

Carroll, Lee & Whiteside Counties

Extension Council

MINUTES

September 19, 2023

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Karla Belzer. Council members engaged in group introductions.

Attendance:

Present: Emily Zimmerman, Mike Delany Karla Belzer Teresa Galaway, Sylvia Rivera, Jennifer Lang, Bruce Black, Deann Kramer, Mark Ward, Gordon Kelm, Karen Stenzel.

Public Comment: None.

Elections

Chair: Gordon Kelm

Vice Chair: Sylvia Rivera

Secretary: Emily Zimmerman

Meeting minutes: Minutes from April 2022 were reviewed. Motion made to approve minutes as written made by Mark, seconded by Jennifer.

Reports:

Financial Report:

Provided by Karla Belzer. As a unit, we are doing very well. We historically have had an abundance of cash reserves. We are funded by local county funds that are matched by the state, as well as campus funding for academic staff and an allocation of federal funds. We have had an influx of federal funds, which is not necessarily a good thing, as we need to be spending it on programming for the betterment of the community. We are making progress by hiring staff. By FY25/26 we may need to request an increase in funding from local county boards. Wanting to highlight the value added programming (ie: snaped program). West Carroll STEAAM– new program that will be starting, which was awarded \$438k that will help hire staff and purchase equipment. Final proposal is with HUD, then funds will be released to start that program.

Programming Update:

Ag and Natural Resources: Bruce focused on summer gardens. 7 week program on teaching kids to grow their own food from soil to harvest. Any of the produce went to the partner site or a food pantry. Also partnered with Lanark Community Garden (Learning and Lawnchairs) which averaged about 12 people each month where food was grown for food pantries throughout Carroll and Whiteside Counties.

Community and Economic Development: Mike Delany discussed applying in collaboration with local health departments for grant money addressing food insecurity in the region. Application was submitted at the end of June and we recently found out it was approved. It will be a collaborative effort, and the

extension part of it will include Bruce and his team of volunteers and snapped volunteers. This will help people understand better sources of healthy food and development ways to grow them year round, including at home instruction hydroponic growing. This could reflect as much as \$100k per year.

New Business

Karla Belzer – We are required by law to have an advisory board. Future meetings are expected to be more interactive. Executive order to allow zoom meetings have expired. Workaround is to ask for an accommodation request if needing a zoom meeting.

We need to comply with open meeting act rules since we are a public entity. We may be required to take the Open Meetings Act compliance training, Karla is going to check into it to make sure we are in compliance.

Openings - We have a snapped community worker position open.

SVCC Partnership: Invited Illinois extension to partner with them to coordinate greenhouse efforts. Bruce will also be teaching a spring horticulture course, which will be a benefit being able to use the greenhouse for extension programming. There is a formal signing day on October 13th at SVCC. All extension council members are asked to attend if they can.

Diversity Equity Inclusion and Access: Getting involved in tools for schools. West Carroll Food pantries shelves are bare.

Last meeting of 2023: November 6th. Dates of 2024 will be set by that next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:10 PM by Gordon Kelm.