



Minutes

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek
1257 County Farm Rd. Bedford, VA 24523
Wednesday, May 7, 2025
7:30 p.m.

Present: Joy Powers (*District 2*); Don Gardner (*District 3*); Ethan Tanner (*District 5*); Melody Divers (*District 6*); Pete Fellers (*District 7*); Lindsay Tomlinson (*At-Large*; **arrived at 7:44**); Dorothy McIntyre (*At-Large*); Ken Newman (*At-Large*); Matt Baumgardner (*At-Large*)

Absent: Jeff Powers (*District 1*); Chuck Grove (*District 4*); Sam Gardner (*At-Large*); Niki Feazell

Staff Present: Pam Armstrong, Justin Stauder, Scott Baker

Guests: None present

(1) CALL TO ORDER

- Vice Chairman, Dr. Don Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Dr. Gardner called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Baumgardner moved, seconded by Mr. Ken Newman, to approve the agenda. Adopted Unanimously

(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – April 2, 2025

- Dr. Gardner called for a motion to approve the April 2, 2025, minutes. Correction of April 26, 2025, for the Bedford Market opening noted and made. Mr. Ken Newman moved to approve as amended, seconded by Mr. Baumgardner. Adopted Unanimously.

(4) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

- Real Estate tax bills have been mailed throughout the county. Residents with any questions should contact the county Treasurer's office.
- The groundbreaking for the animal shelter expansion is happening next week.
- Parks & Rec is still in the process of hiring a new Director. The Spring Events Series began this past Friday May 2 with First Fridays at Falling Creek Park. The Arts & Drafts Festival is being held on Saturday May 10.
- Pickle Ball Courts project remains underway.
- Disc Golf course maintenance is also underway, and the course should be re-opened to the public on June 1, should the project remain on time.
- Fire & Rescue – Deputy Fire Chief of Administration position hiring is wrapping up. Emergency Management tabletop exercise for county employees and stake holders being held May 8.
- Toilet concerns at the Forest Farmers Market and Library are being discussed, with no further updates currently.

(5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

- Economic Development Week begins next week May 12.
- Business Appreciation Event being held tomorrow May 8 from 4-6:00 pm at Venue 109. This is a floating event and everyone is invited.
- May 14 at 1:30pm the Susie G. Gibson Science and Technology Center CTE signing day is being held. Career Tech Education students will commit to employment with employers from across the region.

- Ag Focused Bedford One Tour idea was discussed and will be brought to the Business Programs Coordinator to possibly be held at future date during the upcoming 2025-2026 school year.

(6) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

- Spring crops will most likely be affected heavily by the most recent drought. Disaster programs are available if the threshold is met by the value of lost crops.
- The pull behind poultry litter spreader is now available for the public to rent. “This is Bedford” community printout has additional information regarding the spreader and the rental options.
- Bedford 4H & FFA Youth performed very well at the Central Virginia Livestock Show. The awarding will be completed on May 22.

(7) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

- The Farm Transition meeting was held April 29. Several community members were in attendance looking for more information on being able to transition their farm to the next generation. Scott Baker added that the Farm Transition program is an excellent opportunity for families to work one-on-one with members within the program to obtain guidance for farm transitions.
- The Bedford County Farm Bureau was present at the Central Virginia Livestock Show in support of the FFA youth of Bedford County.

(8) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

i. Upcoming events

- Ms. Powers gave an update regarding the Bedford County Fair. A public announcement is being made next week, Wednesday, May 14. All elements of the fair will be afforded, just not at the same time and in the same place.
- Ms. Powers was able to attend the Virginia Governor’s Agricultural Trade Conference representing Bedford.

ii. School Ag Programs Update - Lindsay Tomlinson

- The Central Virginia Livestock Show was great and ran very smoothly.
- Several of the students are getting ready to attend the Washington Leadership Conference. Cost being \$1,000.00 per student. Be on the lookout for fundraising within the community to help raise funds for the students to attend.
- The State Convention camp is approaching. Fundraising is happening currently for those students as well.
- Liberty Middle School will host Mobile Dairy on May 20 with the hope Staunton River will be able to host her as well.
- Drive a tractor to school day will be held this month as well.
- Staunton River currently has three Ag Teacher positions open.

b. Marketing & Production

i. Farmer’s Market updates

- Moneta Market opened on May 7 with 160 attendees.
- Forest’s 15th Season has started. Forest has held two markets to date with 1,300 attending the first, 1,600 attending the second. No new vendors are currently being accepted. They have 125 vendors with 35-40 as full-time vendors.
- Bedford and Montvale have both held one market to date.

ii. Coyote Lottery –

- Ended on March 29. All winners have been contacted. Removing from agenda going forward until next season.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

- Nothing new to report.

d. Public Relations

- May is Beef Month.
- May 8 will be the 10th podcast held. Ethan Tanner will be making his first appearance.
- The Collaboration with the Bedford County Public Library System is coming together. Moneta Public Library will host the first Local Ag Road Show, on Monday May 12 from 2-3:00pm as a drop-in event.
- Facebook page has over 500 followers. Farm Producer's Directory is constantly being updated.

(9) OTHER BUSINESS

a. Informational items

- Divers Farm is giving away one ticket to the Central Virginia Business Collation Empower Women Seminar being held May 16 from 9:00-3:00. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.
- Mr. Gardner extended a Thank You to the Bedford County Farm Bureau for the letter provided to the Board of Supervisors regarding the special use permit for the biosolids storage building on his farm, along with the Ag Board.
- Scott Baker stated a new 4-H Agent came on board April 12.
- Kids' Market Place being held at Montvale May 8, and then another Kids' Market at Moneta Market May 9.

(10) ADJOURNMENT

8:30 pm.