

Unit 27 Council Meeting
February 19, 2026
11:00a.m. – 1:00 pm

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Curtis Marshall at 11:10am. Verbal introductions were made around the table and name cards were placed before each attendee. Civil rights information slips and meeting sign-in sheet were circulated around the room.

Council members present:

Alexander/Pulaski	Johnson	Massac	Union
Curtis Marshall Natalie Sawyer	Raymond Bieri Evan Coulson Patti Powell	Tracie Key Greg Jeffords	Harry Brockus Hannah Godfrey Arien Hermann Hunter Boyd

Staff present: County Director Jody Johnson, John Shadowens, Kristi Stout, Erin Garrett, Anne Townsend, Monica Meyer, Shannon Pulliam

Also attending: John McCuan, Johnson County Commissioner

Meeting minutes from December 11, 2025, were reviewed. Motion made by Raymond Bieri and seconded by Tracie Key to approve prior minutes. Motion carried.

Council Business

2026 Officers

- Chair: Curtis Marshall
- Vice Chair: Evan Coulson
- Secretary: Tracie Key
- Financial Officer: Patricia Wilson

2026 Council Membership Confirmed

Johnson County - Raymond Bieri, Evan Coulson, Patti Powell, Brianna Daily (Youth), Kylie Vaughn (Youth)

Massac County - Tracie Key, Greg Jeffords, Don Robbins, Dale McReynolds

Pulaski/Alexander - Curtis Marshall, Don Patton, Natalie Sawyer, Patricia Wilson

Union County - Hunter Boyd, Harry Brockus, Hannah Godfrey, Arien Hermann

New member orientation scheduled for May 21, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. prior to the regular meeting.

County Extension Director Report

Strategic Direction & Needs Assessment

- Extension Grand Challenges reviewed
- Unit Needs Assessment highlighted
- #1 Identified Issue: Youth Mental Health

Council members were encouraged to share emerging community needs between formal assessment cycles.

Financial Overview

Trust Account: \$172,797

Revolving Account: \$46,494

Smith-Lever (Federal): \$254,250 (increase to \$300,000 anticipated)

Gift Account: \$27,204

AJMPU Foundation: \$30,000

County Contributions:

- Johnson – \$46,619
- Massac – \$17,500
- Pulaski/Alexander – \$26,200
- Union – \$40,000 (+\$10,000 approved from general fund)

Discussion included:

- Loss of SNAP-Ed funding
- Lease space challenges in Union County
- Matching state funds opportunity
- Importance of long-term fundraising strategy

Statewide & Administrative Updates

- Dr. Matthew Van (new Extension Director) visited Unit 27 — first unit visit statewide.
- Request pending for additional \$10 million in state funding.
- ICJIA R3 funding pathways discussed.

Civil Rights & Inclusion

Director emphasized compliance and commitment to serving diverse audiences and maintaining federal funding eligibility.

Partnerships & Community Engagement

Highlights included:

- Johnson County 2000 leadership
- CEO Program (first year in Johnson County)
- Friends of the Shawnee National Forest (15-year anniversary)
- Disaster Preparedness & Teen CERT
- Healing Illinois Initiative
- Negro League Baseball educational exhibit exploration

Unit Reports

Natural Resources, Environment & Energy (NREE)

2025 Highlights

- Summer Library Program – 100+ youth
- Woolly Worm Educational Program – 660+ participants
- National Moth Week (Giant City)
- Pumpkin Extravaganza – 100–200 participants
- Wreath-Making Workshops
- Master Naturalists: 14 active
- Master Gardeners: 9 active
- Volunteer Hours: 2,600+

Trash Blast Initiative

- 2,000+ lbs collected in 2025
- 16,000+ lbs collected since 2021
- 400 illegally dumped tires removed with EPA assistance
- Woodsy Owl 55th Anniversary partnership

Snake Road Sentinel Program

- 82 trained participants
- Online training expansion
- Visitor and snake population data collection
- Educational outreach materials developed

Food Donation Gardens

Cairo Garden (Southern Seven property)

- 30 raised beds
- 1,300 lbs produce donated
- Garden Tales youth program

Metropolis Garden

- 1,200 lbs produce donated
- Community volunteer engagement

Community & Economic Development (CED)

- Independent grocery stabilization efforts
- Food desert prevention initiatives
- Grant writing support
- Regional economic collaboration

4-H Youth Development

- 47 youth participated in UIUC campus visit
- Teen Leadership & CEO program engagement
- Continued experiential education initiatives
- Youth development focus tied to mental health resilience

SNAP / INEP

Discussion included:

- Loss of SNAP-Ed federal funds
- Impact on staffing and programming
- Long-term sustainability concerns

Discussion Items

- Fundraising strategy exploration
- Potential healthcare partnerships
- Lease space solutions
- Grant collaboration opportunities

Dates and Times of future council meetings

- May 21, 2026 @ Vienna - 11am-1pm (CED staff) – 10am for orientation with new Unit Council members
- September 17, 2026 @ Vienna – 11am-1pm (4-H staff)
- December 10, 2026 @ Vienna – 11am-1pm (NREE staff)
- February 18, 2027 @ Vienna - 11am-1pm (CED staff)
- May 10, 2027, 2026 @ Vienna – 11am-1pm (4-H staff)

Motion to adjourn made by Curtis Marshall and seconded by Gregg Jeffords. No objections, meeting adjourned at 1:02pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Monica Meyer

Unit 27 - Office Support Specialist

For Unit 27 Unit Council secretary, Tracie Key