

Unit 18 – Christian, Jersey, Macoupin and Montgomery Counties

Thursday, October 24, 2024

Christian County Office – 1120 N. Webster Ave., Taylorville, IL

Attendance: Connie Beck, Mark Dugger, Anna Fessler, Caleb Grover, Vicki Joiner, Venise McWard, Andrew Holsinger (staff), Sara Marten (staff)

Call to Order – Vicki Joiner called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Minutes from June 2024 – Minutes were reviewed but without a quorum, no motion to approve.

Fiscal Reports – Sara Marten reviewed the fiscal reports for both the trust and revolving accounts for June 2024 (end of FY24) and July, August, and September of FY25. Additional furniture was ordered/installed in both Jersey and Macoupin counties which accounts for the larger amount in that line item. No major issues to report. No quorum so fiscal report was not approved.

Priority Area Highlight – Andrew Holsinger led a review of current programming focused on social and emotional health. This is one of the unit’s priority areas but does not have a dedicated staff member focus. Andrew presented data and information on the importance of building relationships and relating other topic areas – like gardening and hiking – to social emotional health. He highlighted some programs he’s led recently, including sensory gardens and tree/nature walks. Vicki Joiner mentioned that many schools are becoming more involved in this area, and it would be easy for staff to come in and add to their programming.

Unit Updates

STAFFING – Sara reported that Mackenzie Drone accepted the office support position in Christian County and started almost a month ago. She works Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and has jumped right in and been a great fit for the office.

Sara also gave an update on the 4-H positions in the unit. The Jersey County coordinator position closed in August and interviews took place in early September. An offer has gone out to a candidate, and they should start in a few weeks. Taylor Pope, the current 4-H coordinator in Christian, is going to temporarily cover both Christian and Montgomery County 4-H programs as there is still an opening in Montgomery. She will eventually move to the Montgomery office while some time is taken to determine the best way to fill the open spot in Christian County.

Openings for two SNAP Community Worker positions in Macoupin and Montgomery counties have also been posted and will close next week.

Old Business

- **Community Partner Awards 2024 Updates** – All presentations have been completed except for the Macoupin County Wild Riders group. Staff are working to find a time to present the award in the coming month.

- **Plan of Work Update** – Sara gave an update on the three-year plan of work. The unit is heading into the final year of the three-year needs assessment and plan of work. Of the four priority areas, over 50% of the programming has fallen into the workforce development area, but Sara explained that many programs fall into this category as their goal is to learn a skill or build knowledge in a certain area that often impacts a future or current career. Participation numbers have stayed fairly consistent across the past two years.

Beginning in 2025, the unit will begin to prepare for their next needs assessment. Campus has launched their strategic plan that will help drive the new planning process. Sara will share more, as information is available. Extension council members are encouraged to participate in the planning process.

New Business

- **Extension Board Membership & Terms** – Sara reviewed the current board members and terms. Council is moving to a rotation of terms on the calendar year (off in December, new members join in January). For this year, members with terms expiring in October (in the old system) will stay on until the December meeting. Sara is identifying a few potential members, especially in Montgomery County as that is where we have the lowest representation. If others have suggestions on who to invite, please reach out to Sara.
- **Election of Officers** – Election of officers for 2025 was postponed until the December 2024 meeting.

Staff Program Reports – Andrew Holsinger, Horticulture Educator, gave a verbal report of past programs. Valerie Belusko, Community & Economic Development Educator, Jessica Jaffry, 4-H Youth Development Educator, and Lisa Peterson, Nutrition & Wellness Educator, all submitted written reports. Sara reviewed other programs throughout the unit.

Next Meeting – The final meeting of 2024 will be held in Montgomery County on Thursday, December 19th. Meetings will continue to be held on the 3rd Thursday of March, June, October, and December, beginning at 7:00 PM, in 2025. A proposed schedule was reviewed.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7.47 PM.

DRAFT