

**McLean County Extension Board Meeting
 March 12, 2020 Meeting Minutes 4:30 p.m.
 McLean County Extension Office
 1615 Commerce Parkway, Bloomington, IL**

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by Tom Creswell at 4:31 p.m.

Introductions

- Introductions were made:
 - McLean County Board Representatives Metsker and Soeldner were present. County Staff Taylor was present.
 - Extension Council Representatives Creswell, McKibbin and Sommer were present. Extension staff Lewis-Sibley, Halihan and Estes were present.

Review/Approve May 13, 2019 Meeting Minutes

- Soeldner motioned to approve the May 13, 2019 minutes as presented, Sommer seconded; all approved, motion carried.

Review of FY21 Levy Request for Extension

- County Board and Extension Council reviewed the Extension FY22 levy request for \$503,370, which is noted to be for County Board tax year 2021.
- Extension FY21 budget was reviewed. All items being discussed had been previously sent by email, but copies were made available.
 - Metsker wanted to examine carryover utilized in comparison to previous year's overage. An explanation was given.
 - Soeldner was glad to see the carryover was utilized and reduced. This was one of the board's biggest concerns and he feels more comfortable explaining the reduced amount to the McLean County Board.
 - Halihan discussed that 60% of the Extension budget was for McLean County. Periodic reviews of county splits are done but calculations tend to come out the same, using these percentages:
 - 60% McLean
 - 20% Livingston
 - 20% Woodford
- Income and expenses were discussed.
 - State matches received for FY18, FY19 and FY20 were discussed. Due to the State of Illinois and the distribution from the Department of Ag, the checks come to Extension sporadically, so not always within the same fiscal year.
 - The Illinois Department of Agriculture distributes funds to the U of I. They make the decision on what match amount is paid to each county based on matching funds received.
 - Extension Partners is the university's lobbying team that is extremely involved with the State of Illinois and has fought for Extension to continue to receive these funds. Extension has three line items on the state budget:
 - Chicago Initiative
 - 4-H Youth Development
 - County Board Match
 - The separation pool was explained by Lewis-Sibley. Unpaid vacation hours are paid out when an employee separates from Extension. Also, many Extension staff are contracted employees, so they would be paid out until the end of their contracts.
 - Equipment seemed to be a much higher amount than previous years. Due to the Unity Community Center's commercial kitchen upgrade, many of these expenses fell into this category. The Health Department required the updates so that Unity would meet code requirements.

McLean County Board Representatives	
<i>Catherine Metsker</i>	P
<i>Jim Soeldner</i>	P
<i>Gerald Thompson</i>	A
Extension Council Representatives	
<i>Tom Creswell</i>	P
<i>Ed McKibbin</i>	P
<i>Mike Sommer</i>	P
McLean County Administrative Staff	
<i>Cassy Taylor</i>	P
McLean County Extension Staff	
<i>Bobbie Lewis Sibley</i>	P
<i>Sara Halihan</i>	P
<i>Erin Estes</i>	P

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- The Unity lease was discussed as well. Extension has leased the building for 16 years and the lease is renewed every three years.
- Metsker wants to ensure that in the future, money given to Extension is applied appropriately.
- An explanation of Premium Funds was given by Lewis-Sibley. All money received by the state for Premiums gets paid out to youth that participate in the 4-H Show. None of this money is utilized for expenses locally.
 - McLean's 4-H membership is the largest in the state, with 1200-1300 youth. Livingston and Woodford each have 350-400 in each county.
- Specific line items were discussed:
 - Leases - why is McLean's is so much higher than the other two counties?
 - McLean has two facilities, and they are both larger buildings, holding more staff than the other counties. Rent/lease rates are higher in Bloomington/Normal than in other counties. Livingston's building is owned by the Education Association.
 - Fairgrounds payments fall into this category as well, with the payment to McLean County Fair being \$50,000.
 - Consultants – these expenses are for programming and fair judge payments.
 - Contingency Reserve – this is for programming and staff. The reserve amount held is based on what Extension would need to utilize if the state money does not get paid out.
- Soeldner asked if the other County Boards scrutinize the budget the way McLean does. Lewis-Sibley explained that both Livingston and Woodford were both supportive of Extension, and although Woodford County meets with Extension approximately one time per year, Livingston does not request meetings.
- Metsker wanted to know why we were requesting \$503,000 but it was only in the budget for \$375,000. Lewis-Sibley and Halihan pointed out again that the Extension fiscal year does not match the County Board fiscal year, and the \$375,000 is what we are receiving from McLean County for Extension's FY21. The levy request being discussed today is for Extension's FY22.
- Metsker requested an understanding of where the carryover is shown on the provided documents. Lewis-Sibley and Halihan explained the current balance vs. the year-to-date revenues and expenses to show where that carryover is found.
 - Metsker was concerned that that if an excess of \$400,000 was spent, using carryover funds, that maybe there was a spending problem.
 - McKibbin spoke to discuss the County Board requiring Extension to spend down their carryover funds, which was the request of the board last year when reducing Extension's levy amount. Now, the board is questioning why money was spent and why carryover funds are being utilized.
 - The university policy is to keep 12-18 months of carryover, so that Extension can continue operating in a financial crisis. The former County Board Administrator felt that the University's carryover threshold of 12-18 months is excessive.
- Soeldner would like to do a more thorough review of the reports provided by Extension before a decision and vote is made on the levy amount request.
- Unity Community Center was brought up again by Metsker, asking about the spending being done to a building that is being leased. "Do we need Unity?"
 - McKibbin gave a thorough explanation of what Unity is and how vital it is to our community. As a former member of the Extension Foundation, he discussed the plan for the McLean County Extension Service Foundation to purchase this building in the future.
 - Lewis-Sibley talked about the updates made to the building with the health code requirements and the additional space taken over in the front of the building. These updates were needed to accommodate the health code and space limitations Extension was having.
 - Both Lewis-Sibley and Halihan discussed the unexpected expenses that came along with the upgrades. For example, the moisture mitigation had to be completed before the floors could be replaced.

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- Metsker wanted to understand why so much money was being spent at Unity to increase the value of the building that was not owned by Extension. Also, a suggestion was made to request a lease negotiation with the owner the next time the lease is renewed, to lower the monthly rate.
 - McKibbin and Lewis-Sibley spoke about how Extension Foundation is looking to purchase this building. The owner is working with foundation and has given them a reasonable sale price on both the building and the land next to Unity. The owner understands the importance of this program and the need to be up to code with youth inside the building. Some of the required code updates and expenses were split, including the fire monitoring system. Foundation is in discussions about how to fund the building purchase, including possible fundraisers.
- County Board members requested to see the FY20 budget, so that they could compare it to the current FY21 budget. Lewis-Sibley printed copies for each in attendance and passed them out.
 - In order to explain some of the larger expenses in FY20, Lewis-Sibley listed some of those items:
 - Unity updates and renovation - \$200,000 renovations (both kitchen and staff space)
 - Additional leased space at Unity
 - Increase in cleaning expenses at Unity due to the larger space and cleaning needs of the program
 - State-wide Extension Program Coordinator increase of 15.75%, due to a salary review.
- It was suggested by one of the County Board members that they, as County Board members, meet to discuss the reports provided and determine what percent is to be presented to the McLean County Board. Lewis-Sibley noted that it was against Open Meetings Act for them to meet outside this setting to discuss the levy request, that is to be decided by both the County Board members and the Extension Council. Taylor agreed that this could not be done. A disagreement took place about who determines the levy request to be presented to the McLean County Board.
 - The state Extension Law requires that the McLean County Extension Board, comprised of three County Board members and three Extension Council members, votes to determine the levy request recommended to be presented to the full McLean County Board. Lewis-Sibley provided a copy of the Extension Law, which was handed out to all in attendance.
- It was suggested that they meet again to vote on the recommendation for the levy. Dates were discussed, but not set. A date will be determined by email correspondence. Once the date has been determined, Lewis-Sibley will email the agenda to all attending.

General Discussion

- Creswell made comment that he has always been impressed by Extension, what they do for the community and especially their programming at Unity.
- Soeldner noted that previously, the board had concerns that programs Extension was providing were duplicating services provided by other organizations. He felt confident this was not the case and that the programs were essential to our communities. Lewis-Sibley shared that our staff are actually working with other organizations in the communities to combine forces.
- Lewis-Sibley invited County Board members to attend the Extension Council Meeting on May 12, 2020 at Unity Community Center.
 - Metsker stated that she attended the Council Meeting last year and was impressed by the quality of programming Extension provided and the discussions happening at the council meetings.

Adjourn

- Metsker motioned to adjourn, Soeldner seconded; all approved, motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Erin Estes