



Minutes
Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek
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), Matt Baumgardner (At-Large), Sam Gardner (At-Large), Dorothy McIntyre (At-Large), Ken Newman (At-Large), Lindsay Tomlinson (At-Large)

Staff Present: Pam Bailey, Justin Stauder, Trish Luger

Guests: Monica & Tim Bowman – Ag in the Classroom

(1) CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Adopted Unanimously

(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a. February 7, 2023

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the February 7, 2024, meeting minutes.

Mr. Newman moved, seconded by Mr. Gardner to approve the meeting minutes.

Adopted Unanimously

(4) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

The Board of Supervisors will be hearing a text amendment for the zoning ordinance regarding adding agriculture as a special use in the commercial district. Previously a rezone would have to be completed. This is due to a nursery desiring to expand on a neighboring property not zoned correctly.

(5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

VDACS is opening another round of AFID grants for any Ag production up to \$50,000. The spring round runs March 25 - May 6 and Bedford County will provide matching funds up to \$50,000.

Wellfarm Meats is under contract at Tucker Terrace in Evington, pending grant funding.

SMLCA is celebrating Ag Day on March 19 with a tractor parade followed by a trade show display. The community is welcome from 1-2:00 pm and economic development and tourism staff will be in attendance promoting Bedford Grown.

(6) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

The next Weaned and Vaccinated Feeder Calf sale will be on March 15.

The Central Virginia Cattleman's Conference is April 5 at Wright Brothers Beef. Dr. Young from the VDACS lab will be in attendance.

Parks & Rec is coordinating Thrive Outside on April 6 from 9 am – 6 pm. Multiple vendors on-site will offer activities for the whole family.

Well-water testing will begin this spring and kits can be picked up the first week of April. Testing will begin April 10.

(7) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

Young Farmers will have a meeting on March 7 at 7:00 p.m., at the office.

(8) SPECIAL PRESENTATION – Ms. Monica Bowman - Ag in the Classroom Ambassador

(9) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming events

2. School Ag Programs update

February was busy with activities to celebrate FFA.

March has brought contests for 4-H & FFA such as livestock judging, stockmen contests, public speaking, tractor operators, and tractor troubleshooting.

Literacy week is approaching, and contacts have been made to read in the schools.

Activities are planned for Ag week.

The Stockmens Contest is later this month and plans are underway to attend.

Liberty FFA will be at Liberty Lake Park on May 15 for their version of Food for America. Anyone with facilitation or booth interest can speak to Ms. Tomlinson.

Strawberries and plant sales are the current fundraisers.

Liberty High school is hosting a reverse career fair on April 24 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. and needs assistance. This fair will allow students to spotlight their skills and talents. Ms. Tomlinson may be reaching out for participation.

Smith Mountain FFA is hosting an all-you-can-eat breakfast on March 16 at Chamblissburg Ruritan Club and a spaghetti dinner is also being proposed.

3. County Fair Report

The county fair, scheduled for August 23 -25, has been approved by the Board of Supervisors. A press release and new webpage are expected within the next few days and updates will follow weekly. The educational tour is set for August 22. If you desire information to be included in the packets being distributed to the teachers, please inform the Fair board.

b. Marketing & Production

1. Farmer's Market updates

Ms. McIntyre has a vendor meeting at the Forest Library, at 6 p.m., with much interest. A market on March 9 has approximately thirty-five vendors attending. The Summer market season will begin at the end of April and run through the Saturday before Thanksgiving in November.

The Moneta market has a meeting for potential members on April 4 at 6 p.m. at the Moneta Library. Additional vendors are needed, especially a bread artisan.

A change in location to the Moneta Library is in the works and will solve issues that occurred at the previous space. The market will run from May 1 – August 27.

The Montvale market is potentially changing its market to the second and third Saturdays each month, beginning April 20 and ending September 21.

2. Coyote Lottery

The lottery brought in 143 coyotes.

\$1,000 winner-Josh Rupe

\$500 winners – Josh Rupe, Junior Harris, Dwain Bever, Hunter Huff, and Jeff Williams whose name was drawn twice.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

Mr. Fellers stated Senate Bill 697 was carried over for another year. He spoke about the Halifax Solar blackout: Supervisors put halt on applications for now after crowd descends on meeting.

Dr. Gardner spoke about an article regarding solar and trying to move the bill through, taking the power away from the local people. To be net zero energy by 2050 would require enough solar panel components to occupy an area as big as the state of Texas. Solar companies are currently bribing counties to sign up for solar.

Mr. Johnson spoke about damage being caused by wind energy.

Mr. Baker spoke about funds being available for Ag BMP.

d. Public Relations

The PR committee strives to bring information into the county and updates to Bedford Grown and speaking to local farmers has proved beneficial.

(10) OTHER BUSINESS

a. Informational items

Mr. Fellers spoke about author Bruce Ingram, deer population, recruiting hunters, and the need for more local deer processors as hunters are faced with driving long distances for this service.

The Bedford Community Health Foundation teamed up with the Extension Office, Parks & Rec, Hunters for the Hungry to hold a canning event to make venison stew at the New London Cannery, on March 7. The Community Health Foundation will distribute the cans throughout its network. Additional canning events for this cause will follow.

The wildfires in Texas and the desire to coordinate a truckload of hay to Texas were discussed.

Mickey Johnson's presence at monthly Ag meetings was commended.

Ms. Powers brought attention to a question from a farmer desiring to know the Ag Board's stance on cannabis, which stems from a recent arrest of a Bedford farmer. Discussion included commercial cultivation and insurance due to an employee's negligence under the influence.

(11) ADJOURNMENT

8:28 pm