



Unit 25 Extension Council Meeting  
Tuesday, November 28, 2023  
Edwards County Farm Bureau Meeting Room  
15 S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Albion, IL 62806

5:30 p.m.

## **MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Jim Brewer, Terry Bruce, Paul Bruinsma, Julie Clodfelter, Tonya Potts, and Doug Raber

**Members Absent:** Justine Basnett, Kelley Biggs, Haleigh Buchanan, Megan Daughtery, Michelle Pillar, Jan Ridgely, and Lily Simpson

**Staff Members Present:** Tara Buerster and Katie Bell

### CALL TO ORDER

Jim Brewer called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Due to not having a quorum the group decided to go ahead and meet and go through the agenda, just not act on any action items and hold them for the January meeting.

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council members and staff members introduced themselves to all in attendance.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 28, 2023, minutes were reviewed, and approval was tabled to January 2024 meeting, due to not having a quorum.

### FINANCIAL REPORT

Tara Buerster presented the Unit 25 Financial Report as of October 2023.

### LOCAL FOODS SMALL FARMS PRESENTATION

Katie Bell made a presentation to the Council on her background and her role in the Unit as the Local Foods Small Farms Educator. Included in her presentation were upcoming programs she has planned over the next three years as part of the Unit's 3-year plan of work.

### OLD BUSINESS

- a. County Office Spaces: Tara Buerster reviewed that Edwards staff are settled in the new office they moved into at the end of March. A ribbon cutting/open house was held in June, and they will do an Open House in conjunction with the Albion Lighted Christmas parade in December. Richland and

Wabash offices continue to be offices of concern, due to age and space. Tara continues to look at potential buildings in Olney and work with the Building Association there.

- b. New Phone/Internet System – Tara reported that the Unit now has one phone/internet system through Wabash Communications. All phones are Voice Over Internet (VOIP) and linked together as a system, with 4 offices using Wabash Communications for internet. Lawrence continues to use Sparklight for Internet due to Wabash not having fiber in Lawrence County.
- c. Open Meetings Act Training: All council members are required to take the training. Tara provided the following list as those still needing to take training (for their new term, etc.) or provide a copy of completion if done for another entity: Doug Raber, Megan Rinsch, Jim Brewer, Tonya Potts, Haleigh Buchanan, Justine Barnfield, Paul Bruinsma, Lily Simpson. Tara stated she would send the OMA training link out again to those who need to complete.
- d. Council Vacancies for 2023-2025 term – Tara reviewed the new Council members added since the last meeting and that we continue to look for a person for Lawrence and Wabash to fill the council.

### NEW BUSINESS

- a. In/Out Account Check Signors – a list of In/Out Account Check signors was presented but tabled for approval until the January 2024 meeting.
- b. AgrAbility Program – Tara Buerster and Katie Bell reviewed the AgrAbility Program offered by a grant through the University. Tara and Katie will both serve as Ambassadors for the program to our 5 counties and will go through training prior to Christmas break.
- c. Engaging Diverse Audiences – Tara reviewed with the Council again that as part of the Unit's DEIA goal we are to work to serve underserved audiences. She reviewed with the Council the work the unit had done with the CDC in Wayne County and contacts that have been recently made with other agencies.

### STAFF REPORTS

County Director: Tara Buerster discussed the Poverty Simulations she has facilitated, and staff have assisted with since the last meeting. Requests continue to come in for Poverty Simulations. Tara also reported to the group on the MyPI program done in partnership with Carle Richland Hospital and TRiO Upward Bound at IECC during the summer. Buerster gave a quick overview of updates in each program area and staffing. Currently the unit is fully staffed. Buerster also updated the Council on her travel and work outside of the Unit for Extension.

Youth Development Educator: Samantha Gaither was not in attendance due to another engagement but sent a written report that was distributed to the Council members.

Local Foods Small Farms Educator: Katie Bell provided a report on work completed within the Unit since her arrival in late May. She shared that a CAT tunnel will be coming to our Wayne County Office for use in her research and programming. Katie also reminded the Council about the upcoming Annie's Project program that will begin in February.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was made.

### FUTURE MEETING DATE

The Council discussed possibly rotating meeting locations within the Unit. The Council all agreed they preferred to keep the meeting location centrally, in Edwards County. The next meeting will be held January 16, 2024, at 6 p.m. at the Edwards County Farm Bureau, 15 S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Albion, IL 62806. Note time change, Council decided to push back start time to accommodate those traveling in.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned around 7:30 p.m.