



Minutes

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek
1257 County Farm Rd. Bedford, VA 24523
Wednesday, September 3, 2025
7:30 p.m.

Present: Jeff Powers (*District 1; Chairman*), Joy Powers (*District 2*), Chuck Grove (*District 4*); Ethan Tanner (*District 5*); Melody Divers (*District 6*); Pete Fellers (*District 7*), Dorothy McIntyre (*At-Large*); Ken Newman (*At-Large*); Josh Powers (*Guest*), Sam Gardner (*At-Large*), Katelynn Trask (*Guest*), Matt Baumgardner (*At-Large*)

Absent: Don Gardner (*District 3; Vice Chairman*), Lindsay Tomlinson (*At-Large*), Mickey Johnson (*Guest*), Johnny Divers (*Guest*), Justin Stauder (*Deputy County Administrator*)

Staff Present: Pam Armstrong, Scott Baker, Niki Feazell

(1) CALL TO ORDER

- Chairman Powers called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Sam Gardner moved, seconded by Mr. Ken Newman, to approve the agenda.
Adopted unanimously by members present.

(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – August 6, 2025

- Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the August 6, 2025, minutes. Mr. Sam Gardner moved to approved meeting minute, seconded by Mr. Ken Newman.
Adopted unanimously by members present.

(4) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

- Nothing new to report

(5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

- Mrs. Armstrong reported VDACS has opened another round of AFID grants. The requirements are for infrastructure improvements in development that supports local food production and sustainable agriculture. It is a \$50,000 grant that is matched by the Board of Supervisors. Applications open October 1st-31st.
- Mrs. Armstrong also reported having spoken with Ms. Dorothy McIntyre regarding a farmer's market survey in hopes of having one for producers and one for consumers to determine what they look for in a farmer's market experience. Currently there are four within Bedford County.

(6) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

- Mr. Baker followed up regarding the Johnson Grass infestation in grass hay fields and how that is a growing issue. He did reach out to our weed specialist

where there is nothing labeled on the East Coast that would selectively control Johnson grass in cool season grass hay.

- Mr. Baker also provided a follow-up on the reorganization and reenergizing of the Bedford Beef Producers Association. There are a couple of younger producers that are interested, one of those being Peyton Stanley. Peyton reached out to the local Farm Bureau that does the estate planning programs and is trying to get on his schedule for probably early 2026 to do a public meeting on estate planning and farm transitions.
- VDACS was awarded several million dollars by the USDA to provide relief to those impacted by hurricane Helene. Bedford is an eligible locality, as there was mild damage due to that storm. That application process has not begun yet.

(7) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

- The annual meeting is scheduled for next month, on October 7th.
- It is currently resolution time at the Farm Bureau. Resolutions can be submitted locally. Bedford County can submit five annually to be presented in front of legislators.

(8) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

1. Upcoming events

i. Bedford County Fair Report

- The Bedford County Fair carnival was recently held at Liberty Lake Park. It was a great success.
- 4-H and FFA all worked together to keep the Old McDonald tent staffed all weekend. It was a group effort.
- Livestock and Horse Show was held last weekend. Over 70 exhibitors came to the horse show for the first year. All four species were present at the livestock show on Sunday.

ii. School Ag Programs Update

- Josh Powers was contacted and asked to return to Staunton River for the next month in interim until the new hire can be established.
- With the new school year starting, all chapters are currently working on fundraising and getting contests together. Staunton River Middle School also filled the vacant Ag teacher position as well.
- The Ken Palmer memorial scholarship contest extended its deadline until September 10. The contest winner will be announced September 16 at the Bedford Boys Tribute Center.

b. Marketing & Production

- Nothing new to report.

i. Farmer's Market updates

- The Moneta Farmer's Market finished up this past week. Overall, it was not a terrible season for the market. Signage continued to be an issue. Ms. McIntyre stated she will be looking into two different signage options for next season. Next season the market time will change to 9 a.m. - noon, May-August 2026.
- Forest Market had its highest customer count this past weekend at 2,100.
- New vendor inquiries are being reviewed. November market times will change to 9 a.m. - noon, the 1st-22nd due to daylight savings and lack of daytime hours.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

- Nothing new to report.

d. Public Relations

- Last month's Ag Podcast discussed Farmer's Markets. Last month also marked the 1-year anniversary of the podcast launch.
- Facebook had over 75,000 views within the last 28 days, for an 18% increase from last month. Also, the page now has 800 followers.
- PR Committee has meeting scheduled for September 10th to look at upcoming year 2026.

(9) OTHER BUSINESS

a. Informational items

- Big Otter Mill is holding its fall fundraiser on October 11th. Additional donations are needed in stew beef, cream, and volunteers.
- Bee Festival will be held on Saturday September 13th, 10:00-6:00.

(10) ADJOURNMENT

- 8:15pm