



**Livingston, McLean & Woodford
Extension Council Meeting
March 9, 2021 Council Minutes
via Zoom**

Paul Wilkins called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

No public comment requests were submitted.

Introductions: All Extension Council members and staff introduced themselves and stated what county they reside in.

Approval of November 2020 Meeting Minutes – The minutes were approved as submitted on a motion by Tom Creswell and seconded by Dustin Smith. All in favor; motion carries.

Fiscal Reports

- Bobbie shared her screen with a PowerPoint presentation. Items included were:
 - Extension Funding Streams
 - Federal, State & Local
 - SNAP funds are not reflected in the unit budget
 - County Board Levy Process
 - Historical Levy Requests (FY13 – FY22)
 - FY22 Levy Discrepancy
 - Income and Expense Reports for FY20 and FY21 year to date
 - FY22 Draft Budget
 - Question & Answer
- Bobbie requested feedback from the Council members about how to approach and create conversation with the McLean County Levy. The McLean County Extension Board meets next week and would like to have some fresh ideas to bring them. The unit has addressed some concerns by reducing overtime, staff changes (including not replacing certain positions) and centralizing supply orders.
 - Our current carryover of \$1.4 million is shown on our nearly \$2 million budget. The university allows 18 months carryover for Extension units, but it has caused some issues with county board discussions. In three years at the current rate, the carryover amount will be reduced to zero.
 - Paul – was the reduction supposed to be for one year only and then go back to the initial amount after that year was over?
 - It seems that there is heated conversation about the carryover, but that saved this unit during the time when state matching funds were not being sent to Extension.
 - Dustin – after reserves are depleted, Extension will need to do more fundraising through the foundation?
 - Tom – the county board members seem to be concerned mostly about the unit carryover and the how our carryover is inappropriate, when involving taxpayer money. This unit seems to be fiscally responsible. What approach can we take to demonstrate this?
 - Pam – talking points about how Extension rapidly pivoted to producing high quality programming with in-person events abruptly being canceled due to COVID. It is impressive and the staff continued without missing a beat. Show them the fiscal side of this transition.
 - Rich – wonders why fund balances for previous years are included. The county board should only be looking at the income and expense for each year.
 - Bobbie – the Extension Board meetings are open to the public, if any would like to join. Send a request for the meeting invitation and Zoom link if interested. If the carryover was not in place two years ago, our unit would have been in trouble fiscally.

Council Members	
<i>Shirley Blackburn (W)</i>	A
<i>Tom Creswell (M)</i>	P
<i>Kate Henkel (W)</i>	P
<i>Jenny Larkin (L)</i>	A
<i>Libby Larkin (L)</i>	A
<i>Plamedie Lubika (M)</i>	P
<i>Lisa Maynard (W)</i>	P
<i>Pam Meiner (L)</i>	P
<i>Debbie Ruff (L)</i>	P
<i>Rich Schroeder (M)</i>	P
<i>Julie Schumacher (M)</i>	P
<i>Dustin Smith (L)</i>	P
<i>Mike Sommer (M)</i>	P
<i>Paul Wilkins (W)</i>	P
<i>VACANT</i>	
Executive Committee	
<i>Tom Creswell (M)</i>	
<i>Pam Meiner (L)</i>	
<i>Paul Wilkins (W)</i>	
County Board Delegates	
<i>Tom Creswell (M)</i>	
<i>Pam Meiner (L)</i>	
<i>Paul Wilkins (W)</i>	
<i>Mike Sommer (M)</i>	
Extension Staff	
<i>Kelly Allsup</i>	P
<i>Katie Buckley</i>	P
<i>Alcha Corban</i>	P
<i>Erin Estes</i>	P
<i>Brittnay Haag</i>	P
<i>Laura Holland</i>	P
<i>Bobbie Lewis-Sibley</i>	P
<i>Jenna Smith</i>	P
<i>Camaya Wallace Bechard</i>	A



- Mike – wondering if more explanation of McLean funds vs. unit funds needs to be discussed.
 - Why was Extension reduced by 20% by the board when other areas only saw a 5% reduction?
- Paul – do other departments carry reserve funds and if so, at what percent?
- Tom – does the budget need to be adjusted to display the \$75,000 reduction?
 - There was some confusion in the tax year vs. Extension’s fiscal year. Can more information be provided to show this?
 - With the county board reductions in the last few years, they are getting to a point where they will be starving Extension out of business if they will not continue to fund us.
- Bobbie – in the past, Extension has requested that volunteers, families and community partners to call their local representatives, letting them know how important Extension and 4-H is to our communities.
 - When Bill Wasson was handling the County Extension Board, he noted that when we did this previously, that he had never received so many calls. He was impressed by our number of supporters. He was also very good at communicating information about the County Board to us.
- Nick – concerned about funding reduction if county board continues to reduce our levy.
- Bobbie – Harry Clore will be joining the McLean County Extension Board call to help clarify some discussion topics.

Business Items

Staffing Update

- Our unit qualifies for two SNAP-Ed community workers, but we have had several failed searches.
- Nick Frillman was hired on as our Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator.
- Summer Assistant positions have been posted and include four 4-H Summer Assistants and a Garden Assistant.
- The 4-H STEAM Program Coordinator position was vacated in January and should be posted soon for applicants to apply.

Civil Rights Compliance

- This is a hot topic with the university and 4-H.
- 4-H Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committee was accepting nominations and trained appointees with an outside consultant. Both Bobbie and Linda Faye White will be representing Unit 12 on this committee. Their topic of discussion on their first meeting included how to diversify and include more.
- Academic staff (County Director and Educators) are required to report in their performance evaluation how they made an effort to reach out to diverse audiences.
- COVID has changed our audiences immensely, creating new diverse, accessible programming.

Program Advisory Committees – TOPIC: Diversity, inclusion and equity in our programming – and how/where to reach DEI audiences in the COVID world

- Each committee went into a different breakout rooms and discussed the topic.
 - 4-H Youth Development: Kate Henkel, Plamedie Lubika, Dustin Smith, Alcha Corban, Laura Holland, Katie Buckley
 - State offering “Just in Time” equity dialogue series led by teens for youth to have a platform to discuss and take action on social justice issues
 - 6 topics will be presented; Unit 12 will be focusing on “What is bias?”
 - Offered to youth and (potentially) leaders in all 3 counties
 - Teen led to be more impactful; youth typically respond better in peer settings
 - Reach out to diverse communities to ensure they know what opportunities 4-H is providing
 - Sharing with schools (students will share information through word of mouth)
 - Gather information from students about how 4-H can provide greater access (students know themselves and family situations the best)



- Community flyers
- Recognize that “diversity” includes multiple areas (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic, religion, sexual/gender identity, etc) and be inclusive of all areas
- In less diverse communities, increase education about diversity
 - Benefit of “Just in Time” series/bias education
 - DEI education at young age benefits whole communities (recognition of how actions and words affect people)
- Use of poverty simulations
 - Helps reduce stigma of what “poor” means
 - Potential for teen participation
 - Sharing how they function to educate communities
- Meeting kids where they are
 - Bringing 4-H to kids
 - Community programming
 - Low or no tech activities delivered to kids
 - Program partners
 - Grab and go lunch through schools
 - Community spaces
 - How to overcome access barriers (further discussion needed)
 - Internet access
 - Technology access
 - Transportation to events
- Panels/meetings with students/community members
 - Eureka College hosts “fishbowl discussions”
 - Students share what they go through and what they wish other people knew
 - Focus on hot topics students deal with
 - Benefit to using similar design for high school students
- Ag & Natural Resources: Shirley Blackburn, Tom Creswell, Rich Schroeder, Kelly Allsup, Brittnay Haag
 - Garden in a Bag
 - Reaching food donation sites, food pantries, tool library
 - Providing a container and plants to grow
 - Will share resources and tips with participants all summer
 - All of the material is available in Spanish
 - Little Roots
 - Offered statewide to 5-7-year-olds (Cloverbuds)
 - All program material available in Spanish
 - Reaching out to the state 4-H team to connect with 4-H Juntos programs and counties with high Spanish-speaking populations
 - Volunteer Groups
 - Offering online training (asynchronous) for those individuals still working and not able to attend an in-person training
 - Providing financial assistance when requested
 - Offering training and volunteer opportunities on evenings/weekends
 - Online/Zoom programs
 - Easier for people to attend (no travel, health reasons, schedule)



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- Spanish Conversations (Nick)
 - Attends weekly online conversational cafés to practice/improve Spanish
- Family & Consumer Sciences: Pam Meiner, Julie Schumacher, Mike Sommer, Paul Wilkins, Rachel Benn, Camaya Wallace Bechard
 - Discussed the newly renovated Garden in a Bag program and how we could reach diverse audiences. They will be offering the program in English and Spanish. Jenna explained that they could use more potential audiences in Livingston and McLean counties. Paul has an updated Food Pantry list for the county that he will email. He also suggested Headstart in Eureka. Pam suggested the Cullom Community Food Pantry. She will provide a contact person.
 - Pam talked about Pontiac Parks and Rec Block 59 outdoor event that is planned for this summer-October. They are looking for organizations to take one day to offer educational family activities. Pam will provide more information as she learns more.
 - Julie discussed including more culturally diverse foods into programming and to offer programming that includes kids too. Jenna talked about her involvement with HEAL in Woodford/Tazewell/Peoria and that she is currently working with food pantries to offer more culturally diverse foods. They just completed focus groups with Hispanic/Latino participants to gain better insight into the types of foods to offer. Jenna and the workgroup is also working on developing educational materials that are specific to Hispanic/Latino population. Once this is complete, Jenna plans to use the materials in other programming.
 - Paul suggested looking into partnering with local chefs on webinars to do more culturally diverse cooking demonstrations. Julie said that ISU just hired a new FCS faculty chef who is Turkish and may want to do cooking classes.

Other Business Items

- Virtual Road Show with our Director of Illinois Extension Shelly Nickols-Richardson from 1-3pm on April 6, 2021
 - Erin will be sending out the Zoom invitation to all Council Members. All staff will be on the call as well.

Meeting Schedule

- FY21 (subject to change to virtual, as needed):
 - May 11, 2021 – Unity
- FY22
 - September 14, 2021
 - November 9, 2021
 - March 8, 2022
 - May 10, 2022

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m. on a motion by Tom Creswell. Motion unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted, Erin Estes – Recorder