

Unit 24 University of Illinois Extension Council Minutes

August 3, 2023 – 5:30pm – Saline Co. Extension Office

Welcome

The Unit 24 Extension Council meeting on August 3, 2023, was called to order at 6:00p.m. by Vice Chair Stacey Phillips after the annual dinner catered by Sherry Chrisman.

Council Members Present

Stacy Phillips, Alex Watkins, Jennifer Willis, Justin Roberts, Debbie McVey, Donna Rumsey, Connie Gibbs, Norman Hill, and Rachel Lands.

Staff Present

Angie Messmer, John Shadowens, Sheila Stamer, Bronwyn Aly, and Lindsay Adams.

Extension Council Training

Extension Council Training for new members was discussed by Angie Messmer. The training class does not take very long to finish. Two packets were provided to those present providing details on what the Extension Council is and what is expected of its members. A summary packet was put together by Angie Messmer and a more detailed packet was put together by Sheila Stamer.

Approval of Minutes from August 4, 2022, November 3, 2022, and February 16, 2023

Thankfully there was a quorum at this meeting, so the minutes from last year's meetings were able to be reviewed and approved. A motion to approve the August 4, 2022, minutes was made by Alex Watkins, seconded by Jennifer Willis, and the motion carried. A motion to approve the November 3, 2022, minutes was made by Justin Roberts, seconded by Donna Rumsey, and the motion carried. A motion to approve the February 16, 2023, minutes was made by Donna Rumsey, seconded by Norman Hill, and the motion carried.

Fiscal Reports – Trust Account – 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Quarters

Since there was a quorum at this meeting, the Fiscal Reports were able to be reviewed and approved as well. Sheila Stamer made note that the Reconciliation Summary shows the



ending balance as of the end of June 2023 and will be the carry over for FY24. The ending balance is above normal, which is good. Sheila stated it was due to reasons including agreements, cuts in spending and due to limited activity during the COVID shutdown, as well as other factors. She made note that next year our expenses are likely to increase due to employees increasing programming, which increases expenses and travel costs. A motion to approve the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Quarter Reports was made by Stacy Phillips, seconded by Alex Watkins, and the motion carried.

Updates from the County Director

- Lindsay Adams is the new Youth Development Educator. She started on June 20, 2023, and has been busy attending the 4-H county fairs with Angie Messmer and the Extension Program Coordinators. Lindsay has been brainstorming new ideas for 4-H activities and has been discussing the idea of starting new 4-H spin clubs. Lindsay does not have a 4-H background; however, she has been a high school teacher in Gallatin County where she also coached the academic teams. She has an interest in videography and photography.
- There has been a vacancy in the Office Support Assistant position at DSAC (Dixon Springs Agricultural Center). Interviews have been conducted, a potential hire has been identified, and we will be moving forward with the hiring process next week.
- Zoom/virtual meetings are no longer allowed. These virtual meetings were allowed as part of the COVID measures that were put into place, which expired on May 10, 2023. All meetings that require voting must be conducted in person.
- Unit 24 currently has one extra help clerical employee and is needing more. This position is on an as-needed basis. Extra help employees would answer the phone and direct people to where they need to go, and other small tasks while covering an office. Depending on the experience of the person, they may be able to progress in their skills and do more in the office. An extra help employee is maxed out at 900 hours and then they must take 6 months off if they plan on returning to the same position. Extra help employees do not have to travel to all the counties in Unit 24. It is okay if someone only wants to cover the county office in which they live in. Several council members offered to send referrals to Angie.
- Community involvement was discussed by John Shadowens. Extension is trying to focus programming on its 5 Grand Challenges. To do this, they are conducting a community needs assessment. The data gathered from the needs assessment will then be put into Qualtrics to organize the results. John Shadowens and Angie Messmer have also been conducting face-to-face interviews with individuals. During this meeting several community needs were expressed by those present

including housing, youth development, parenting, and food insecurity. Needs in Unit 24 differ for each county and Extension has been trying to cast a broader network so communities know what good Extension can do. It was also expressed that to make changes and improvements in our counties, leaders need to consider who their partner agencies are, plan for the long term rather than for 1 year, narrow down what they want to achieve, and organizations need to step up and be leaders to implement action.

- John Shadowens also discussed the new grocery store in Cairo, what it took to make that possible, and what is happening in Gallatin County (which is a food desert). The mobile food pantry is progressing nicely. It was patterned after Food on the Move in St. Louis. The mobile food pantry will consist of a Ford F250 truck with a 23 ft. trailer outfitted with shelves and coolers to house food. The truck will be parked for about one and a half hours. People in the community will be able to shop there like they would in a regular grocery store. Items available will include (but is not limited to) cereal, dairy products, vegetables, and protein rich foods. The mobile pantry will make 3 stops per month each year because it is a pilot program. There will be approximately 3,000 pounds of food on the trailer that can serve up to approximately 60 families. Discussion held about having recipes or a QR code available on the trailer that connects shoppers to a site with videos on how to prepare the food they plan to purchase. John also mentioned that the Illinois Grocery Initiative Bill has been passed (but not yet signed by the Governor) that would bring us closer to being able to start more grocery pilot programs in towns that have no grocery store.
- Bronwyn Aly reported on the Southern Illinois Summer Twilight Series meetings. A flyer was included in the folders provided to those present at this meeting that listed the dates, where the meetings took place, and what the main topics were. On the third Monday of each month those who participated in the Twilight meetings went to a different farm/business and had discussions that focused on production practices and how to market products. These Twilight meetings allow time for networking between farmers, and they had an average of about 25 people in attendance at each meeting except for the program at Bass Farms, which drew in 55 in attendance. There is usually a diverse participation at these programs. There is one more Twilight meeting schedule on August 21, 2023, at The Patch in Williamson County.
- Bronwyn also discussed the High Tunnel Production Field Day at the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center that took place on Thursday, July 13, 2023, from 6-8p.m. Topics discussed included programs, funding for the high tunnels, and basics about high

tunnels. An entomologist from campus came down as well as a graduate student who brought some of their robots to demonstrate. The robots help to monitor insect clusters and helps target direct spraying. The event went very well.

- Attendance of the Extension Council meetings was discussed. Last year there was a severe problem with lacking a quorum at the meetings. Hopefully this year there will be more people who are able to make it to our meetings.

Election of Officers

Stacy Phillips is the new Chair. Norman Hill (nominated by Justin Roberts) is the new Vice Chair, Rachel Lands (nominated by Alex Watkins) is the Secretary, and Justin 3 | P a g e Roberts (nominated by Stacy Phillips and Alex Watkins) is the new Financial Reporter. All were in favor of these individuals holding these offices and the motions were carried.

Election for Extension Board Roster and County Governing Board Roster

Two women and two men needed to be appointed to the Extension Board. Those on the Extension Board would meet with the County Board if there was an extenuating circumstance. Alex Watkins made a motion to appoint Stacy Phillips, Norman Hill, Rachel Lands, and Justin Roberts to the Extension Board which was seconded by Jennifer Willis. The motion carried. It was made note that Norman Hill said that we need to make an inquiry to the County Boards to see why they have not appointed representatives.

Civil Rights Discussion/Review Conducted on 4/4/23

We had a good review with little findings and were complimented on the work we done in preparation of the review.

Council Replacements/Term Expired or Lack of Attendance

Those individuals who fall into these categories are Tony Eckert, Hank Oldham, Zach O'Neal, Larry Richards, Donna Rumsey, and Alex Watkins. Per request of Alex Watkins, a motion was made by Stacey Phillips and seconded by Justin Roberts to keep him on the Extension Council for another term.

New Members

Our new members include Amanda Courson, Connie Gibbs, Norman Hill, Justin Roberts, and Dean E. West. A motion to approve both the Council replacements/term expired or lack of attendance and the new members was made by Justin Roberts and seconded by Stacy Phillips. The motion carried.

In/Out Account Audit Committees

There is a group that audits the in/out bank accounts, and the committee members need to be approved. The committee in Hamilton County consists of Cindy Anselment, Lynn Smith,

Nolene Rubenacker, Cara Bowling (alternate), and Sheila Stamer (office support staff). The committee in Saline County consists of Alex Watkins, Ciarra Willett, Janetta Flener, and Kathy Oglesby (office support). The committee in White County consists of Jennifer Carter-James, Lisa Wolff, Larissa Hays, Kathy Oglesby, and Sheila Stamer (office support).

In/Out Accounts for Saline/Hamilton/White – Check Signatories

The check signatories for Saline, Hamilton, and White Counties need to be approved. The signatories for Hamilton County are Angie Messmer, Elizabeth Cooley-Questelle, Elaine Miller, and Jennifer Willis. The signatories for Saline County are Angie Messmer, Bronwyn Aly, Elizabeth Cooley-Questelle, and Dean E. West. The signatories for White County are Angie Messmer, Bronwyn Aly, Holly Heath, and Elizabeth Cooley-Questelle. A motion to approve both the Audit Committees and the Check Signatories was made by Alex Watkins and seconded by Justin Roberts. The motion carried.

Future Meetings for 2023-2024

Our next meeting will be on Friday, October 27, 2023, at 4p.m. at the University of Illinois Extension Office in Harrisburg. We will also have a meeting in February, May, and August of 2024, but the dates have yet to be set.

Comments and Discussion

- Angie will be sending out a newsletter between our meetings with unit updates to the council.
- Bronwyn is co-editor of a newsletter and will also send out emails periodically to the council members.
- Angie handed out pamphlets that contained a brief summary of Extension, commented on the Annual Report, and offered Extension yard signs to anyone who would like to display them. She also discussed the 2023 Stewardship Week at the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center. It was back in person this year and had a very good impact on the kids who participated in the event and showed them possible career/job opportunities. A packet was included in the folders provided to those who were present at this meeting that contained project accomplishments, project highlights, a list of the stations at Stewardship Week, and a thank you to all those who provided program support.
- It was stated that there was lots of good discussion at this Extension Council meeting, and everyone was thanked for their participation and for their attendance.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn this meeting of the Unit 24 Extension Council was made by Rachel Lands and seconded by Stacy Phillips and Alex Watkins. The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Minutes taken and submitted by Rachel Lands.