

**Carroll, Lee & Whiteside Counties
Extension Council
MINUTES
December 2, 2024**

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. in person and by Zoom.

Attendance:

Gordon Kelm, Lupita Serrano, Eileen Piper, Karen Stenzel, Daniel Swihart, Pam Martinez, Silvia Rivera, Bruce Black, Jennifer Lang, Lee Reese, Deeann Kramer, Martha Ebbesmeyer, Emily Zimmerman, Karla Belzer

Public Comment: None.

Extension Mission and Vision:

The council reviewed the extension's mission and vision, stressing the alignment of activities with strategic priorities and the engagement of the Advisory Council.

Reports:

Minutes:

The council approved the minutes from the September 2024 meeting with a motion by Pam Martinez and a second by Silvia Rivera. No further discussion. Motion carried.

Budget Update:

Budget requests were discussed, with positive updates on requests and the receipt of additional funding in Lee County. The council also noted the receipt of a county board match installment and the retirement of CFO Harry Clore.

Programming Updates:

Martha Ebbesmeyer shared 4-H programming updates including the completion of the Health Rocks program in Lee County and the start of the Teen Teachers program in Whiteside County, highlighting the importance of building relationships with local youth. Youth programs and career fairs were discussed, including volunteer incentives and a new career exploration program set to begin in Milledgeville.

Bruce Black shared successful events and recognitions, including a pumpkin smash event, recognition for the Challand Horticulture Program, and upcoming pesticide applicators testing.

Karla Belzer shared a brief update on efforts to improve broadband connectivity in Lee County, with multiple providers involved in the projects, and family life programs including active brain health programs, plans for new programming, and ongoing recruitment efforts.

Grants: West Carroll STEAAM Hub, CDC Action Grant

Karla Belzer provided a brief update on the West Carroll STEAAM Hub including use of new science programming space, additional funding for staff and equipment, and the CDC action grant for health programming and poverty simulations.

New Business:

Community Bank Signatories:

Motion to approve Karla Belzer, Bruce Black, Marilyn Kemmerer, and Katie Baker as check signatories made by Karen Stenzel, seconded by Pam Martinez. No further discussion. Motion carried.

ESAC Update:

Gordon Kelm provided an update from the Extension State Advisory Council meeting including state funding discussions and plans for a new extension center, emphasizing the importance of maintaining relationships. Marketing efforts and strategic planning were discussed, including the development of new materials, use of technology, and collaboration with federal legislators.

Staffing Update:

Karla Belzer provided staffing updates including recognition of staff awards, the unit being nearly fully staffed, and plans for new hires starting in January.

New Extension Council Year:

The council will adopt a calendar year for meetings, with elections to take place at the next meeting and strategic planning for programming in early 2025.

Discussion: Community Needs and Efforts to Target Underserved Audiences:

The council discussed local issues including homelessness and community needs, highlighting challenges faced by shelters and the importance of partnerships and community involvement. Extension staff will consider these needs in program planning and developing community collaborations.

Other Business:

Next Meeting: **February 10, 2025**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m. made by Eileen Piper, seconded by Pam Martinez. No further discussion. Motion carried.

--Emily Zimmerman, Secretary