

VA FFA Board of Directors/Advisory Board Council Meeting –

4:00PM – Tuesday, April 12, 2011 – Church of the Brethren - Staunton, VA

Members in Attendance: Andy Seibel, Brian Alexander, Brian Fisher, Cindy Blaha, Glenn Anderson, Jason Ince, Jennifer Lyons, Jessica Jones, Laura DeLano, Laura Wall, Missy McDonald, Rick Rudd, Ron Byrd, Russell Jennings, Sally Shomo, Stephen Edwards, Steven Waller, Theresa Lindberg, Ted DeLano, and Wes Kline

Brian Alexander called the meeting to order. Brian Alexander stated there was no written agenda and would begin the meeting with Andy Seibel providing the FFA Update.

Virginia FFA Update

Andy Seibel began discussion about the association facing the challenges of the state convention. For state convention, Seibel has to arrange for room and meals, lighting and sound, parking, and etcetera for the state convention through Virginia Tech. Each aspect of the convention is costing more money annually as the university continues to increase their base charge rates and incidental costs each year. Seibel distributed a state association convention cost analysis for each meeting attendant to review. Seibel stated he wants to keep the cost as low as possible for each person, but he can't do that when individuals are registering for convention and then backing out the last minute. Jason Ince asked what would be the best bottom line estimate of the cost for convention for each person and Seibel stated what was listed on the cost analysis sheet. Alexander asked Seibel what was the best estimate he could give for the association's annual operating funds. Seibel stated the best ball park estimate is the organization is running a \$600,000 business. Cindy Blaha asked if what is stated on the estimate sheet includes endowments. Dr. Anderson stated endowments only cover awards not operational costs. Seibel stated this is the first time in the nine years he has been the Executive Secretary the organization may end in the red. Seibel asked the board to give recommendations as to what would be the best course of action to follow for the association. Alexander asked what if the association could reduce costs if it could cut back on some other events throughout the year including Big E or National FFA Convention and the number of students being taken to the events. Alexander also stated many chapters are providing their own transportation to and from convention, including train and plane, and maybe the association could save some money if it could cut back on the number of buses going to events. Seibel stated \$7.50 per room of the national convention costs gave about \$6,000 allowing the organization to pay for the state officers' rooms and meals. Seibel stated National FFA has already cut back on rooms for 2011. Rooms are being cut back to 50 single rooms and 100 double rooms instead of the larger state block the association has had in the past. Seibel stated for the bus transportation he charged everybody the same price, but the bus company in Eastern area charged extra and everyone else had to make up the difference. Seibel stated Anderson is helping the organization the best way he can but is not expected to continue to bail out the organization. Seibel stated as an organization, Virginia continues to add events to the list of activities for its year, but is not cutting back on events that may have very little or no interest, either way, it is costing the association money. Teresa Lindberg asked if Seibel had a recommendation to alleviate the problems. Seibel stated at this time he did not. ***No action needed.***

Brian Fisher asked what if the association raised its dues. Seibel stated the last time we raised dues we lost membership. We have 32,000 students enrolled in agricultural education and if one half of them would pay dues, we would be in a better financial position. Jennie Lyons asked if Seibel could give an estimate as to the cost annually the association has to pay for all of its events. Seibel stated in the past the advisory board has asked to keep the organization within a five to ten percent estimate of the overall budget and because of gas prices and other rising costs, we cannot estimate what it would be

because of all the price fluctuations. Lyons stated we should be able to have a rough estimate of the number of students paying annually and how much that brings the association. Seibel stated it depends on the number of chapters and their percent paid membership. Blaha asked if middle school students could pay more dues because she knows there is a difference in the amount high school members and middle school members pay. Sally Shomo stated middle school has its own sector in the association with its own related costs that do not deal directly with high school FFA membership. Shomo stated some middle school students, including her own, pay the same amount of dues high school students pay to gain access to more membership opportunities, but not all middle school chapters have their members pay the same amount as the high school members. Jessica Jones agreed as she stated her middle school students pay the same as high school students giving her middle school students a greater advantage as members of the association. Jones stated high school chapter members have more access to opportunities such as state and national awards and scholarships that middle school members aren't eligible, therefore, asking middle students who have some fewer opportunities than that of the high school counterparts in numerous ways is not fair to the middle school students when plenty of high school members are not taking advantage of the opportunities already afforded to them. **No action needed.**

Ted DeLano asked if the advisory board had the association add \$10-\$15 on top of the convention rate would that help with costs. Seibel asked that once we break the \$200 rate, will agriculture teachers instead of bringing 20 students would instead bring 15 students. T. DeLano stated it would not be a problem for their chapter but he is not sure of everywhere else. Lindberg stated from her perspective, they are not allowed to have fundraisers and \$10-\$15 extra would hurt her chapter. Laura Wall asked what the difference in the costs is this year as opposed to that in the past. Seibel stated University Unions and Student Activities (UUSA) rents the equipment from the same vendor we are using, marks the price up, and then charges Virginia FFA. Seibel stated the university has a policy that whoever is using the UUSA equipment must have a person from their agency on staff while the equipment and facility is in use. Seibel stated the extras come in from the company that is renting out the equipment and facilities. Seibel stated Virginia Tech wants \$2.50 per person for a service fee for every parent that attends the convention. Seibel stated the money agriculture teachers pay for the convention is put in an interest bearing account and those funds are used to purchase equipment and other costs of the organization. Lindberg asked Seibel the purpose of the service fee for every parent. Seibel stated for having the parents on grounds, the university has more work to do so it costs them more, so it costs the hosting organization more. **No action needed.**

Seibel stated Dr. Alan McDaniel is no longer a Virginia Tech employee and wants \$3,000 to operate the horticultural career development events. Dr. Rudd stated the group needs to bet on Virginia Tech employees that have been contest superintendents being on a nine month contract and searching for individuals to help with career development events in the future. Blaha asked if there is any way to ask teachers to volunteer and run an event. Seibel stated it takes a minimum of three days to operate a contest. Lyons stated she has a teacher who has expressed an interest in helping with a state convention contest. Seibel stated with understanding if a teacher wants to do so that is fine, but it takes three of the four days of convention to operate the contest and if the teacher has brought students, who is supervising the students and is not taking away from the experience with the teacher and their students. Dr. Rudd stated the department has already talked about trying to figure out ways to have multiple events at one time so it takes the pressure off the teachers and Seibel to get facilities, awards, and thank you's taken care of. Seibel stated plaques and other supplies have already been ordered and at this point cannot be changed right now for convention, but we still need to look at what we need to do for the future. **No action needed.**

Russell Jennings brought up the affiliation chapter dues aspect and would that be beneficial to helping the association. Dr. Anderson stated it may help the association, but as Seibel stated, there are over 32,000 agricultural education students who could join the association and many choose not too and that puts pressure on everyone. Dr. Anderson stated we need to go at least \$15 above what Tech is charging for the event, so for state convention, it should be around \$215 to attend. Russell Jennings moved to raise the convention registration fee from \$65 to \$80. Laura DeLano seconded. **Motion passed.**

Seibel stated when teams are registered, teachers are to indicate if a student is dual enrolled or competing in multiple events. After finding out yesterday, when the team checked in without their teacher, the person doing registration entered Admirable Byrd and Giles County were doing both 4-H and FFA. Individuals entering data in the room were not notified Rockbridge were not dual enrolled. Seibel stated he went and looked for Mr. McLachlan. They assumed the teachers and students had decided not to give reasons. Seibel received a phone call asking why his students did not have their scores computed as they ran for both divisions. Mr. McLachlan stated he understood miscommunication had occurred and the person who was doing the reasons score handed Seibel the reasons cards for the students yesterday. Anderson stated there is a long standing agreement that once scores are announced, the results stay as is. Alexander asked that if the scores had made a difference in the final results. Seibel stated it would not have for the top three, but would have for the top six allowing them to advance and thought the advisory board needed to make a decision. Alexander reiterated Dr. Anderson is correct that we have a long standing agreement that once scores are announced, then they stay as is. Jason Ince moved that if the teams qualify within the first to sixth team score allowing them to advance. Ted DeLano seconded. **Motion passed.**

Seibel stated the Virginia Cattlemen's Association and Dr. Anderson are interested in using the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Program as the exam for the Animal Systems Pathway. The exam would be given at the Virginia Beef Expo that would carry various components the VA Cattlemen's Association is willing to put in scholarship money for the top students to encourage and reward student participation. It would have to be open to both 4-H and FFA. The advisory board needs to make a decision if this is an opportunity to pursue. Dr. Anderson stated if it gets approved by the board, it would begin next year and the teacher would have to work with their local extension agent. The test has to be proctored closely and going back to the extension agents and working with them would be ideal. Alexander stated this is similar to the NOCTI exam and this would be worth pursuing. Ince asked if this would be another certification for students to use once they graduate high school. Seibel stated that is correct. T. DeLano stated any qualifications we can give students before they graduate is better than nothing. Anderson stated the whole CTE program has to have 50% students take the test and have 50% of students pass the NOCTI exams and getting credentials are worthy for students to have now and for them in the future even if it does not count as a high school credit. Dr. Anderson stated you can request the same test or you can wait and retest the students as a whole group, but there is no pretest exam. **No action taken.**

Seibel stated change is coming and we will not meet again until after the changes occur. Starting next year, the Virginia FFA Agriscience Fair will align to the Agriscience Pathway. The national contest will change to where the only top 15 students in the nation come out and compete in each area. There will be a new Agriscience career development event to encourage research. They are going to replace Agriscience Student of the Year with an Agriscience Proficiency. For all SAE based programs, if you are no more than 12-13 years old, 640 hours, between 16- 17 years old, 2,064 hours, and over 18 years old, 2,080 hours per year. If more hours than your age range, your application will be disqualified. Ag Communications changes from five students to three. Agricultural Issues has a change of where their

portfolio is due in August. The Agricultural Mechanics and Agricultural Sales have a revised team activity. For Agronomy, Dairy Foods, Forestry, and Livestock Evaluation all four scores will count. Creed Speaking and Extemporaneous Speaking has changed to match Prepared Public Speaking. Farm Business Management, Floriculture, and Job Interview have no major changes. Marketing Plan changes three to five minutes per set up rotation. Meats Evaluation cookery and preparation method has been added. Nursery Landscape has added more hands on during the competition. For Parliamentary Procedure there is an open book and closed book portion during competition. Poultry Evaluation has added counting 15 eggs and all four scores will count. Seibel stated we will go over career development event changes during a two hour session at the agricultural education teachers' conference after attending a five day training session in Indianapolis, Indiana. Laura Wall stated the more we as a state association can align with National FFA regulations the better. **No action needed.**

Seibel stated each year the national organization ranks states in how they are performing and Virginia is ranked last in the number of career development event teams, career development event teams per chapter, number of students getting state degrees, membership, number of chapters, and proficiency award applications. Seibel stated states have been talking about having a sweepstakes winner who would set up the state booth as a sponsorship. The proposal is a rough draft, but there would be a division for single teacher department and multiple teacher departments. Lyons asked if the teacher would have the ability to waive taking care of the state booth. Seibel stated he was not sure at this time. Blaha asked where the sponsorship funding would come from. Seibel stated maybe the FFA Foundation but maybe not. Lindberg stated the middle schools would have to be weighted different. Wall stated this is a good idea to pursue. Seibel stated based on discussion this may be something to bring before the teachers. Rudd asked philosophically what are we as an association saying about agricultural education and FFA participation. Rudd posed that we need to be careful about the message we are sending to agricultural educators. Do we want them to teach students or train teams? Careful attention should be paid to the overall purpose and execution of how the sweepstakes would be handled. **No action needed.**

Seibel stated the Foundation met earlier today and reiterated that if plaques were not sponsored by the end of convention this year, they would be eliminated. Seibel distributed the list in full of plaques on the elimination list. Plaques are in short list:

- Forestry – Central, Eastern, Jr. Eastern, and Jr. Central Areas
- Prepared Public Speaking - Central, Eastern, Appalachian, Central and Eastern Areas
- Small Engines – Central and Eastern Areas
- Tractor Troubleshooting – Appalachian, Central and Eastern Areas
- Chapter Forestry/Wildlife – Sr. Appalachian, Sr. Central, Sr. Eastern, Sr. Northern, and Sr. Southside Areas
- National Chapter (Chapter Development) – Sr. Appalachian, Sr. Central, Sr. Eastern, Sr. Northern, and Sr. Southside Areas
- National Chapter (Student Development) – Sr. Appalachian, Sr. Central, Sr. Eastern, and Sr. Northern Areas
- National Chapter (Community Development) – Sr. Appalachian, Sr. Central, Sr. Eastern, Sr. Northern, and Sr. Southside Areas
- National Chapter – Sr. Winner, Sr. Appalachian, Sr. Central, Sr. Eastern, Sr. Northern, and Sr. Southside Areas

Seibel stated if you want to receive a plaque for that area help raise the money and sponsor the plaques. If they are not sponsored by the end of the 2011 convention, they will be terminated. **No action needed.**

Stephen Edwards stated he and Seibel discussed capping to enroll convention attending students in no more than two contests during the state convention. Edwards stated there were schools who enrolled students in five contests last year. Granted, we have super star students who will concentrate their interests but there is a breaking point for any child. T. DeLano asked if this is a problem every year or is this multiple enrollment just as of last year. Seibel stated this has occurred in the past and is a liability issue of students not having training in contests and cannot be handled appropriately when they get into different situations. L. DeLano stated this needs to be monitored more closely if at all possible. Brian Fisher moved to limit state convention student participation in two contests. L. DeLano seconded. **Motion passed.**

Seibel stated he made a list of what it takes to keep the organization running and has requested the board review the list and make the necessary recommendations to maintain organization operation. T. DeLano asked if there is anything the advisory board can do to help Seibel with supervision in various events. Seibel stated the list is sent out to the Career and Technical Directors and all the Virginia Agricultural Education Teachers and some teachers do not attend. Seibel stated that every teacher in the state of Virginia who enters a code with Dr. Anderson is given a list of duties to perform during state convention, but it does no good if the teachers do not attend convention or they attend convention and do not show up at their assigned duty station(s). Dr. Anderson stated Lindberg had mentioned public speaking career development events were the ones that seem to have difficulty getting judges. Dr. Anderson stated area representatives need to contact him with the second place winners so he can get judges for the contests. T. DeLano stated if you have a second place individual in the public speaking contest, that teacher is to be the judge for the state contest. **No action needed.**

Seibel stated for middle school ribbons, the board has to make a decision. For horse judging, currently with the middle school, every child gets a rosette. If we order in quantity we can cut the price. We discussed this at the fall advisory council meeting where we talked about reducing the price. Seibel stated to reduce the price from \$4.00 to \$2.00 we would have to go from a rosette to a flat ribbon. Lindberg stated the students love getting ribbons. Sally Shomo stated she knows her students hang on to those ribbons and are proud of them. Seibel stated the difference in the long run is really no difference in price if the advisory board thinks the benefit to the student outweighs the price. Teresa Lindberg moved the middle school ribbons should move from rosette to a flat type that is more general and can be used for multiple events. Jennie Lyons seconded. **Motion passed.**

Agricultural Education Advocacy

Dr. Rudd discussed the ongoing legislative initiative. Dr. Rudd urged the board to mobilize individuals to ask for support and roll our sleeves up and do a little fighting for agricultural education on a state and national level. Rudd stated he was in Washington D.C. for lobbying on Capitol Hill and they think the future is bright. Their calculation is 70% more food and the time for agricultural development is now. We should be able to step up and do it now. We are going to get together as a group, arrange our talking points and get broader out in the state. Shomo suggested having a general session committee of individuals ready to lobby at the General Assembly. Rudd stated there is a national effort going on for advocacy in the field of agriculture and agricultural education.

Advisory Council Meeting Schedule:

Fall Meeting – October 11 or 12

Minutes of the meeting will be archived with previous minutes at www.vaffa.org/abouts/advisory/html.

Brian Alexander moved to adjourn the meeting. Laura Wall seconded. ***Motion passed.***

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica M. Jones