

Unit 18 – Christian, Jersey, Macoupin and Montgomery Counties
Thursday, December 19, 2024
Montgomery County Office, 1 Industrial Park Drive, Hillsboro, IL

Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Connor Ashlock, Connie Beck, Tiffany Blasa, Mike Cross, Mark Dugger, Anna Fessler, Caleb Grover, Vicki Joiner, Venise McWard, Dennis Rahe, Mindy Ward, Jessica Jaffry (staff), Sara Marten (staff)

Call to Order – Chair Vicki Joiner called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes – Minutes from the past two meetings were reviewed for approval. Venise made a motion to approve both minutes, as sent. Caleb seconded. Motion passed. Minutes approved.

Fiscal Reports – Fiscal reports were presented. Both income and expenses are expected to remain within the budgeted amount in most cases. County board funds continue to be processed. Most of the remaining income is collected in the spring. Some office equipment is getting upgraded which is showing an increase in that line item. No other major issues or concerns to report.

Priority Area Highlight – Jessica Jaffry led a review of the thriving youth priority area. As a key part of the Extension system, thriving youth programs are highlighted in the 4-H program primarily. Jessica showcased the current ‘flower model’ to demonstrate how quality youth programs that contain key components (adult mentor, developmental contexts, leadership opportunities) provide the stable roots for youth to grow, flower, and thrive in the future. Jessica also showed the current locations of 4-H clubs and membership and reviewed current programming and goals with the council members. There was some discussion on how to better reach youth in certain areas (i.e. Montgomery County locations). Jessica shared that at recent expansion and review meetings, both youth and adults discussed similar topics and set some goals to determine how to better serve some of those underrepresented populations.

Unit Updates

STAFFING UPDATES – Sara shared that, since the last meeting, Beth Steckel accepted and started as the new 4-H coordinator in Jersey County. Additionally, two new SNAP-Ed Community Worker positions were posted and closed for Macoupin and Montgomery Counties. Interviews were held earlier in the week. With the upcoming holiday break, Sara will check references in early January and hope to have offers sent out in mid-January with a goal start date in late January to early February.

The only remaining staff position to fill is an additional 4-H position within the unit. Currently, Taylor Pope is covering in both Christian and Montgomery Counties. Planning on hiring an additional 4-H coordinator to assist Taylor in serving both counties and splitting some of the duties across both positions. Sara and Jessica still need to determine details but look for another 4-H position to be posted soon.

OFFICE CLOSURES – Sara reminded council members of the upcoming holiday closures. The university provides holidays and gift days so that staff are off work from December 24 through January 1. With December 23 being a Monday, many staff are taking additional personal time off. Sara has requested to close all unit offices on Monday, December 23 as well, with Montgomery County remaining open to answer any phone calls.

Old Business

2025 OFFICER ELECTIONS – The following council members were nominated to serve as officers during the 2025 calendar year:

Chair – Vicki Joiner

Vice Chair – Mindy Ward

Secretary – Caleb Grover

Venise McWard made a motion to accept the officer candidates, as slated. Anna Fessler seconded. Motion passed. Officers approved and elected, as slated.

New Business

COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARDS 2025 – Sara reviewed the application with council members and asked for any changes. Deadline will remain March 1 so that applications can be reviewed during March 2025 meeting.

APPROVE 2025 MEETING DATES & TIMES – Sara reviewed the proposed meeting calendar for 2025. Meetings will remain on the 3rd Thursday of the following months: March, June, October, December. The only adjustment will be in June, when the meeting will move to the 2nd Thursday to accommodate the Juneteenth holiday. Tiffany Blasa made a motion to approve the meeting schedule for 2025. Venise McWard seconded. Motion passed.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP – Sara reviewed the current council roster and those members with terms expiring at the end of the month without the ability to renew for another term. Both Venise McWard and Connie Beck will be retiring at the end of the month. Sara and the rest of the council thanked them for their service and encouraged them to continue to share about and support Extension. Sara has sent a few invites to Montgomery County community members to join the council in 2025 and is waiting to hear back. If any current members have ideas of who to invite, please let Sara or a staff member know.

STAFF PROGRAM REPORTS – Sara shared reports from Andrew Holsinger, Valerie Belusko, and Lisa Peterson, who were not in attendance. Jessica Jaffry shared a verbal report of her past programming and upcoming 4-H events in 2025.

The next council meeting will take place on Thursday, March 20, 2025. The meeting will take place at the Christian County Extension Office, which is a slight change from years past.

With no other business, Anna Fessler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Connor Ashlock seconded. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

DRAFT