



## Extension Council Meeting Minutes

**Time and Place:** A meeting of the Extension Council Board was held on Thursday, March 7, 2024 at the Coles County Extension Office.

**Participants:** The following members were in attendance: Kelly Barringer, Denise Corray, Gary Gergeni, Janet Blade, Scott Seegmiller, Tom Webb, Travis Phelps, and Jessie McClusky, County Director. Also in attendance were Morgan Jones, Marketing Coordinator, Jenny Lee, Master Gardener and Master Naturalist Program Coordinator, Andrea McNeil, 4H Youth Educator, and Dennis Ochs, Douglas County Ag Center Board President.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm and a quorum of the Board was present. Tom Webb called the meeting to order, and Denise Corray kept the minutes of the meeting.

**Approval of December 7, 2023 minutes:** Travis Phelps made a motion to approve the December minutes, and Scott Seegmiller seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

### Program Spotlight:

- Jenny Lee from the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist Program provided an overview of the Master Gardener program for the Committee members. The program is currently being delivered in person, hybrid, and in a completely online delivery platform to appeal to more participants' schedules.

### Guest:

- Douglas County Ag Center Board President Dennis Ochs educated the Board on the origin of his Board and the relationship between his board and Extension Council (this was tabled from the December meeting, pending more information). He also provided some background information about the person nominated for the Douglas County Ag Center Board, Elizabeth Mitsdarffer. Kelly Barringer made a motion to vote Ms. Mitsdarffer to the Douglas County Ag Center Board, it was seconded by Denise Corray, and it passed unanimously.

### Committee Reports:

- Programs
  - What programs have you seen promoted for Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, 4-H Youth Development, Family Life, and SNAP-Ed? Any suggestions?
    - Tom Webb has seen Master Gardener and Master Naturalist in local papers and also has friends who attend and invite him to join. He thinks the word of mouth about these programs is solid. He also sees signs around Cumberland County for the deer donation program. We suggest utilizing social media more, and suggested looking into the TV screens that are at some gas stations.
  - What programming is needed and within our scope to provide?



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- We don't think we need to expand programming, but rather focus on the successful programs and scale down a bit on offerings in general.
  - Who do you think we should be connecting with to enhance our efforts (collaborators)?
    - Focusing on the mental health-related programs (couples counseling, caregiver support), we can reach out to ECIAA and hospice agencies for referrals. Also, Kelly noted that SIU-C has a farmer mental health program. In general, we can reach out to home schoolers. Also, we could see about accessing the greenhouses on school properties during the summer when they are probably not in use.
  - What program area(s) would you like to know more about to help guide your understanding/awareness?
    - Denise could use some education about all programs. Tom thinks hearing about them on a regular basis would be helpful. We all agree that the Program Spotlight portion of our meetings are very helpful.
- Marketing
  - We should not inundate people with information – it's too much and they stop looking and/or it goes to spam.
  - No mass mailings of flyers or print media.
  - We should make contact with teachers.
  - Daytime meetings for the different programs do not attract people who are working, so they tend to attract an older demographic. Offering programming outside of regular business hours will likely attract a different set of people.
  - Make the marketing material more specific and send less frequently (quarterly vs. monthly).
  - We need key people/ambassadors in the community to spread the word about programs offered.
  - When trying to market to such a large audience, it's not hitting any particular demographic successfully.
  - On the monthly (quarterly?) flyer, hyperlink the counties vs. the programs so people can jump to what's available in their local area.
  - Add an archive section to the website to past press releases.
  - Determine what is considered a successful program and review to determine if it should continue or not.
- Membership
  - The challenge is that we should have 15-20 members on the Board, and there are only 11.
    - We should identify candidates and send their contact information to Jesse (make sure they know she will be calling).
    - FFA teachers would be good members.
    - Home schooling circles can be contacted.



- We can review new candidates at the June meeting and they can join at the September meeting.
- Financial
  - Jessie explained that she has three new staff (Andrea McNeil, Rachel Stenger, and Melania Kincaid), and the signature cards need to be updated at the banks. Janet Blade made a motion to update the signature cards, and Gary Gergeni seconded. It passed unanimously.

**Old Business:**

- Extension position updates:
  - Andrea McNeil is the new 4-H Youth Education, and introduced herself to the Board.
  - Rachel Stinger started as the 4-H Program Coordinator in Moultrie-Douglas counties
  - Melena Kinkaid started as the 4-H Program Coordinator in Cumberland County

**New Business:**

- Extension updates:
  - Kelly Barringer shared that there is an amendment drafted to HB5017/SB3407 that will allow meat processors to get processing fees covered for meat donation programs.
- Bylaws – Discussion was had about attendance at Board meetings. Some members never attend, and do not correspond with Jessie at all, despite her attempts. There was consideration of adding a clause to the council member agreement outlining the expectation for a certain level of attendance. After discussion, it was decided to pass a policy that the County Director will review the attendance of Board members and share that information with the Membership Committee. Based on that information, the Membership Committee will make a recommendation to the Board for action, if necessary. A motion was made by Scott Seegmiller and seconded by Kelly Barringer, and it passed unanimously.

**Executive Session:** NONE

**Public Comments:** NONE

**Adjourn:** A motion to adjourn was made by Janet Blade, and Denise Corray seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:51pm.

**NEXT MEETING IS JUNE 6, 2024**