

**University of Illinois Extension
Fulton-Mason-Peoria Tazewell Unit
Extension Council Meeting
Monday April 7, 2025
Tazewell County Extension Office
Pekin, IL**

Minutes

- Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chair Kim Dunnigan at 12:06 PM
- Attendees: Earl Allen, Rachel Driver, Kaytlin Lehman, Kim Dunnigan, Melissa Gilson, Patty Weigers, Dinah VanDelinder, Sue Beeney, and Janine Donahue. Quorum requirement was satisfied. All members introduced themselves.
- Approval of minutes. All members reviewed the February 3, 2025, minutes. No corrections were needed. Motion was made by Melissa to approve minutes and Janine seconded with all approving.

Staffing Updates:

- Rachel Driver, the new Extension Master Gardener Coordinator, introduced herself. She is a Pekin native and had previously worked 10 years in Education. She joined Extension one month ago and her headquarters is in the Pekin office.
- Kaytlin Lehman- Kaytlin is from Fulton County and had previously worked in the SNAP Ed program. She completed her Bachelor of Science Degree with SIU-E and returned to Extension now as a SNAP-Ed coordinator. Her headquarters is in the Fulton County office.
- Earl discussed how each of these new staff members has hit the ground running and how they are doing an excellent job. Earl is still interviewing candidates for a SNAP-Ed position.
- Per the idea of Kevin Carey, Acting Director of 4-H Youth Development, Earl is exploring the possibility of replacing the open 4-H metro educator position with 2 metro program coordinator positions. This change may allow for greater opportunities for programming with youth.

- Christine Belles, Coordinator of the Extension Master Naturalist program will be retiring April 30, 2025. Earl has filled a full time Extra Help position and that individual will begin May 2025 and assist with covering the EMN program needs until the Coordinator position has been filled.
- Roberta Clifton is a new substitute office support staff member in the Mason and Fulton County offices.
- Earl indicated that 2 additional staff members have discussed with him the possibility of retirement this calendar year.

Review and approval of FY 26 Budget:

Earl provided a handout of the FY 26 Budget and reviewed all the line items on the Revenue chart. He noted that the University of Illinois has not yet announced the staff salary program for this year, so the personnel lines may be adjusted before final submission in May. All members reviewed the non-personnel expenses on the second page of the handout. Melissa made a motion to accept the budget as printed and Patty seconded the motion. Members unanimously approved the budget.

Other:

The Master Gardener program held their annual Gardener's Big Day on April 5, 2025 at Spoon River College and modified the programming to a half day format. It was well attended.

Future Meeting Schedule:

- Local County Extension Board Meetings will be held in July and August 2025. Dates and locations to be determined.
- Next regular meeting will be October 6, 2025, at noon at the Pekin Extension Office as per the schedule of meetings being held on the 1st Monday of October, February and April.

Respectfully submitted April 8, 2025

Janine Donahue, Secretary