

**University of Illinois Extension – Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall, Putnam  
Unit Council Meeting Minutes  
June 16, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.**

**Initially met at the Henry United Methodist Church to tour the garden then the meeting was conducted at the Henry office**

The June 16, 2026 meeting of the Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall, Putnam Extension Unit Council was called to order by Stefanie Morris.

**Attendance-** Arretta Znaniecki, Stefanie Morris, Douglas Stockley, and Kathryn Erjavsek

Staff – Extension County Director Erin Orwig, Youth Development Educator Shasta Hladovcak, 4-H Program Coordinator Anne Scheel, Summer Intern Lilliana Bernabei

**Minutes for March 24, 2026:**

Douglas Stockey made the motion, Stefanie Morris seconded. Motion carried.

**Community Garden at Henry United Methodist Church:**

The meeting initiated at the community garden and Anne Scheel provided a tour. They started with eight raised beds and have expanded to 12 in four seasons. The funding is provided by a grant from campus. This year they also added a grid drip system. 4-H members are responsible for choosing what is grown each year with the donated seeds. Produce from the garden can be used by the 4-H members at the fair or placed in the blessing box at the Church or one in McNabb. The garden has averaged approximately 700 pounds of produce donated. There is also a section of flowers that the members will use for floral arrangements at the fair. Like any garden, pests are an issue so one way Anne is deterring them is with CD's hanging from any tomato cages or supports. It seems to be helping to keep the birds away. This garden is a successful partnership with the church. They have provided the space, water, and built a new, larger blessing box this year. Community members have stocked it with non-perishable food items until the garden produce is available.

**Finance Report:**

Erin reported that the budget has been submitted to campus. She distributed county budgets to those in attendance. The losses from SNAP-Ed were offset by the closure of the IVCC office and eliminating extra help positions. The campus-funded summer intern position is assisting with 4-H show organization.

Campus was not successful in their \$10 million ask to state. They do plan to ask for it again next year.

## **Program Reports: (newsletter emailed and in packet)**

Shasta Hladovcak, Youth Development educator, provided updates for her summer and fall youth development programs.

### **Summer Updates**

- Lilliana has joined us and is learning lots of new skills while travelling between offices and a variety of programs.
- I created a bingo for the summer to create engagement with families in all the counties. Prizes are available when the youth bring their completed line or coverall bingo into their county office.
- Summer Sizzle shoot went well with 89 youth competing.
- Programs are completed with the Brainstormers in Manlius- Food Science, Rockets to the World, Nature in Art, and Drones.
- Library programs are going well. The national theme is Plant a Seed, Read so it fits well with our programming.
- Food science camp at Ottawa YMCA in July
- Jr Solar Sprint in Mendota in July

### **Planning for Fall and Spring of 2026-2027:**

- Health Rocks Workshop on Nov 17, 2026, partnering with OSF, Bureau Co Health Dept, NCBH.
- Offering additional 4-H Club support for next year to help with changes in fiscal calendar and volunteer hours.
- Drones clubs planning for all counties, hoping we have a STEM 4-H extra help in fall for M-P.
- International night/Public Speaking/Project workday locations and dates Winter/Spring 2027 TBD

### **Program highlights in the newsletter:**

- Ag in the Classroom, Katharine Girone
- Food & Nutrition Education, Susan Glassman
- Agriculture, Master Gardeners & Master Naturalists, Emily Hansen

### **Outreach Efforts**

The garden at Second Story Teen Center and First Christian Church was planted with plants donated by IVCC's agriculture department. Teens are watering and weeding the garden on

Tuesdays and Fridays. The rest of the watering is being done by church members or Sarah Hodel, 4-H EPC for Bureau county. Master Gardener, Gay Kyle, met with the teens to teach them proper water and planting. She plans to visit later this summer to look for pest or disease issues in the plants and teach the teens ways to prevent and treat the vegetables and herbs.

### **Old Business-**

Kathryn Erjavsek reported that she visited the outdoor education day at Putnam County education day where many extension staff and volunteers were providing programming. She really enjoyed Anne's exercise with the students and said Anne explained the game very well. Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners were also at the event doing activities with the students.

### **New Business-**

Welcome Lilliana Bernabei as the Summer Intern! She is a sophomore at Iowa State University and a member of LaSalle county 4-H. She started in 4-H showing hogs, but has expanded into general projects as well. She has served on the National 4-H Congress and is active in Collegiate 4-H at Iowa State. She will be helping out in all the program areas but especially with 4-H show prep. Her internship will end on August 7.

Aaron Lindstrom resigned in April, so a new extra help position for Marshall-Putman will be posted soon. It will be for STEM programming and up to 20 hours per week.

### **Other/Special Considerations:**

#### **Location:**

Kathryn Erjavsek moved to adjourn the meeting. Arretta Znanieki seconded – motion carried, meeting adjourned.

Submitted by: Kathryn Erjavsek