



## Minutes

**Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board  
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek  
1257 County Farm Rd. Bedford, VA 24523  
Wednesday, September 4, 2024  
7:30 p.m.**

**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); Dorothy McIntyre (At-Large); Matt Baumgardner (At-Large); Sam Gardner (At-Large); Ken Newman (At-Large)

**Absent:** Lindsay Tomlinson (At-Large)

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

**Guests:** Gary Arrington, Mickey Johnson, Josh Powers, Johnny Divers, Carolyn Fellers

### (1) CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

### (2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Baumgardner moved, seconded by Mr. Newman to approve the agenda.

Adopted Unanimously

### (3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

#### a. August 7, 2024

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the August 7, 2024, meeting minutes. Mr. Baumgardner moved, seconded by Mr. Newman to approve the meeting minutes.

Adopted Unanimously

### (4) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Citizen engagement was obtained for a Parks & Rec Master study on county residents' interest in outdoor recreation. The final plan will be discussed at the Board of Supervisors meeting on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### (5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The new Business Programs Coordinator, Lauren Thurston, has been hired to replace Holley Scheffel. Her extensive marketing experience will help support the department.

Carlos Class, CEO and Co-Founder of Solarix, who recently acquired the former TEVA property, is an avid outdoor enthusiast with plans to incorporate bike trails into the property.

### (6) GUEST SPEAKERS

**Justin Folks – Deer Project Leader/Virginia Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries**

**Gary Arrington/Special Projects Coordinator/Hunters for the Hungry**

Dr. Gardner discussed the issue of deer damage and proposed a solution to protect farmers' crops by developing a program to incentivize the hunting of female deer.

Mr. Folks announced that through Hunters for the Hungry, hunters can donate antlerless deer to a local processor and receive a ticket for a chance to win various prizes. The New London Cannery will then create venison stew, which will be distributed to feeding programs. The program will run from September 14, 2024, to January 31, 2025, and prizes will be drawn on February 2, 2025. Hunters for the Hungry desire to surpass last year's donation of 1,128 cans of venison stew. The processing costs will be covered by Hunters for the Hungry.

Brochures and flyers are available for your consideration.

**(7) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT**

The next Weaned/Vaccinated Sale at Springlake Stockyard will be on September 13, with take up on September 12. Significant wind damage occurred in the White House area on Thursday evening, causing fence damage and falling trees. The Weather Service referred to it as a Microburst.

Mr. Baker will collect information on fallen Ash trees after a storm.

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

Young Farmers will have an informational meeting on Saturday, September 7, at 10 a.m. at the Virginia Cooperative Extension. Speakers include Scott Baker, FSA, and Dr. Cundiff.

The State Fair is scheduled from September 27 to October 6. Farm Bureau members are entitled to discount tickets.

Farm Bureau voted to change its \$1,000 donation from the Coyote Lottery to the deer program.

Doctors have been fielding concerns from residents about the use of biosolids on nearby farms. The neighbor acquires a medical form to expand the buffer zone around the farmer's land to resolve this issue.

**(9) COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**a. Education & Events**

**1. Upcoming events**

The Blue Ridge Bee Festival is a free event on September 14 from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. at Falling Creek Park.

**2. School Ag Programs update**

**3. County Fair Report**

The Fair Board is extremely pleased with the outcome of the fair and thankful to all the volunteers who worked diligently to accommodate 20,000 guests without any incidents. Ms. Powers thanked Bedford County employees and the Sheriff's Department for their presence, assistance, and supervision.

Ms. Tomlinson and the Liberty FFA prepared and staffed the Old MacDonald Tent, allowing interaction with fairgoers.

Kara Thompson with WFXR recognized the Bedford County Fair and the nostalgia of visiting Grandpa Ike's Donuts. Vendor sales were very promising and exceeded expectations.

The first Ken Palmer Memorial Scholarships have been awarded. Nick Dewitt, a senior at Liberty High School, took first place and hopes to represent Bedford at the state competition. Toni Redford, the second-place recipient, is enthusiastic about representing Bedford in the Miss Virginias Association of Fairs Pageant. The event was sponsored by Farm Bureau Young Farmers.

Future plans for this site are currently undecided, but it has been determined that shuttle parking has been beneficial. The fair was highly successful due to the combined effort of the entire team and friendly patrons.

**b. Marketing & Production**

The Moneta market completed its season last Wednesday. Sales were satisfactory and returning vendors are in place for next year. The location is suitable, but not as visible as its previous location.

The Forest Market is continuing to draw large crowds. There have been some parking issues, and completing the path from Forest Recreation Center on Rustic Village Road will be beneficial. Currently, there are no updates on the Bedford or Montvale markets.

**c. Land Protection & Conservation**

Mr. Fellers currently has no updates.

Chairman Powers appreciated Mr. Fellers' commitment to addressing the deer population.

**d. Public Relations**

It was a productive and rewarding week for the PR committee as they used the County Fair for their first social media post, which received over 6,000 views. It was evident from the compliments expressed at the fair that attendees were eagerly anticipating this long-awaited event.

The first podcast was created by Media Squatch and featured Mr. Divers & Ms. Powers. Ronnie Gross will be featured next discussing the September 14 event at the Orchard, and Ms. McIntyre will share about the Farmer's Markets.

**(10) OTHER BUSINESS**

**a. Informational items**

Dr. Gardener is focused on the deer population, while Chairman Powers is dedicated to maintaining the Coyote Lottery and is currently seeking sponsorships.

**ADJOURNMENT**

8:23 p.m.