



Minutes

Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Board
Peaks Conference Room at Falling Creek
1257 County Farm Rd. Bedford, VA 24523
Wednesday, October 1, 2025
7:30 p.m.

Present: Jeff Powers (*District 1; Chairman*), Joy Powers (*District 2*), Don Gardner (*District 3; Vice Chairman*), Chuck Grove (*District 4*), Ethan Tanner (*District 5*), Melody Divers (*District 6*), Pete Fellers (*District 7*), Dorothy McIntyre (*At-Large*), Josh Powers (*Guest*), Sam Gardner (*At-Large*), Katelynn Trask (*Guest*), Matt Baumgardner (*At-Large*), Johnny Divers (*Guest*)

Absent: Ken Newman (*At-Large*), Lindsay Tomlinson (*At-Large*), Mickey Johnson (*Guest*), Pam Armstrong, (*Economic Development Director*), Niki Feazell (*Administrative Assistant*)

Staff Present: Justin Stauder (*Deputy County Administrator*), Lauren Thurston (*Business Programs Coordinator*) Scott Baker (*Extension Office Director*)

(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. Matt Baumgardner moved, seconded by Mr. Sam Gardner, to approve the agenda. Adopted unanimously by members present.

(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – September 3, 2025

- Chairman Powers called for a motion to approve the September 3, 2025, minutes. Mr. Matt Baumgardner moved to approve meeting minute, seconded by Mr. Sam Gardner. Adopted unanimously by members present.

(4) ADMINISTRATION REPORT

- The county currently has public comment open for the landfill permit. Bedford County is modifying the current permit; action is tied to correcting overfill and closure of one existing cell within the county landfill. County will apply for a new cell once overfill errors are corrected. Comment is open until October 20th; additional plans for going forward are available at the Public Library currently.
- The government shutdown will not affect Bedford County outside of Social Services and the County Nursing Home due to funding, otherwise the county will remain running accordingly.

(5) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

- Lots 15 and 16 at the New London Business and Technology Park are coming to completion. Remaining grading due to be completed by Thanksgiving, majority

of grading is finished along with stormwater. Road has been cut in and graveled. BRWA continues to work on utility extensions still needed and should be wrapped up by month's end.

- The EDA recently held strategic planning discussions and meetings over the past several weeks. There will be a joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors on October 14th where those new ideas and priorities can be discussed and focused on, which will allow open dialogue with the board as far as maintaining course of identifying new project areas for their upcoming year.

(6) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REPORT

- VDACS grant portal is now open for farms that were impacted by hurricane Helene. Application portal is open for 45 days and applications can only be submitted through online portal.
- Bedford County Beef Producers Association met again recently. A winter meeting is set for January 20, 2026, at Springlake Stockyard where the Farm Bureau State Planning Specialist will be speaking.

(7) BEDFORD COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMERS REPORT

- No new Young Farmers report
- Bedford County Farm Bureau's next scheduled annual meeting is happening October 7th at 6:00, with dinner at 7:00 and the business meeting following at 8:00 to discuss new resolutions to present to legislators and local government.

(8) COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Education & Events

i. Upcoming events

a) Bedford County Fair Report

- The Bedford County Fair/Carnival held recently at Liberty Lake Park, along with the Horse & Livestock Show held at Tom's farm, were all great successes this year.
- The Ken Palmer memorial scholarship contest was held on September 17th at the Bedford Boys Tribute Center, where the local youth FFA turnout was very well.
- The first Contest Hall partnership with Centerfest, organized by Carolyn Fellers, was held at the warming center in September, with several local participants having great success.

ii. School Ag Programs update

- The fulltime Ag teacher position at Staunton River High school has been filled.
- Liberty High School and FFA sent several students to participate in this year's State Fair.
- Beginning next year, the state will require 100% participation among each FFA Chapter. Dues are set at 3 levels – national, state and local but not all dues were previously required. With the new requirement, all students will have to be FFA members at 100% of each chapter. For example, if there are 250 students enrolled in Ag classes and only 80 are actual due-paying members, an additional 170 students will be required to pay dues, which could affect smaller chapters negatively. Community participation will be needed.

b. Marketing & Production

i. Farmer's Market updates

- No new farmers market report. Participation was limited in recent markets due to weather.
- Dr. Gardner presented information for the 2025-2026 Hunters for the Hungry deer management project raffle.
- The coyote lottery is on hold for the time being.

c. Land Protection & Conservation

- Nothing new to report.

d. Public Relations

- Last month's podcast was about All Things Bee. The local Blue Ridge Bee Festival was held on September 13th as well. Layman's Farm will be the guest for next month's podcast.
- Facebook activity continues to grow with 898 followers with a lot of page engagement.

(9) OTHER BUSINESS

i. Informational items

a) Data Center Information – Time Permitting

- Data Centers were discussed, along with the potential negative affects those centers have on local counties. Additionally, the strain of local water and power systems. The biggest impact of rural agriculture. Different options for updating current resolutions and zoning were mentioned. The board plans to continue ongoing discussion at future meetings.

(10) ADJOURNMENT

8:20 pm