

Unit 18 – Christian, Jersey, Macoupin and Montgomery Counties

Thursday, June 20, 2024

Jersey County Extension Office – 201 W. Exchange, Jerseyville

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

Call to Order – Vicki Joiner called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Minutes from December 2023 and March 2024 – Minutes were reviewed for the past two meetings. Mike Cross made a motion to approve both meeting minutes. Anna Fessler seconded. Motion passed. Minutes approved as sent.

Fiscal Reports – Sara Marten reviewed the fiscal reports for both the trust and revolving accounts for March, April, and May 2024. Reminder that the fiscal year ends June 30. Most expense lines should stay within the budget this year. Some educational supplies and awards are being bought in bulk, prior to the summer fair and programming season, which is why some of those line items may come in overbudget.

Priority Area Highlight – Valerie Belusko led a review of current extension programming within one of the unit's four strategic priority levels – workforce preparedness and advancement. This is an area that Valerie has done a lot of work in in a variety of settings – both with youth and adults as well as low income or underrepresented audiences. Many 4-H youth development programs were also highlighted, as well. Council members discussed how some of the programs are marketed and ways to get more schools or community groups to know about the programming offered. The Jerseyville CEO would be a potential partner to look into working with in the future.

Unit Updates

STAFFING – The office support position in Christian County was open earlier in the month and closed today. Sara reported that there was a good applicant pool and will wait to see who is eligible to interview moving forward. Both the Jersey and Montgomery County 4-H coordinator positions are currently open. The Jersey County position should be open again in the coming weeks to hopefully be advertised during the fair. The Montgomery County position will be posted later in the summer. Please help share when they become available.

4-H SHOW – Jessica shared updates on the remaining 4-H shows this summer. Macoupin and Montgomery shows are wrapping up next week with their food and clothing shows. Jersey and Christian are scheduled in July. Jessica has enjoyed getting to experience the different 4-H programs and expressed gratitude for the many volunteers and helpers that help make each show and experience a success each summer.

OFFICE INNOVATION GRANT – Sara shared that unit is being awarded a grant to enhance office/worksites wellness across the unit. With the grant funds, the unit plans to invest in some

additional equipment – such as walking treadmills – that will help staff be more physically active during the workday.

Old Business

- **Community Partner Awards 2024 Updates** – Both Pana LiveWell Fitness and Jerseyville Library have been awarded and press releases are being worked on. Litchfield School District will receive their award next week during their annual meeting. Macoupon Wild Riders Horse Club will meet with 4-H staff after the summer season.
- **2023 Unit 18 Impact Report** – The official report was mailed to all council members earlier in May. Many thanks to Cassie O’Connell for her coordination and editing work. If anyone needs or wants additional copies, let Sara know.

New Business

- **Unit 18 In & Out Checking Account** – Connor Ashlock made a motion, Venise McWard seconded, to update the signatories on the Unit 18 In & Out checking account to the following staff members:
 - Retain the current signers – Sara Marten, Andrew Holsinger, Lisa Peterson, Valerie Belusko
 - Add New/Additional Signer – Jessica Jaffry

Motion passed. Signatories will be updated.

- **FY25 Budget** – Sara presented the proposed budget for fiscal year 2025. Many line items are remaining the same, but some increases are needed due to staff promotions/raises and rising costs in travel and utility payments. The budget also includes a potential additional staff member that will focus on social and emotional health topics that are outlined in our plan of work. Vicki Joiner asked if county board contributions were increased this year or planned to increase in coming years. Sara reported that her asked increases for FY25 all got approved except in Jersey County. She plans to ask for additional increases in a few counties for FY26 to support programming and staff needs. Connor Ashlock made a motion to accept the budget as presented. Anna Fessler seconded. Motion passed. FY25 budget approved.
- **DEIA Discussion** – Parity reports for the unit were updated in March. Sara led a discussion on updates and trends. Overall, the unit has seen some improvement in their reach of underserved audiences but still aren’t reaching parity (80% of the census population) in most counties in black and Hispanic audiences. These continue to be goals for the unit.
- **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 be allowed to stay on through December or end in October. Sara will reach out to each individually to confirm. We still need members in Montgomery County if anyone has ideas/suggestions of who to reach out to.

Staff Program Reports – Valerie Belusko, Community & Economic Development Educator, and Jessica Jaffry, 4-H Youth Development Educator, give verbal reports of past and future programs. Sara Marten gave updates on behalf of Andrew Holsinger, Horticulture Educator, and Lisa Peterson, Nutrition & Wellness Educator.

Next Meeting – The 2024 meeting schedule was shared. Meetings will continue to be held on the 3rd Thursday of the following months. All meetings will begin at 7:00 PM.

- October – Thursday, October 17 (Christian County)
- December – Thursday, December 19 (Montgomery County)

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

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