

Carroll, Lee & Whiteside Counties

Extension Council

MINUTES

November 6, 2023

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Gordon Kelm. Council members engaged in group introductions.

Attendance: Emily Zimmerman, Danielle Gapinski, Kara Schweitzer, Marcia Zell, Deeann Kramer, Abbey DeShane, Lee Reese, Eileen Piper, Karen Stenzel, Cilvia Rivera, Gordon Kelm, Daniel Swihart, Karla Belzer, Bruce Black, Martha Ebbesmeyer

Public Comment: None.

Meeting minutes: Minutes from September 2023 were reviewed. Correction to add Karen Stenzel as present. Motion made to approve minutes with correction made by Cilvia Rivera, seconded by Karen Stenzel. Motion carried.

Reports:

Financial Report:

Karla Belzer provided the financial report, sharing with the council that budget requests have been made to county boards and should be approved in the next month.

Programming Update:

Family Life Educator: Kara has been focusing on brain health program this fall. She is also networking and building relationships to create healthy living, brain health, social and emotional health, caregiving, and parenting programs in the community for 2024.

Horticulture Educator: Bruce focused on apples and pumpkins, as well as the growing of fruit this fall, and preparing for the partnership with Sauk Valley Community College. Got great feedback from the Petunia growers and will be focusing this winter on preparing for the intro to horticulture class and utilizing feedback from master gardener volunteers to optimize the program.

4-H: Danielle Gapinski is working on programming for the community. Ignite is a summit that will be hosted in Washington DC. Ages for Ignite are high school aged youth. All travel and summit expenses will be covered with support from the IL 4-H Foundation for fifteen youth. A Zsuite account is needed to apply. Application to attend with Illinois is through December 9. Martha completed health jam program. Was able to do tours at KSB Hospital. Participated in the eighth-grade day at SVCC and discussed career pathways. Attended an education and technology conference, discussed top ten job skills in 2020 vs. 2027.

New Business

Signatories: Currently, Janice McCoy is still on the "in and out" bank account to sign checks. She needs to be removed as she has moved on to a regional position. Motion to remove Janice McCoy as owner of the checking account at Community State Bank and replace with Karla Belzer, current County Director made by Cilvia Rivera, seconded by Eileen Piper. No further discussion. Motion carried.

Katie Baker also needs to be added as a signatory on the account. Motion to add Katie Baker as a signatory made by Eileen Piper, seconded by Lee Reese. No further discussion. Motion carried. Bruce Black and Marilyn Kemmerer will remain as signers on the account.

Open Meetings Act: We must comply with open meetings act rules, which means council members need to take Open Meetings Act compliance training. Karla will be sending out an email for this training to be completed. This is to be in compliance with our civil rights reviews, which will happen again in 2025. Demographics also must be gathered for program participants, to ensure equal opportunity employer. This includes council members too. This needs to be collected and reported back to the state.

Staffing updates: One open position (SNAP-Ed community worker), with five applicants. Interviews will take place before Thanksgiving. Once that position is filled, we will be fully staffed.

Discussion on targeting underserved communities: Whiteside County has seen an uptick in the homeless population, and there is a task force in place to help with that. Illinois Extension participates in the task force and may provide programming around mental health. Emily discussed the potential of supporting our local Muslim community and making sure that they are feeling supported, safe, and secure during the heightened level of Islamophobia due to the war in Israel/Palestine. Commercial ag is also an area that needs attention to see what the needs are and to develop programs. Marcia Zell reiterated that all of Carroll County is underserved.

Other Business: Extension statewide advisory council (ESAC), will be discussed at the next board meeting. Waiting for the sign off at the federal government level for a grant to be released to develop a STEAAM Center in West Carroll School district. This will help provide teachers with resources to teach, while also offering after school education.

SVCC partnership happened October 13th. Bruce will be teaching a horticulture class, Spring 2024 semester. Master gardeners have taken over the East part of the campus, and bulb planting will be happening in the coming weeks.

2024 meetings: February 12, April 22, September 16, and December 2.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:09 p.m. made by Cilvia Rivera, seconded by Karen Stenzel. No further discussion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Zimmerman