

Boards, Commissions, Councils and Committees Funded by the Board of Supervisors

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE CHARTER

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of the Agriculture Committee is to assist the Board of Supervisors by providing information, advice, recommendations and reports in the areas of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry or other plant and animal based production industries found in Amherst County. Coordination and organization of the Amherst County Fair is also the responsibility of the Agriculture Committee. The Committee will serve as a body of local expertise to the Board of Supervisors.

2. **Goals.** The goals of the Agriculture Committee are to provide specific, measurable, reasonable, and timely information, advice, recommendations, and reports on matters requested from the Board of Supervisors or otherwise within its purview. It is authorized to develop its own goals and initiatives to further the County's interests in the area of its purview so long as they do not supersede those of this document or any budgeted funds allotted to it. Other goals include the following:

- To stay apprised of current knowledge, developing issues and best management practices;
- To be a cohesive, communicative and inclusive organization;
- To promote agri-business and agri-tourism in the County within the Comprehensive Plan;
- To encourage and assist the Economic Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce and Cooperative Extension Service;
- To encourage and assist the School District in providing agriculture education;
- To provide direct assistance to County staff in identifying and making application for agricultural grants and loans for the County; and
- To coordinate, organize, promote and prepare the annual Amherst County Fair.

The Agriculture Committee may receive specific objectives for each year from the Board of Supervisors toward which it will be expected to achieve and report its progress. It may propose objectives as well as budget expenditures to the Board.

3. **Membership.** The Agriculture Committee will consist of nine (9) voting members to achieve representation from as many agricultural specialties as possible. Five (5) members will be selected by individual Supervisors without regard to locality and may be replaced by their appointing Supervisor (or their successor) at will. Four (4) at-large members will be selected by majority vote of the Supervisors without regard to locality or voting district. Each voting member will serve for a term of three (3) years, with three members' terms ending each year. Of the initial nine (9) members, three (3) will serve two-year terms, three will serve three-year terms, and three will serve four-year terms in order to obtain a staggered rotation. Members serve until their successor is appointed. Members may succeed themselves. The voting members may be representatives of specific organizations or may be individuals named for their professional or educational experience. All are expected to bring a measure of relevant

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expertise or experience to the work of the Committee. Public advertising to fill a vacant At-Large seat is required. Voting members need not be sworn into office by the Clerk of Court. A County Supervisor will serve as a non-voting liaison to the Agriculture Committee. The Committee Chairman may invite additional non-voting individuals to join the Agriculture Committee for specified, limited, purposes or issues.

4. **Youth Participants.** There may be up to two youth participants (YPs) on the Agriculture Committee. The YPs will be solicited from the County school system with a special recruiting invitation to the Amherst Chapter of the Future Farmers of America and 4-H. The YPs will be invited to provide input on all matters before the Agriculture Committee but will not cast votes.

5. **Meetings.** Regular meetings of the Agriculture Committee will be held at the County Administration Building, in the Administration Conference Room. The regularly scheduled meeting time may be changed by unanimous consent of the members of the Agriculture Committee. Special meetings may be announced and called as needed. Regular meetings will be held, at a minimum semi-annually and as needed as determined by the Chairman, County Administrator or Board of Supervisors Chairman. Summarized minutes will be taken in the format specified by the County Administrator and submitted to the County Administrator no later than 30 days from the date of the meeting. The Agenda for each meeting is determined by the Chairman with the assistance of the Secretary.

6. **Reports.** An annual report is required. The County Administrator will direct the format and content of the report. On occasion, the County Administrator may seek specific information, guidance, input or recommendations from the Agriculture Committee on a matter being prepared for consideration by the Supervisors. The Administrator will specify the format of the information sought.

7. **Structure.** The Agriculture Committee will be organized pursuant to ACR 1-3.11. Subcommittees and their chairs may be organized as the committee directs. If there are temporary members that participate for a limited time or purpose their selection, purpose and duration should be specified.

8. **Staff Support.** The Agriculture Committee can expect to receive support directly from the County Agricultural Extension Agent who will serve as the Agriculture Committee's clerk and secretary. The County Attorney is also available to answer legal questions. County email accounts will be opened for each member to facilitate communications. Copier, postage and other support can be made available through the County Administrator's Executive Assistant.

9. **Authority.** The Agriculture Committee may represent the County of Amherst to Central Virginia Planning District Commission and other partner organizations with the understanding that all final decisions regarding County business resides solely with the Board of Supervisors. The Agriculture Committee may not represent the County to state, federal, nonprofit, or commercial and industrial

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organizations without coordination with the County Administrator. The Agriculture Committee, through its Chairman, is expected to keep the County Administrator apprised of any and all activities it undertakes which may have a significant affect upon the County or its interests, especially its budget.

10. **Official Acts.** Acts of the Agriculture Committee shall be performed by majority vote and recorded in official minutes. Only the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, as an individual, may speak for the body but must be careful not to overstep the bounds of consensus within the Agriculture Committee. Decisions shall be reached according to ACR 1-3.8.

11. **Virginia Freedom of Information Act.** The Agriculture Committee is a "public body" under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. It is the responsibility of the Chairman, with the assistance of the Secretary, to insure compliance with all facets of this law.

12. **State and Local Governments Conflict of Interests Act.** Members of the Agriculture Committee are not required to file the annual Financial Disclosure Statement.