Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Extension Advisory Council Meeting Minutes (Draft)

Extension serving Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle Counties - Unit 2
Monday, September 28, 2026—6:00 p.m.
El Jimador Mexican Grill, 260 E Lincoln Hwy, DeKalb, IL 60115

Present: ***Extension Appointed Board Members***: Patrick Deutsch, Rick Fritz, Lyle Hopkins, and Tom Walberg**;** ***Advisory Council Members***: Dan Dietrich, Terry Schuster, Kathy Dombek, Mark Schuth, Melissa Rojas, Barb Wych, Barbara Thrun, Tracy Drobick, Jeff Woodyatt, and Tina Holtz. ***Staff****:* Heather Coyle, Mike Delany, Peggy Anesi, Lee Kouski, Amy Miller, Abigail Nelson, and Teresa Schwarz. ***Public:*** Kathleen Napier, Mrs. Dan Dietrich, Mr. Rojas.

This meeting convened at 6:20 PM. County Director Heather Coyle welcomed everyone and stated that we are here to connect with other advisory committees, gain a broader understanding of the Extension's work, welcome new members, and express gratitude to members with expiring terms.

Coyle provided notification of the Illinois Open Meetings Act and the EEO Program Notification plan, noting that links to these documents were provided via the agenda. She said the Illinois Open Meetings Act training needs to be completed once in a lifetime. She stated that if you have already completed it, you should let Teresa S. know or take the training at your earliest convenience and send the completion certificate to Teresa S. so it can be on file. Coyle pointed out some of the contents of the folder each member received, including the unit's 2025 impact report and flyers for upcoming programming.

Teresa Schwarz announced the new and expiring members of the Extension Advisory Council. Please refer to the list attached to these minutes. ***Attachment A***

Coyle turned the floor over to Barb Wych, Chairperson, who led the business portion of the meeting. She said everyone received last year's meeting minutes and read them for errors. **Jeff Woodyatt motioned to approve the minutes; Mark Schuth seconded the motion. The Council voted to approve the minutes.**

Chairperson called for committee reports:

Health & Local Foods: Heather explained how this subcommittee was dismantled in January/February 2026 due to losing SNAP-Ed. Once a new Ag Educator is hired, the subcommittee will be reorganized.

Community and Economic Development: Mike Delany spoke about the programming they have been working on, including the upcoming Poverty Simulations, Hometown Leaders (which was replicated in all counties in Unit 2), and My Hometown is Cool. Heather stated that Mike is a shared CED educator with Unit 4, Lee, Carroll, and Whiteside counties. ***See Attachment B***

Natural Resources, Environment, and Energy: Peggy Anesi discussed the Watershed Stewards community education program and the watershed activities in the three counties.

The meeting was paused for attendees to have dinner. After about 45 minutes, the meeting resumed.

4-H & Youth: 4-H & Youth Educator Abigail Nelson introduced subcommittee member Tina Holtz who reported on this past year's focus for the committee, which was in two areas- increasing awareness of programs and retention of current members. ***See attachment C***

Coyle mentioned that it is a strategic planning year for Extension and that committees will review elements of the new strategic plan in the upcoming year. The focus is on youth retention, and the youth development element of programming needs to be intentional. Consistent themes for Extension serving Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties are: 1. Water, and 2. Leadership. Extension is a trusted agent helping communities. Coyle discussed how State Matching funds can increase the value of local contributions. Each year, the University of Illinois' Director of Extension requests state matching funds from the Illinois General Assembly, based on contributions from the local county board and partner agreements. Historically, 65% of local dollars have been matched.

Chair Barb Wych continued the meeting with the election of the 2026-2027 officers. She asked for volunteers willing to serve. A motion to elect new officers was made by Melissa Rojas and seconded by Rick Fritz. Motion carried.

CHAIRPERSON – Conduct the annual business portion of the meeting and sign council documents.
Tina Holtz, DeKalb County
VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Conduct the annual meeting in the chair's absence.
Dan Dietrich, Ogle County
SECRETARY – Take minutes at the annual meeting and review minutes before distribution.
Jeff Woodyatt, Ogle County

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting; the Council voted to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Council Roles Summarized: * Linking University of Illinois Extension with local leadership, communities, agencies, and organizations. * Supporting and advocating for Extension programs. Identifying needs and potential resources (human, financial, physical). * Advise on the program planning and implementation processes. * Assuring council membership represents all segments in the counties served. * Assuring program outreach meets equal opportunity and program access guidelines.

2026 Extension Advisory Council Meeting

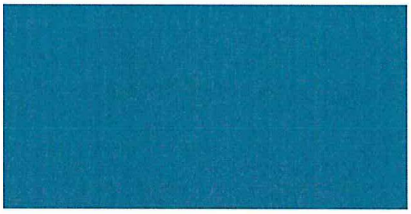
Terms expiring	1st term	2nd term
Barb Wych	2024	2026
Araceli Lopez King	2023	2026

YOUTH

Jozlyn Mundy	2026	xxx
Abigail Kolthoff	2026	xxx
Lillian Hetland	2026	xxx
Hope Hargrave	2026	xxx
Immanual Arellano	2026	xxx
Allissa Martin	2026	xxx

DISMANTLED COMM. H&LF

Mark Schuth
Joyce Lewis
Melissa Rojas
Abigail Hesslau
Stephanie Meyers



TOTAL: **7** adults 6 youth

New members

Terry Schuster	CED
Kathy Dombek	CED
Tracy Drobick	NREE
Megan Poole	NREE
Grace Coveliers	NREE

ATTACHMENT A.

Community and Economic Development Advisory Council
- 2026 Annual Meeting -

Civic Engagement & Young-Adult Retention

- Hometown Leaders (w/4-H) – Ogle (Fall 2025)

Career Pathways & Readiness

- Ready 4 Work (w/4-H)
  - DeKalb HS
- Welcome To The Real World (w/4-H)
  - Belvidere North HS

Connectedness & Inclusion

- Main Street Illinois presentation (Fall 2025)
- DeKalb County Economic Development Corp. presentation
- Poverty Simulations

Facilitation

- Ogle County Data Dashboard
- Ogle County Economic Development Corp.

Local Government Education webinars

- Resilient Communities (w/ Extension NREE)
  - Data Center series
- 5-part Business Transition and Succession series
- Digital Equity (w/ IL Office of Broadband)

Advisory Council's Needs Assessment

- Access to Food
- Entrepreneurship and development
- Water supply

Attachment B

September 2026

4-H Youth Advisory Committee Report 2026

Boone County | DeKalb County | Ogle County

Committee Purpose

To be the eyes and ears of 4-H Youth Programming in Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle Counties. To assist University of Illinois Extension staff in identifying programming needs and to grow community connections for Positive Youth Development.

Extension staff identified three key areas in which committee member feedback would be beneficial to guide programming decisions for program year 2025 - 2026. See below.

Youth Engagement

February 25, 2026

The committee discussed how 4-H can better meet youth where they are by creating programs that connect to their interests, school experiences, activities, and future goals, while using ways of reaching youth that work best for them.

Engaging 4-H Alumni

May 19, 2026

The committee discussed ways to reconnect with 4-H alumni by offering flexible, social, and professional opportunities that build on their past 4-H experiences and current interests; ideas included short-term volunteer roles, workshops, mentorship, & networking

Volunteers & Community Partnerships

Upcoming: November 11, 2026

The committee will discuss ways 4-H can build stronger volunteer and community partnerships, including what support volunteers need, how to make volunteering more accessible, and how community partners can help create meaningful opportunities for youth.

Attachment C.



Committee Intentions for 2025 - 2026

To provide clarity around committee member roles and expectations, intentions for the group were outlined in the November 2025 committee meeting. See below.

Community Outreach & Representation

Serve as ambassadors for 4-H within the community by promoting awareness of local youth programming. Share feedback from community members, youth, and families to help staff stay informed about local needs and trends.

Program Support & Development

Assist in identifying gaps in current programming and suggest new, relevant topics or activities. Collaborate with staff to support events, workshops, and learning opportunities for youth.

Networking & Resource Sharing

Leverage personal and professional networks to connect 4-H with potential volunteers, partners, donors, or venues.

Local Needs Assessment

Provide insight on emerging issues or opportunities within Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle Counties that 4-H could address. Help tailor programming to reflect community priorities and youth interests.

Looking Ahead

Over the next year, the 4-H team will focus on expanding and strengthening positive youth development experiences, with the committee helping guide this work through their advice and perspective. We will focus on increasing access to 4-H educational opportunities, creating more opportunities for project and skill mastery, and strengthening how we shape and deliver Agriculture, Nature, and College, Career, and Life Readiness programs and experiences.

Upcoming Dates

4-H Youth Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 11, 2026
6:30 P.M.
Via Zoom

Questions about 4-H Youth Advisory Committee? Contact:

Abigail Nelson
Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development
agnelson@illinois.edu

Attachment C.