



**Minutes**  
**Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board**  
**Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek**  
**1257 County Farm Rd. Bedford, VA 24523**  
**Wednesday, November 1, 2023**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Agricultural Board**

**Present:** Jeff Powers (District 1), Joy Powers (District 2), Don Gardner (District 3), Chuck Grove (District 4), Ethan Tanner (District 5), Melody Divers, (District 6), Pete Fellers (District 7), Sam Gardner, (At-Large)

**Absent:** Matt Baumgardner (At-Large), Dorothy McIntyre (At-Large), Ken Newman (At-Large), Lindsay Tomlinson (At-Large)

**Staff Present:** Justin Stauder, Scott Baker, Trish Luger

**Guests:** Ms. Tracy Patterson, Commissioner of Revenue  
Dr. Walters & Dr. Young-VDACS  
David McGreevy – Deputy Director, Division of Animal and Food Industry Services

**(1) CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order at 7:26 p.m.

**(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Tanner moved, seconded by Mr. Sam Gardner.

Adopted Unanimously

**(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

**a. October 4, 2023**

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the October 4, 2023, meeting minutes. Mr. Sam Gardner moved, seconded by Mr. Tanner to approve the meeting minutes.

Adopted Unanimously

**(4) Special Appearance:**

Mr. Joe Guthrie, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), spoke via phone regarding working towards enhancing lab services at VDACS. The Lynchburg lab hired Dr. Taylor Young and he was pleased to announce that necropsy has been reinstated.

Dr. Walters stated that Lynchburg, Wytheville, and soon to be Warrenton will be a part of the National Health Laboratory Network. This will allow all four labs to standardize equipment and services.

Mr. McGreevy spoke about expanding labs in Lynchburg, Warrenton & Harrisonburg. These modern designed labs will enhance capacities and offer an afterhours drop off room. [vdacs.virginia.gov](http://vdacs.virginia.gov)

**(5) ADMINISTRATION REPORT**

Ms. Patterson discussed clarity on the farm use tags stating that vehicles under a weight of 7501 lbs. require a cardboard placard. Metal plates are required for vehicles with weight over 7501 lbs.

Ms. Patterson stated her department will do everything in their power to qualify applicants.

**(6) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Ms. Bailey was away on business and did not attend the meeting. Mr. Stauder distributed a brochure for an upcoming Bedford ONE agri-tour at Chapel Creek Farms.

**(7) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT**

The Ag Board received a thank you for the arrangement for Mr. Gross.

Parks & Rec Outdoor Events Coordinator, Lee Whittekind, is planning a Thrive Outside event in April 2024, celebrating the natural outdoors of our county.

Virginia Tech's \$80 million grant to help farmers implement climate-smart practices that could significantly reduce greenhouse gas is not available statewide. Therefore, Bedford County is not able to participate this year. Counties benefitting in the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District are Nelson, Albemarle, Louisa, and Fluvanna. Charles City, James City, New Kent, York County, and the city of Williamsburg, which are in the Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District, will also benefit from this grant.

Mrs. Nancy Johnson passed away Monday, October 28, 2023. A card from the Ag Board will be sent.

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

At the annual Farm Bureau meeting it was stated that rates were expected to rise.

**(9) COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**a. Education & Events**

**1. Upcoming events**

**2. School Ag Programs update**

Chapel Creek Farms had a small group of 4-H children tour their Cider Barn.

Liberty FFA is currently at State Convention with four students receiving their American FFA Degree.

Fruit sales are underway, and connection can be made through an FFA chapter.

**3. County Fair Report**

A county fair meeting is scheduled next week to determine a date and have decisions in place by the end of 2023.

**b. Marketing & Production**

**1. Farmer's Market updates.**

Ms. McFadden stated the Bedford market had a beneficial year with several new fruit and vegetable growers that will continue into 2024 and social media growth of 4,000 followers. The market has become a weekly, positive family social event with youth entrepreneur vendors including Bedford 4-H students from the Virginia Tech Extension Office.

Visitors included the Lieutenant Governor, and Michelle Miller, The Farm Babe.

The market has seen an increase from 250 patrons in 2019 to a height of 500-750 this past season.

The Holiday Markets are scheduled November 18 & December 16 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Ms. Divers spoke of the Montvale Market and the need for continual vendors and social media assistance.

**2. Coyote Lottery**

To date, 47 coyotes have been checked in.

**b. Land Protection & Conservation**

Mr. Fellers noted that Henry, Pittsylvania, and Mecklenburg Counties are questioning their decision to move forward with solar panels. A decision to cap acreage allowed for solar farm development has begun.

**(10) OTHER BUSINESS**

**a. Presentation on proposed public relations committee**

Chairman Powers mentioned two key points for the public relations committee to be successful: job details for each member and working with Economic Development.

Chairman Powers requested a vote to approve a new Public Relations Committee to the Agricultural Board  
Adopted Unanimously

Chairman: Ms. Divers

Members: Ms. Powers & Ms. McIntyre

A draft of the by-laws to reflect four standing committees to the Agricultural Board will be presented and voted on at the December meeting.

**b. Informational items**

Plan to join us for our annual Christmas holiday cheer next month, hosted by Karen. You are welcome to bring a snack to share as we gather at 6:30 p.m.

**(11) ADJOURNMENT**

8:38 p.m.