



Minutes

**Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek
1257 County Farm Rd. Bedford, VA 24523
Wednesday, October 2, 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); Pete Fellers (District 7); Dorothy McIntyre (At-Large); Matt Baumgardner (At-Large); Ken Newman (At-Large)

Absent: Justin Stauder; Melody Divers, (District 6); Sam Gardner (At-Large); Lindsay Tomlinson (At-Large)

Staff Present: Pam Armstrong, Trish Luger, Scott Baker

Guests: Josh Powers, Carolyn Fellers

(1) CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Powers called the meeting to order at 7:30 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. September 4, 2024

Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the corrected September 4, 2024, meeting minutes. Mr. Newman moved, seconded by Mr. Baumgardner to approve the meeting minutes.

Adopted Unanimously

(4) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Currently, there is nothing to report.

(5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Ms. Armstrong received the latest VDAC AFID Grant information. The grant opens on October 1 and closes on November 15. The desire is to potentially pursue improvement operations for the cannery. Previous recipients of the grant include Bramble Hollow Farm and ECO Friendly.

(6) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

The Weaned/Vaccinated Sale at Springlake Stockyard on September 13th brought in an approximate 275 head total. Prices on the loads have not yet been obtained.

The hurricane isolated tornado on Dickerson Mill Rd. caused agricultural tree damage. Localized flooding on the North side occurred but was not related to the tornado. It was stated that anyone with damage should take pictures of damage before cutting or removing any debris.

Ronnie Gross donated 1,000 lbs. of apples to the Cannery. Many volunteers came together to process 200 qt. size cans of applesauce.

It was stated that an increase in the creek spraying program would be beneficial due to the rising cost of chemicals.

(7) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

A meeting last night was attended by over 300 guests. Several farmers were acknowledged, and the Deer Program was introduced, with many just learning about this service. Five resolutions are being presented for discussion.

(8) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming events

The Coyote Lottery gained additional sponsorships from Simmon's Auctions, Gross's Orchard, & SafeSide Tactical. The participant can enter an unlimited number of tickets but can only win one prize. Chairman Powers will email the PDF to all members, and Mr. Baker will ensure that the tickets are processed.

2. School Ag Programs Update

Smith Mountain FFA will be selling Thanksgiving turkeys. An advisor can assist with the purchase. Liberty High School, Liberty Middle, and Smith Mountain have been competing in various state fair competitions with Bedford County being well represented and receiving numerous ribbons. Both high school chapters have been busy preparing for the National Convention and are in the midst of fundraisers. Several students will be receiving their American degrees from both chapters at National Convention. Many students will be attending the Middle School Leadership Conference at Virginia Tech. Additional opportunities for students include a Teach Ag Conference and Ag Education contest. Students are being offered numerous exciting opportunities to take part in community events.

b. Marketing & Production

The Montvale market and its vendors completed their season last Wednesday. The Forest market is going strong, and visitors are beginning to utilize the new asphalted connection to the rec center.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

An article in the Farm Bureau Magazine stated the amount of land being lost nationwide between 2017-2022 is enough to equal the state of Maine. President Biden made an emergency declaration for the state of VA, including Bedford County and surrounding SW counties due to Hurricane Irene. Mr. Baumgardner will forward the press release.

d. Public Relations

The committee is scheduling podcasts with Fables and Feathers Winery and a Farm Bureau State Legislative Specialist. Mr. Grove is scheduled to be featured on a podcast. The committee is also featuring Fun Fact Friday on social media as another way to engage its audience. Due to a power outage, the County Fair meeting will be rescheduled.

(9) OTHER BUSINESS

a. Informational items

Dr. Gardner spoke about the doe reduction project coordinated with Hunters for the Hungry. Bedford is fortunate to have three local processors and has noticed an increase in deer since last year. Ms. Powers was nominated as Citizen of the Year by the Bedford Chamber of Commerce. Karston Burch, Legislative Assistant for Delegate Eric Zehr was introduced and welcomed to the meeting. Delegate Zehr and Mr. Burch followed up on agricultural issues Dr. Gardner was experiencing and they will continue to address regulatory and legislative issues. Mr. Baker provided information on standing dead ash trees, which typically remain standing for 3-5 years after death. USDA Wildlife Services can assist with managing wildlife conflicts.

ADJOURNMENT

8:11 pm