

# University of Illinois Extension Council Meeting – Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark Counties Extension Council Meeting Minutes August 19, 2025

## **Council Members Present:**

Adrian Blackwell, Maya Boehle, Rebecca Cantu, Dave Dyer, Spencer Griffin, Melissa Hajostek, Mary Meaker, Addison Monson, Mason Palmer, Dianna Saelens, Mike Sigwalt, Riggins Shafer

## **Illinois Extension staff Present:**

Kristin Bogdonas, Jenny Garner, Elaine Kaple, Tayler Louscher, Russell Medley:

**Call to Order:** Dianna Saelens called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Spencer Griffin called the roll.

**Public Comments:** Not applicable.

**Previous Minutes:** The minutes of the last meeting on April 15, 2025, were approved as read on a motion by Adrian Blackwell and seconded by Mary Meaker. Motion carried.

## **Fiscal Report:**

- The Unit 7 Trust and Self-Supporting accounts ending June 30, 2025, were provided for review by Jenny Garner.
- Henry/Stark In-and-Out account has an end balance of \$5,447.69. Mercer In-and-Out account has an end balance of \$1,694.04; Rock Island In-and-Out account has an end balance of \$3,707.49. In-and-Out account balances started higher in the month of July to cover expenditures for 4-H youth cashing their 2024 premium checks.

## **Council Reports:**

- Dave Dyer reported that the City of Galva hosted another successful Illinois Extension Farm in the Park at their Veterans Park earlier this month. About 225 young children and their families enjoyed activity stations, petting zoo, and hot dog fundraiser lunch for the Henry County 4-H Foundation.

- Mike Sigwalt said the Geneseo- Atkinson Food Pantry experienced a record month in July with 406 families accessing services. The program has grown substantially from four years ago when the pantry serviced 47 families during the same period.
- Dianna Saelens reported that the Henry County Human Services Council created a resource guide last year and is working on developing postcards to support Henry/ Stark County families.
- Mary Meaker indicated Wyoming Public Library finished their summer reading program and expressed appreciation for the variety of programming provided by Kristin Bogdonas, Extension's nutrition and wellness educator. They also hosted a Rural Roots on the Library Lawn with activity stations, petting zoo, and hot dog fundraiser lunch for the Stark County 4-H Foundation.
- Adrian Blackwell talked about the GIFT program where people donate produce from their gardens and how it has been a blessing for Rock Island County families in economic distress due to job loss, inflation, and rising costs. The Rock Island Health Department is also working on their immunization program.
- Rebecca Canut reported Two Rivers YMCA finished with their summer day camp. They have developed a resource for families who need after school childcare; a super snack is provided.
- Melissa Hajostek reported a new grant season started in July. The Mercer County Health Department completed a healthy living fair with Illinois Extension involved last week. The Health Department is also working on their immunization program and is the only location in Mercer County to offer them.

#### **Staff Programming Information:**

- Elaine Kaple reported on the Spring Forward summer camp that also included Illinois Department of Natural Resources and City of Moline as involved partners. Spring Forward enrollment of 40 youth exceeded capacity at Riverside Park. The partners worked together to achieve a solution overnight that resulted in half of the youth learning how to fish and the other half doing 4-H experiential learning; the groups then swapped places.
- Jennifer Peterson shared photos from the 4-H shows during the Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark County Fairs this summer.
- Russell Medley reported Disaster Ready Quad Cities activated in July because of massive flooding in Iowa. Rebecca Cantu is the chair. A Henry, Mercer, and Stark

counties COAD (community organizations active in disaster) just started because of the tornado that hit Kewanee.

- Tayler Louscher expanded on the Gift Garden project that supports home vegetable gardeners by providing resources for growing, harvesting, and donating food to local food pantries. This was developed from an internal team of SNAP-Ed and Horticulture staff along with Master Gardener volunteers. This is a partnership with Illinois Extension, Tapestry Farms, Iowa Extension, Quad City Community Foundation, and River Bend Food Bank. The program encourages new or experienced growers to donate produce to identified food donation sites. The program currently has 70 growers reaching 15 donation sites.
- Kristin Bogdonas mentioned a new Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention evidence-based program she is currently undertaking training to offer to our service area. About 35% of people aged 65 experience a fall and 1 in 5 adults are experiencing arthritis. This 16-part session series reduces fear of falling, increases muscle strength, and improves coordination among participants. There is a social connection benefit to the program as well.

### **Announcements:**

The recently passed One Big Beautiful Bill Act, Pub. L. No. 119-21, 139 Stat. 72 (2025) eliminated funding for the SNAP-Ed program nationally, which is administered in Illinois under the Eat.Move.Save. brand. This means funding will end for University of Illinois Extension's SNAP Education program with the close of the federal fiscal year on September 30, 2025. USDA since sent written confirmation acknowledging that Extension will be able to use remaining Federal FY25 SNAP-Ed funds during FY26. This will allow Illinois Extension to extend services and employment for SNAP-Ed staff through February of 2026. Extension Unit 7 will lose one-third of its staff members as a result of the Bill's passage. SNAP-Ed, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2022, has a long history of providing nutrition and physical activity programming in communities across Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark counties.

### **New Business:**

- **Election of Officers:** On a motion made by Adrian Blackwell and seconded by Rebecca Cantu, Mary Meaker was elected vice-chair and Dave Dyer was elected financial reporter.

- **Extension Board:** On a motion made by Dave Dyer and seconded by Melissa Hajostek, Adrian Blackwell was elected to the Extension Unit 7 Board to represent the Advisory Council and Rock Island County.
- **Open Meetings Act Online Training:** Extension Unit 7 Advisory Council members are required to complete the State of Illinois' Open Meetings Act training. Instructions were provided in the packet and completed certifications should be emailed to Jenny Garner.
- **Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.
- **Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the meeting, a motion was made by Mary Meaker and seconded by Riggins Shafer that the meeting be adjourn ed. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Spencer Griffin