattleman's Association Bus Trip to Lancaster, PA is October 18 - 20. Families are welcome to attend.

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.

(7) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

Mr. Gardner had no current updates.

(8) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming events

2. School Ag Programs update

Makenna Garrett retired as state secretary and Kelsey Weston, former president at Smith Mountain FFA, was recently elected state president. This marks another state president from Bedford.

Approximately over 40 students attended the convention and represented Bedford County very well having received eleven state degrees.

A plan was discussed to recognize Kelsey Weston with a press release. Previous presidents may also be included in the press release to show the history of FFA leadership from Bedford County.

Ms. Powers thanked Mr. Stauder for the work he has completed thus far on the County Fair. Ms. Powers will contact the midway provider for available dates for 2024 and will update the board members at an upcoming meeting.

b. Marketing & Production

Mr. Newman did not have any updates.

1. Farmer's Market updates

Steven Orange from the Montvale Market shared about growth for the first year and is pleased to have new vendor interest. A few high schoolers from Liberty have been selling woodwork and produce.

Ms. McIntyre stated the advertising budget fund of \$7,500 for 3 markets was decreased to \$5,000. With an additional market being added, funds are tight. Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Stauder to investigate overage in the tourism budget as a source of funds.

Mid-season, the markets have brought in approximately \$320,000 for vendors so far this year, with expectation to reach \$750,000.

The Forest market drew 1,200 customers last month and is now seeing 1,700-1,800 customers per month. With increased attendance comes challenges with parking. Patrons can notify the Forest Library Board with concerns that may potentially increase parking. Also, connecting the Forest Rec Center parking lot with a walking path connecting to the library walking path will help give access to 30-40 additional parking spots. The house on site being used for control burn will be constructed into a dental office and will potentially allow an additional 20-30 parking spaces.

Moneta Market currently has eleven vendors and seeing 250-350 customers. Ms. McIntyre may change the time of the market due to slow activity between 6 - 7 p.m. A survey will be distributed for feedback.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers has been continually monitoring solar projects in various counties. In some counties, Board of Supervisors have ordered county planners to make changes to the county zoning ordinance. Bedford County verbally said no to solar facilities, but it is not listed in any zoning.

(9) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A flyer was created for the Coyote Lottery and will run between September 1, 2023, to February 29, 2024.

Mr. Baker will assist with creating tickets for the drawing. Staff will create a press release and disseminate the flier PDF for the Ag Board and others to share.

Ms. Divers mentioned the MRNA vaccine, which the news has mentioned it being used in cattle. The vaccine is not being used in cattle and she feels a resource from the Ag Board would be beneficial to share with the public. Mr. Baker will connect with the vet school for a resource.

ADJOURNMENT

8:46 p.m.