

Unit 27 Council Meeting
February 13, 2025
11:00a.m. – 1:00 pm

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Introductions

- The meeting was called to order by Jody Johnson at 11:23am. Verbal introductions were made around the table and **civil rights information slips were circulated around the room.**
- Special recognition was given to John McCuan, Johnson County Commissioner, who was present for the meeting.

Council members present:

Alexander/Pulaski	Johnson	Massac	Union
Ethan Bradley (YOUTH) Shawna Rhine Curtis Marshall	Evan Coulson Chesley Williams Kylie Vaughn (YOUTH)	Tracie Key Orlando McReynolds James Walton	Kristen Cameron Kendell Boysen Chuck Weilmuenster

Staff present: County Director Jody Johnson, John Shadowens, Erin Garrett, Ifeoluwa Adesoye, Sarita Sawyer, Tiffney Stewart, Patsy Bishop, Kaylee Leach, Monica Meyer, Amy Shuck

2. Approval of Minutes

- Meeting minutes from December 5, 2024, were reviewed. Motion made by Curtis Marshall and seconded by Kendell Boysen to approve prior minutes. Motion carried unanimously. .

3. Council Business

Unit Council Members

- Review of information for accuracy: Members reviewed council information, and no major corrections were needed. Correction of spelling to be made for Kendell Boysen.
- Illinois Open Meetings Act Electronic Training: Members were reminded to complete the required online training for compliance.

Extension Board Members

- Review of information for accuracy: No changes were noted.
- Extension Board Meeting: Discussed the annual Extension Board Meeting and the request to maintain current county funding levels. Motion made by Kristen Cameron and seconded by James Walton to approve. Vote was approved unanimously.

4. County Extension Director Report

Plan of Work & Community Needs

- The 2025-2028 Plan of Work is being developed.
- Members were encouraged to engage with their communities to help identify local needs and collect feedback through upcoming surveys.

Budget Update

- Financial Overview:
 - Trust Account: \$261,000 (lower than preferred \$400,000 level).
 - SNAP-Ed Funding: \$433,000 allocated, with \$87,000 remaining.
 - Self-Supporting Fund: Above normal at \$20,000+.
 - Federal Grants: Smith-Lever & USDA funds are stable.
 - Gift & Foundation Accounts: Minimal unrestricted funds available.
 - R3 Grant: \$86,000 remaining to be spent before June for Cairo Jr./High School project.
- State Funding Request:
 - University of Illinois Extension is seeking a \$10 million increase in state funding (up from last year's unsuccessful \$5M request).
 - Members were encouraged to participate in an email campaign to legislators in support of the funding request.

Facilities & Staffing Updates

- Cairo Jr./High School Office Space:
 - Extension will utilize two rooms and a kitchen within the school.
 - Plans to furnish and equip the space with tables, chairs, TVs, etc.
 - Collaboration opportunities with Trio, Arrowleaf, and local violence prevention programs.
- Staffing Changes:
 - Finance Director (Harry Clore) retiring in May – major loss for financial oversight.
 - Extension Director (Dr. Shelly Nichols) stepping down to return to faculty. Search for a new director by June 1st.
 - New Community Outreach Worker in Union County to start March 3rd.
 - 5 applicants for summer intern positions, with selections forthcoming.

Civil Rights & Inclusion Efforts

- Focus remains on ensuring diverse and inclusive programming.
- Members were reminded that Extension serves all community members, not just agricultural groups.

5. Unit Reports

SNAP-Ed / INEP (Presented by Ife Adesoye & Team)

- Programs Highlights:
 - Illinois Junior Chef – Cooking skills for youth with hands-on food prep.
 - Great Garden Detective – School gardening projects teaching nutrition.
 - OrganWise Guys – Early childhood program on body health & wellness.
 - Healthy Cents & MyPlate for My Family – Adult education programs.
 - Eat Move Save Booths – Community outreach for nutrition awareness.
 - Collaboration with Arrowleaf, WIC, DHS, and food pantries for outreach.
- Special Projects:
 - Food Distribution Programs:
 - First Baptist Church in Ullin – Monthly food pantry serving 83 households.

- Rise Market Recipe of the Month – Encouraging healthier shopping habits.
- R3 Grant Implementation in Cairo – Expanding resources for youth and families.
- Coalitions & Professional Development:
 - School Wellness Policy assistance.
 - Training workshops for food service staff.

Community & Economic Development (CED) – Presented by John Shadowens

- Grocery Store Feasibility Study: \$750,000 USDA grant approved for three-year implementation.
- Economic development projects under review.

4-H Youth Development (Kristi Stout, Vickie Taylor, Dena Wood)

- No staff in attendance, program growth and engagement efforts were shared.

Natural Resources, Environment & Energy – Presented by Erin Garrett

- Written reports provided for review.

6. Future Council Meetings

- May 15, 2025 @ Vienna – 11 AM – 1 PM (CED staff report)
- September 18, 2025 @ Vienna – 11 AM – 1 PM (4-H staff report)
- December [TBD], 2024 @ Vienna – 11 AM – 1 PM (NREE staff report)

7. General Discussion & Adjournment

- Open discussion was held regarding community engagement and programming ideas.
- Need for automative life skills class/opportunity needed to young adults and single women to learn the basic of automobile ownership and care.

Motion to adjourn made by Curtis Marshall and seconded by Kristen Cameron No objections, meeting adjourned at 1:09pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Monica Meyer

Unit 27 - Office Support Specialist

For Unit 27 Unit Council secretary, Chesley Williams