



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

University of Illinois Extension
Sangamon, Menard, and Logan Counties
Extension Council & Board Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2023 – 7 PM
Los Rancheros Restaurante – Petersburg, IL

- **Call to Order** – Chairman Dixon called the meeting to order at 7:17 pm.
- **Council Members & Staff Present:** David Mendenhall, Elsie Ransdell, Nancy Dixon, Sophia Schneider, Clay Irwin, David Opperman, Vera Small, and Terri Casey.
- **Previous Meeting Minutes**
A motion was made by David Opperman and seconded by Clay Irwin to accept the previous meetings minutes. The motion passed.
- **Introductions of Members**
All present took a moment to introduce themselves and to answer the question. “What are you looking forward to most this coming year.”
- **Open Meetings Act Training Requirement**
Casey explained that because Extension is a public entity, they are required to follow the rules of the open meetings act which was established to ensure that meetings were held publicly and in an open manner. The training is pretty straight forward and is offered for free on-line with the State of Illinois. All Council members who have not already completed this training will need to complete this training. Council members will receive an email from her in the next week with a link and instructions on how to complete the training. Once a member has completed the training, they should send Casey either a hard copy of their certificate of completion to the Extension office or send a digital copy to her via email. This training must be done within 90 days of being appointed. Information on a link to the online training can be found here: <https://foiapac.ilag.gov/>
- **Financial/Fiscal Updates**
Casey reported that she was very grateful to all three county boards for granting a 5% CPI increase in the levy requests for FY2023. It had been over 10 years since any of the counties had received an increase, and this is a very important step in helping Extension better keep up with inflation. She also thanked the council members for their support of Extension in this matter.
- **Program Updates**

Casey handed out staff program reports and pointed out programming highlights from the 4th quarter of 2022. She also shared that registration is open for Master Gardener training, as well as the very popular beginning beekeeper course.

- **Staffing Update**

Casey gave a staffing update and offered some good news. First, Travis Wiggins started as a Sangamon County SNAP-Ed Community Worker on November 1. This position had been open for over two years since a retirement in 2020 and has had numerous failed searches, so they are very excited to finally get this position refilled.

Next, she announced that Sherri Bishop had started as the new Logan County Program Coordinator on November 1, 2022. Sherri has been with Extension for two years as an Office Support Assistant in Logan County before transitioning into this role. This left her office support position in Logan County open. Casey shared that they had also filled that position. Shawna Stake-Charron started work on January 3, 2023.

Casey also reported that they had filled the open Menard County 4-H Program Coordinator position, which had been vacant since Sharon Lounsberry retired in 2021. Stacie Skelton is starting Tuesday, January 17. She is a 4-H Hall of Fame volunteer, as well as a past 4-H'er and 4-H mom. Her position is 60% time (or three days a week) and will be housed at the Menard office two days a week Monday and Wednesday (both days that that office is open), with one day a week at the Springfield office allowing for collaborating with Unit 4-H Staff.

Looking toward the future, Casey is currently having conversations with local stakeholders, partners, officials, and campus leadership to better understand the needs in our community and how Extension might be able to help address them.

One area of focus is ag and natural resource education, programming, and expertise for both adult and youth audiences. She believes there is great potential now to acquire the resources needed to bring on staff in this program area by working with area partners, campus, and through grant opportunities. She plans to schedule meetings with members of the council representing agricultural interest, but it has been a very busy time for everyone. She has been having good one-on-one discussions with folks and is scheduling a meeting with the campus ANR program leader, Travis Burke, about staffing opportunities.

- **Reaching New Audiences/Meeting Community Need**

Casey reminded the council that there is an open seat on the council, and she is seeking diverse voices to join the Extension Council, especially those who understand the needs of historically underserved audiences, as well as serving audiences most at risk and in need of our services. She requested that if the council members knew of someone who could represent these audiences and whose experience would be helpful, to please let her know so she can reach out to them.

- **Future Meeting Dates**

**(THIS DATE & LOCATION HAS CHANGED) Thursday, March 16, 2023 – 7 PM
(Sangamon County Extension Office - Springfield, IL)**

Thursday, June 8, 2023 – 7 PM (Logan County Extension Office - Lincoln, IL)

Thursday, October 12, 2023 – 7 PM (Sangamon County Extension Office - Springfield, IL)

- **Public Input**

There was no public input.

- **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Clay Irwin seconded by Sophia Schneider. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.