



Extension Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Extension serving Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle Counties - Unit 2

Monday, September 29, 2025—6:00 p.m.

Uptown Lanes/Back Alley Bar & Grill, 106 W 2nd St, Byron, IL 61010

Present: Extension Appointed Board Members: Patrick Deutsch, Lyle Hopkins, and Tom Walberg; **Advisory Council Members:** Mark Schuth, Sarah Hackbarth, Joyce Lewis, Barb Wych, Jeff Woodyatt, Barb Thrun, Abigail Kolthoff, Mallory King, Natalie Coy, Brooke Heinsohn, Jozzy Mundy, Kayse Rushford, Dan Dietrich, Stephanie King, and Tina Holtz; **Staff:** Heather Coyle, Mike Delany, Peggy Anesi, Connie Handel, Abigail Nelson, Jan Saglier, and Teresa Schwarz.

This meeting convened at 6:10 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 Meeting 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 in the folder that each member received, including the unit's 2024 impact report and flyers for upcoming programming within the unit.

Notification of Unit 2 Signatories: *Heather Coyle, Johnna Jennings, Jodi Baumgartner, and Melinda Colbert for FNB checking account (Boone & DeKalb). And Heather Coyle, Johnna Jennings, Jodi Baumgartner, and Melinda Colbert, for the Harvard checking account (Ogle).* **It was stated that since Johnna Jennings' retirement, Mike Delany will be a signatory in her place.**

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, Chair, and she headed the business portion of the meeting. She said everyone received last year's meeting minutes and read them for errors. **Patrick Deutsch 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: Connie Handel reported on the programming suggestions made by the advisory council and how Extension addressed the needs programmatically through education this past year in all three counties. **See attachment B.**

Natural Resources, Environment, and Energy: Peggy Anesi and committee members Barb Wych and Jeff Woodyatt discussed the Watershed Stewards community education program and the watershed activities in DeKalb County. **See attachment C.**

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

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 D.***

4-H & Youth: Abigail Nelson 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 E.*** Abigail asked, "Why is 4-H important?" Some people involved in 4-H mentioned leadership skills, how to communicate with larger crowds, volunteer opportunities, and numerous project opportunities.

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 2025-2026 officers, asking for volunteers willing to serve. A motion to elect new officers was seconded. Motion carried.

CHAIRPERSON – Conduct the annual business portion of the meeting and sign council documents.

Barb Wych, Boone County

VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Conduct the annual meeting in the chair's absence.

Natalie Coy, Ogle County

SECRETARY – Take minutes at the annual meeting and review minutes before distribution.

Luis Gonzalez, Boone County

Natalie Coy motioned to adjourn the meeting; the Council voted to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8 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.

Extension Advisory Council
Departing members- DeKalb County

Gina Carrona- CED & Governemnt
Anita Zurbrugg- Ag & Natural Resources
Jodi Gudewicz- Ag & Natural Resources
Dori Delacruz- 4-H & Youth

Extension Advisory Council
Departing members- Boone County

Heather Wick- CED & Government
Heather Nelson- 4-H & Youth

Extension Advisory Council
Departing members- Ogle County

Liz Vos- CED & Government
Sherrie Taylor- CED & Government
Candie Fore- Health & Local Foods
Sarah Hackbarth- Health & Local Foods
Kayse Rushford- Ag & Natural Resources

Youth on 4-H & Youth	
Raiden Zimmerman	Ogle
Mallory King	Ogle
Case Charlesworth	Boone
Madeline Koltholff	Boone

New 2025-2026 committee members

Health & Local Foods
Joyce Lewis (Ogle)
Melissa Rojas (Ogle)

Ag & Natural Resources
Barb Thrun (Boone)

4-H & Youth	
Natalie Coy (Ogle)	
Brooke Heinsohn (Ogle)	Abigail Kolthoff (Boone) YOUTH
Carley Ackland (Ogle)	Jozzy Mundy (Boone) YOUTH
Allissa Martin (Ogle)	
Immanuel Arellano (Ogle)	

Health and Local Foods Committee

In February we asked our committee members to fill out a survey to help us focus in on some things we could do to better serve our communities. We received some good suggestions and feedback and used those to come up with an action plan for our committee for this year.

Starting with the health side of things, Kara Schweitzer – Family Life Educator for Units 4 and 2 asked me to share this report:

Several programs this year were held in response to requests from the Health and Local Foods Committee for mental health related programming.

This year Extension partnered with the Boone County Health Department to provide a series of mental health related professional development programs for the health department professionals. Topics included: Addressing Ageism, Trauma Informed Care, Compassion Fatigue- The Cost of Caring for Others, and Compassion and Resilience Education at Work: Stigma Reduction.

Two mental health related programs are being presented locally as part of the Lessons for Living Webinar Series. Decluttering Your Home and Finances is a program designed to provide strategies for decluttering, organizing, and reducing stress. This webinar was live streamed at the Mount Morris Senior Center on September 11. Wellness in Nature is another upcoming webinar that explores the many mental and physical benefits of spending time in nature. This webinar will be live streamed on October 13 at Rock River Center in Oregon, IL.

Additionally, the Integrated Health Disparities Let's Walk program, located in Boone and Ogle counties and self-guided Wellness in Nature signs at Russel Woods Forest Preserve plus DeKalb County Nature walks, both in DeKalb County, encouraged walking and learning about the benefits of time in nature.

Looking forward - Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention is a newer program to Extension. This exercise program is designed to improve balance, reduce pain, increase mindfulness, and decrease stress.

On the Local Foods side, one of the suggestions from a committee member was for Extension to have a presence at local Farmer's Markets in order to make people more aware of our services, answer gardening related questions and have garden-related educational materials available for attendees to take home. Master Gardener volunteers in each county stepped up to provide this service.

In Ogle County MGs were at Rivers Edge Farmers Market in Oregon for 1 Market in June and 1 in July.

In Boone County MGs were at Belvidere's Farmers Market and Crafts for 10 market days from June through September.

And in DeKalb County MGs had a table at the Sycamore Steam Show all 4 days of the show.

Lastly, I would like to share with you something fun that we did for one of our meetings this year. In May we had Extension staff from each county attend the Zoom meeting from a local Extension supported garden site. We also invited our community members to join us at the garden sites if they were able. Then during the meeting staff shared video of the site while explaining some of the Extension programming that was taking place at each of the gardens. It was a great way for our committee members to see and hear about a few of the exciting programs happening in their counties.



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Serving Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle Counties

Extension Advisory Council Speaking Notes
Natural Resources, Environment, and Energy (NREE)
September 29, 2025 @ 6:00 pm

Barb W.

Last fall at this time Unit 2, Boone County, was the pilot location for the new **Watershed Stewards** community education program.

- *Give your perspective of the use of this program as a participant and advisory member.
- *The significance of continuing to assist the county with watershed education.
- *We hope to find a council member in Ogle County soon so we can shift watershed education in that direction, continuing to focus regionally within our unit.

Jeff –

Share how the Extension watershed programs compliment and the Watershed activities in DeKalb County.

C.

**Community and Economic Development
Advisory Council
- 2025 Annual Meeting -**

Civic Engagement & Young-Adult Retention

- My Hometown Is Cool (w/4-H)
- Hometown Leaders (w/4-H)

Career Pathways & Readiness

- Ready 4 Work (w/4-H)
- Welcome To The Real World (w/4-H)

Connectedness & Inclusion

- Poverty Simulations
 - Belvidere
 - Oregon
 - DeKalb

Facilitation

- Lincoln Academy
- Region 1 Stormwater Summit (w/ Extension NREE)
- Ogle County Economic Development Corp.

Local Government Education webinars

- Resilient Communities (w/ Extension NREE)
- Digital Equity (w/ IL Office of Broadband)

Extension Advisory Council Meeting 9/29/25

4-H Youth Committee Update

4-H Youth Committee Purpose:

This committee serves as the eyes and ears of 4-H in Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle Counties. Committee members assist Extension staff with identifying local needs, implementing programs, and creating meaningful youth development experiences relevant to the local communities.

Committee Focus Areas this Year:

As part of our continued effort to strengthen and grow 4-H programming, the committee has been focusing on two key areas – increasing awareness of programs and retention of current members. Adult representatives assist with the outreach initiatives, while the youth representatives assist with participant retention efforts.

Adult Representatives:

- **Focus:** Building Community Partnerships & Expanding Reach
- Adult Representatives partners with the Schools and New Audiences 4-H staff to brainstorm **new partnership opportunities** within our communities.
- Discussions center on identifying **organizations, schools, civic groups, and underrepresented audiences** where 4-H and Extension could increase program visibility and engagement.
- The group also discussed strategies for ensuring 4-H is perceived as **welcoming and relevant** program for all youth and families.

Youth Representatives:

- **Focus:** Understanding 4-H Program Retention
- Youth Representatives collaborate with 4-H Community Club staff to develop **survey tools** aimed at exploring the reasons youth and families leave the 4-H program.
- The goal is to use survey results to **identify patterns, barriers, and opportunities** for improvement in engagement, communication, and support.

Next Steps

- 4-H staff will continue the use of the survey tools to increase understanding of why families may choose to leave the program. 4-H staff will leverage this information to improve the program experience and support of program participants.
- Adult representatives will continue to network and identify areas that 4-H staff can partner with schools and community groups/organizations to increase program visibility and reach. This information has directed the focus of Schools and New Audiences 4-H staff as they offer and implement programs in the 2026 school year. Example: Committee members identified a need in the communities for programs supporting youth mental and emotional health. 4-H staff have responded to this need by offering a four-session program series that will help middle school youth better understand emotional regulation, stress management, and balancing their health and wellness.
- Committee members will continue to report their ideas and feedback to ensure programming meets evolving community needs.