

Augusta County Agriculture Industry Board Minutes

*Thursday, September 11th, 2025; 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM
Augusta County Extension Office Basement Meeting Room*

Members in attendance: *Kevin Phillips, Jeremy Shiflett, Cole Heizer, Andrew Crummett,*

Absent with Notice: *Brian Riddle, Sonny Balsley*

John opened the meeting after 6 pm and noted that both Brian and Sonny had some things that had come up that prevented them from being able to attend.

New Business

Augusta 4-H Meat Judging Team Sponsorship. John shared the sponsorship request letter from the Augusta 4-H Meat Judging team. The Augusta 4-H Meat Judging team is headed to the National 4-H Meat Judging Contest and is raising funds to support the expenses of the trip. The team also went to a Texas Tech Meat Judging Camp during the summer, which their current fundraiser efforts will help cover expenses from that trip as well. The team is holding a carwash fundraiser and is selling carwash coupons to help fund the trip as well.

Jeremy Shiflett – We do need a protocol on handling these requests. John Benner: We approved a “Youth Development Fund”, maximum of \$1,000 for these requests. Discussion centered on how to handle multiple youth sponsorship requests each year. It is possible multiple schools or 4-H clubs may request support in one year. Jeremy Shiflett: guideline could be that we could support teams on a first come first serve basis or put a minimum of \$150 toward a team going to a regional contest, more if they are going toward a national contest. Karl Kiracofe: There are a lot of Augusta County Schools’ competitive teams, not just in agriculture. Cole Heizer: Since it may be impossible to know how many requests we can get in a year, we should plan to have a maximum per team. Karl then made a motion to approve \$500 for the meat judging team. The motion was seconded by Cole Heizer and approved by unanimous vote. Jeremy asked John to continue to refine the guidelines for youth development support. John stated that he would do so.

Farm Bureau is hosting an Estate Planning Workshop on October 7, 2025, at the Weyers Cave Community Center one day after the annual meeting of the Augusta Farm Bureau at Weyers Cave. The Farm Bureau is hosting the free estate planning workshop, with the main speaker being Brian Parks, of Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance. Expenses of the meeting include the cost of the meal and facility rental. Prior to the meeting John had asked the board members if they agreed to sponsor the meeting for \$200. All of the board members approved. John stated he would check with Farm Bureau on where to direct a check.

Old Business

John shared copies of selected sections of the Comprehensive Plan that pertained to agriculture with the board. The board reviewed the sections. Kevin Phillips: It would be good for future consideration of having a land use assessment factored into new agricultural buildings. New Agricultural buildings/barns do have a greater tax burden for a farmer than older farm buildings. A separate rate on ag buildings may provide some tax relief. Insurance on new farm buildings is high as well.

There was discussion on high costs and low commodity prices with the exception of cattle prices.
Andrew Crummett: Short positions on live cattle are at the greatest level/amount of all time.

Augusta County Fair Weather Station: John shared an update on the Augusta Co Fair Weather Station.
The weather station has not yet been scheduled but should be scheduled for later this month.

FY24-25 Budget Review: John Reviewed budget actions taken by the board last fiscal year.

John stated that one potential upcoming expense would be the Virginia Cattlemen's Legislative Steak Fry coming up after the first of the year. There was discussion about the legislative steak fry being a very positive industry event and a consensus was affirmed to support the legislative steak fry. Cole Heizer made a motion to approve the expenditure of sponsoring the legislative steak fry at \$500. The motion was seconded by Kevin Phillips and approved by unanimous vote.

Next meeting date: Tentatively set for December 9, 10, or 11.

With no further business the board adjourned the meeting at 7:35 pm.