

**University of Illinois Extension – Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall, Putnam
Unit Council Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.**

Meeting Held at Princeton office

The March 24, 2026 meeting of the Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall, Putnam Extension Unit Council was called to order by Erin Orwig.

Attendance- Lynn Delaney, Stefanie Morris, Douglas Stockley, Chris Dvorak, and Kathryn Erjavsek

Staff – Extension County Director Erin Orwig, Commercial Ag Educator Emily Hansen

Minutes for December 16, 2025:

Kathryn Erjavsek made the motion, Lynn seconded. Motion carried.

Update on council role:

Erin would like to increase the advisory role of the council. Council members are asked to attend an extension program before the September meeting to familiarize themselves with what we are offering and to be better able to promote programs to community members and partners. At the September meeting, council members will meet with each of the educators to provide feedback about the programs, potential new programs and partners.

Council does need a chair to run the meetings and a secretary to take notes for compliance purposes. Stefanie Morris agreed to chair and Kathryn Erjavsek will continue with the secretary role.

Erin also reported that an audit was conducted statewide on the Extension Boards. There were several throughout the state that were not filled correctly. Extension Boards must be in counties with levies which is Marshall and Putnam for our unit. It should be comprised of two men and two women. They can request the budget for review every year or choose not to. Historically, the unit's Extension Board had members of county boards. It can be member county board members or anyone in the county, but they cannot serve on the council and the Extension Board. Erin will get more information at the state county director meeting next week so she may have more information at the June council meeting.

Commercial Ag Update:

Emily Hansen gave an update on past and future programming. She wrapped up her winter programming last week with the Sustainability on the Farm series. She did all the programs this year for the series. The Agronomy Summit was held at IVCC and will be scheduled again next winter. The Master Naturalist program continues to grow with the new volunteers. Another training will be held this summer before going to every other year training schedule. Emily highlighted the bat and frog data collecting work and fossil programming as some of her favorites from the many programs they are doing. There will be a hybrid Master Gardener training in the fall. Emily is hoping to get new volunteers who will revive the library programs for Master Gardeners. Emily included a volunteer impact report in the packet.

Finance Report:

Erin reported that state match is back to 75% and the FY27 budget will use that for planning purposes. Brooke Welte will start working on the budget in April and it will be at the June meeting for discussion.

The Compeer grant finished in January and the final report was submitted in February. Another drone SPIN club will be held in the fall.

Erin mentioned that there will be no extra help this summer due to budget constraints from the loss of SNAP-Ed. Campus does provide each unit with an intern during the summer so that will help with summer planning of 4-H shows and other programs. There were four candidates who applied, and interviews will finish up this week.

Campus is again asking the state to increase our budget by \$10 million through the Illinois Department of Agriculture. It does have support from the state senate and house. If that were to be accepted, it would allow us to increase our staffing and hire an EPC to assist with the growing MG/MN programs.

Program Reports: (newsletter emailed and in packet)

Erin reported that Katharine Girone, Ag in the Classroom, is visiting many of the schools in M/P. She is also working on summer programs and partnering with Farm Bureau to conduct a tour of local farms and ag businesses for teachers.

Susan Glassman, Food and Nutrition educator, will be traveling to Greece this fall for the International ESP conference. She will be learning more about the Mediterranean lifestyle and diet that she has created curriculum on. She received a scholarship to attend from ESP. Susan will be presenting on her trip at the December council meeting.

Shasta Hladovcak, Youth Development educator, is working on summer programming. She will be a food science academy at Mendota and is working to finalize a few schools for the summer. This will help fill the gap that was left from eliminating the Illinois Junior Chef program with

SNAP-Ed. The unit recently held a Spring into 4-H event at IVCC. Over 40 youth attended and had the opportunity to start three projects for the upcoming fair season.

Outreach Efforts

Shasta Hladovcak just received news that we received a \$500 Food Advocacy grant from campus to purchase materials to start a community garden at First Christian Church in Princeton. This will also be a partnership with Second Story Teen Center. Sarah Hodel, Bureau County 4-H EPC, will provide education on planning, caring and harvesting a garden. Susan Glassman will provide a class on food preservation to the teens later in the summer with some of their produce.

Old Business-

Erin reported that the moving process is completed as of today with Stevenson's transported all the accepted items to surplus at campus. On February 17 Stevenson's removed items from the Ottawa office, on March 11 they moved the IVCC furnishings to Ottawa, and on March 19 they removed old furnishings and rearranged the Princeton office. If you hear of any comments or questions about the moves, please direct those to Erin. All items that were removed went through a process of approval and were either accepted by surplus or were able to be disposed of locally.

New Business-

Welcome Lynn Delaney and Stefanie Morris to the council! We appreciate you volunteering your time to extension.

Meetings will rotate among the offices since we can only use IVCC during regular business hours. The next meeting will include a tour of the community garden at the Henry United Methodist Church then a meeting will follow either at the church or the Henry office. The September meeting will be at Ottawa. Council members will be able to review our Plan of Work and meet with educators about programming needs. The December meeting will be in Princeton and feature a presentation from Susan about her international professional development trip to Greece.

Other/Special Considerations:

Location:

Lynn Delaney moved to adjourn the meeting. Douglas Stockley seconded – motion carried, meeting adjourned.

Submitted by: Kathryn Erjavsek