

Extension Board Meeting

Boone County- Illinois Junior Chef program, July 7, 2025, at 10:30 AM

St. John's United Church of Christ, 401 N Main St, Belvidere IL

DeKalb County- Camp Russell, July 7, 2025, at 11:30 AM

Natural Resource Education Center, 11750 State Rt 72, Genoa IL



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

MINUTES

1. Introduction: Present: Boone County Board member, Tom Walberg, DeKalb County Board member, Patrick Deutsch, Heather Coyle, Mike Delany, and Teresa Schwarz.
2. Observed SNAP-Ed programming for youth (Illinois Junior Chef) in Boone County with Tom Walberg. Observed Camp Russell (Nature Day Camp for youth) with Patrick Deutsch and Tom Walberg.
3. Interviewed staff members Brianne Gugerty, Stevie Momaly, and Peggy Anesi. Brianne and Stevie represented SNAP-Ed and Peggy is the natural Resources, Environment, and Energy Educator.
4. County Needs and Extension Programming Discussion: The value of Extension to local communities and the needs of Boone and DeKalb counties were discussed. Themes included continued youth development, agriculture business and sustainability, agriculture education, natural resources (soil and water), and minority and new audiences. Water sustainability and resources in DeKalb County was discussed and as well as the Paddle and Learn program, where Extension is training local educators on water and watersheds to incorporate into their classroom curriculum. The Hometown Leaders program and My Hometown is Cool program were discussed to get more youth involved with local government.

A copy of the program report and the annual impact report was provided. The cover shows ripples in the water, to represent the relationship of Extension in the community. Heather noted that the Paddle and Learn (training teachers), Watershed for Leaders, 4-H youth development, and Hometown leaders are examples of longer-term priority programming. For example, one teacher newly aware of the importance of their local watershed shares that knowledge with about 25 students a year for the rest of their career. And for civic leaders, understanding their watershed is vital when determining policy related to water use.) While it is easy to look at the number of persons attending a program, we must not over-prioritize short-term attendance over lower number, long term impact programs related to leadership development. Heather noted that Extension needs to “play the long game” in terms of community development. The group discussed community and county government needs. government.

5. Budget Materials: Annual Budget Plan, Financial Summary (May, not finalized), Impact Report
The staff funding formula was discussed. Tom asked about funding based upon number of programs delivered. However, Heather noted that is not a viable funding model for Extension for several reasons.
1) Extension has a complex funding structure and the levy, passed by referendum, is foundational to securing additional resources. Grants are one of those sources, but they are not dependable over time, as demonstrated with over \$500k in grant losses and 4 staff layoffs slated to occur by February of 2026.
2.) Extension invests considerable funding into the training and development of local staff. These staff are employees of University of Illinois. They cannot have their positions adjusted annually based upon program numbers for a particular year. (However, Extension reviews its programs and staff performances annually. Underperforming programs are regularly evaluated for discontinuation.)

Heather discussed next year's losses in terms of funding (over \$500k). She also discussed PTELL with the group. **Pending the outcome of the final period financial statement and feedback from the group, Extension will ask for the same amount of funding next year, perhaps with a cost-of-living adjustment.**

6. Lunch, Adjourned at 1:20 PM