

Augusta County Agriculture Industry Board Minutes

*Thursday, January 16th, 2024; 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Augusta County Extension Office Basement Meeting Room*

Members in attendance: *Brian Riddle, Jeremy Shiflett, Cole Heizer, Andrew Crummett, Sonny Balsley, Karl Kiracofe, John Benner*

Members Absent: Kevin Phillips (with notice), Brian Riddle (with notice)

Sonny opened the meeting at 6 pm. The board provided introductions and welcomed the newest member Karl Kiracofe to the board.

Old Business

John reviewed the budget actions taken since last meeting. There is \$500 support sent to Virginia Cattlemen's Association for the Legislative Steak Fry. John also mentioned that \$245 would be sent to Augusta Extension for covering the BRCC Plecker Center rental for the Risk Management Seminar on Non-Insured Crop Program and Pasture Range and Forage Insurance.

Sonny Balsley: What other funds did we use so far this fiscal year? John: \$500 for Fort Defiance High School FFA competition teams and \$250 for the 4-H Skill-a-thon team. Therefore \$1,495 of budget spent, while \$5,265 remains.

John stated that he had shared edits and suggestions on the 2014-2015 Comprehensive Plan update with the county planners. It was decided to extend an invitation to the county planners to come to a future meeting in March or April.

New Business

John mentioned an upcoming seminar, co-sponsored by Extension and the Augusta County Farm Bureau on land conservation easements. The meeting is to be held March 27, 2025 at BRCC.

John mentioned the Market Animal Show Fundraiser is coming up on February 1, 2025. Sonny Balsley asked the board what the board wished to do with regard to the fundraiser. It was decided to set the support for the Market Animal Show to be \$3,000, \$750 of which would be for the David Fiske Recordbook Award.

FY2026 Budget Request. John stated that the Augusta County Fair was seeking assistance in purchasing a new weather station to assist them in collecting weather data for their rain insurance provider. Jeremy Shiflett: Is there a way that this weather station can be used to provide more accurate drought data? John: Yes, a weather station can upload data to Weather Underground, NWS/NOAA to help provide info to the drought monitor. The fair will also cover a percentage of the cost.

Jeremy Shiflett: Are they planning to hold an Agriculture Gala next year? John: Yes, that is a possibility. Andrew Crummett: Would be good to provide resources to start up small ag ventures, including breweries.

Jeremy Shiflett: It would be beneficial if we had the resources to partner with commodity groups and associations, Virginia Cattlemen's Association, Virginia Grain Producer's Association, etc., to provide

educational programs for farmers. These educational programs could focus on adoption and adaptation of new technologies.

After further discussion, it was determined that the FY 26 budget request would be \$7500. This would allow current support of Market Animal Show and youth programs, while increasing resources to host other programs.

Next meeting date was then scheduled, TBA March 18, 19, 20 or April 8, 9 or 10. With no further business, Sonny adjourned the meeting.

Post Meeting Addendum: John followed up with the board members to inquire if the Ag Industry Board would be willing to help sponsor the Land Conservation Seminar co-hosted by the Augusta Farm Bureau on March 27. The board agreed that a amount of \$150 would be appropriate as a sponsorship to be used towards the refreshments for the meeting.