

Unit 27 Council Meeting
May 15, 2025
11:00a.m. – 1:00 pm

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Ruby Lingle at 11:00am. 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
Ethan Bradley (YOUTH) Curtis Marshall)	Evan Coulson Chesley Williams Kylie Vaughn (YOUTH)	Tracie Key Don Robbins James Walton	Kristen Cameron Kendell Boysen Ruby Lingle Chuck Weilmuenster

Staff present: Doug Harland, County Director Jody Johnson, John Shadowens, Destenie Sullivan, Eleazar Edwards, Ifeoluwa Adesoye, Kaylee Leach, Amy Shuck

1. Introductions and Approval of Minutes

- Attendees introduced themselves, including council members, Extension staff, and special guest Doug Harlan, Associate Director for Region 3.
- Meeting minutes from February 13, 2025, were reviewed. Motion made by Chuck Weilmuenster and seconded by Curtis Marshall to approve prior minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Council Business

- End-of-Year Transition:
 - December 2025 will mark the final meeting of the current Council cycle.
 - New members will begin in January 2026.
 - Members were asked to identify replacement nominees before the September meeting.
- Illinois Open Meetings Act (OMA):
 - Members were reminded to complete the OMA electronic training.
 - New members in January will also need to complete it.
- Unit In/Out Accounts:
 - Now consolidated under the Johnson County office to improve efficiency and streamline audits.
 - Agenda item for September: review and update check signers.

3. County Director's Report – Jody Johnson

- Plan of Work & Community Needs:
 - Explained the new 3-year Plan of Work format.

- Council members received forms for identifying key informants by thematic area (community, economy, environment, food/ag, health, technology).
- Deadline: June 5, 2025. In-person meetings during 4-H General Shows were proposed.
- Civil Rights Compliance:
 - Staff have received monthly reminders to track civil rights activities.
 - Will continue in new Council cycle.
- Budget Updates:
 - State funding is current.
 - Trust funds impacted by a delayed R3 grant amendment (\$120K unspent).
 - SNAP-Ed balance remains (\$39K unspent) with new fiscal cycle starting July 1.
 - Foundation funds remain underutilized (\$5,485), no active board or fundraising strategy.
 - Discussion on pursuing endowments and legacy gifts.
- Grant Activity:
 - R3 Grant: Extension and partners are planning a proposal to reclaim uncommitted marijuana tax funds (~\$160M statewide).
 - USDA HFFI Grant: John Shadowens leads local grocery access and food system innovation work.
- Cairo Site Development:
 - Two classrooms donated for youth programming and VISTA staffing.

4. Unit Reports

- Community & Economic Development (CED):
Presented by John Shadowens, Destenie Sullivan, and Eleazar Edwards.
 - Overview of grocery store capacity-building work in 16 counties under USDA/AmeriHealth grant.
 - Over 40 locally owned stores supported with marketing, transition, and sustainability strategies.
 - Conducted grocer summits and shared findings with legislators.
 - Upcoming fall grocer conference in planning stages.
 - Offered strategic planning services to local agencies.
- 4-H Youth Development - No staff in attendance, program growth and engagement efforts were shared, written reports provided for review.
- Natural Resources, Environment & Energy – No staff in attendance, program growth and engagement efforts were shared, written reports provided for review.
- SNAP-Ed updates given by Ife and Kaylee highlighting programs and activities, growth and engagement efforts, written reports provided for additional review.

5. Upcoming Council Meetings

- September 18, 2025 – Vienna, 11:00 AM–1:00 PM
- December 11, 2025 – Vienna, 11:00 AM–1:00 PM
- February __, 2026 – Vienna, 11:00 AM–1:00 PM
- May __, 2026 – Vienna, 11:00 AM–1:00 PM

6. General Discussion and Q&A

- Council discussed strategies for improving Extension visibility and encouraging donor support.
- **Emphasis placed on continuing strong SNAP-Ed programming amid potential federal budget cuts.**
- Discussion on the need for active community partnerships and civil society engagement.

Following a presentation by CED staff, a Motion to adjourn made by Kendell Boysen and seconded by Curtis Marshall. No objections, meeting adjourned at 12:53pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Monica Meyer

Unit 27 - Office Support Specialist

For Unit 27 Unit Council secretary, Chesley Williams