Unit 18 – Christian, Jersey, Macoupin and Montgomery Counties
Thursday, April 16, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Brandi Crawford, Darryl Edwards, Anna Fessler, Caiden Freeland, Cyndy Howard, Joe Kaburick, Erin Lockwood, Katie Paulek, Mindy Ward, Katie Wilson

Call to Order – Council Chair Mindy Ward called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. All members were asked to introduce themselves by sharing the county they were representing and how they currently or have interacted with Extension. Sara welcomed the new Unit 18 Extension Council board members.

Approval of Minutes – Minutes from the December meeting were presented. Darryl Edwards made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Anna Fessler seconded. Motion passed. Minutes approved as sent.

Unit Updates – County Director Sara Marten gave a brief overview of the unit staff, program areas, and fiscal report for both returning and new board members. Sara also shared a brief program report of unit-wide programming that took place between January and March of 2026.

Old Business

COUNCIL OVERVIEW – Sara reviewed the purpose and goals of the council and referenced the handout that all members received in their meeting packet. This group is focused on providing feedback and helping connect staff members with their communities. With many new members present, Sara also reviewed some of the expectations of council members, including meeting attendance and participation

2026 COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD – REVIEW APPLICATIONS – Staff nominated a total of 7 community partners this year for recognition – 3 from Christian, 2 from Jersey, 1 from Macoupin, and 1 from Montgomery. Sara will send out a virtual poll for all members to vote on their preferred winner between the Christian and Jersey nominees. It was also discussed that partners that have nominated multiple times should potentially be given a higher consideration. This question may need to be included on future forms when staff are nominating. Once council members vote, Sara will work with marketing staff to get press releases and awards out to those community partners.

New Business

OPEN MEETINGS ACT TRAINING & COMPLIANCE – The Unit 18 Extension Council board falls under the Open Meetings Act (OMA) guidelines. Board members are highly encouraged to complete the OMA training and submit their respective certificates to Sara Marten. This will ensure the Unit 18 Extension Council board remains in compliance with OMA guidelines. All members will receive further information on completing this training via email in the near future.

2026 EXTENSION COUNCIL & EXTENSION BOARD SCHEDULE – The meeting schedule for 2026 was reviewed. There will be in-person meetings held this summer in each respective county. Council members are highly encouraged to attend these meetings as they will focus on county-specific budgets and funding requests. The full unit council will meet again in October.

Christian County – Monday, August 10, 2026 @ 6:30 PM
Jersey County – Thursday, June 25, 2026 @ 6:30 PM
Macoupin County – Thursday, November 19, 2026 @ 6:30 PM
Montgomery County – Monday, July 27, 2026 @ 6:30 PM
Unit Council – Thursday, October 15, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

In future years, the full council will meet in January, April, and October and county-specific extension board meetings will be held throughout the summer (dates to be determined.)

FY27 BUDGET REVIEW – Sara shared that she is in the middle of Extension's annual budgeting process. Sara shared current expenditures, as of the end of March 2026, as well as a tentative budget for FY27, which begins on July 1. At this point, most income and expenses look to remain the same for the next fiscal year. During extension board meetings this summer, the council will further discuss county-specific budgets and funding sources. Sara also reminded council members that part of their role may include supporting or assisting with soliciting for funds, if needed.

OTHER BUSINESS – There was a request for a list of council members and email addresses, in case of needing to further contact. Sara will make one available and send out to all members for reference.

With no other business, Cyndy Howard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Darryl Edwards seconded. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 P.M.

APPRVOED 10/15/2026