

University of Illinois Extension
Unit 4 Council Meeting
Minutes
April 12, 2021

Attendance:

James Hazzard, Dr. Shelly Nickols-Richardson, Harry Clore, Angie Barnard, Lisa Diaz, Tony Franklin, Sam Koon, Carissa Nelson
Karla Belzer, Janice McCoy, Allie Johnston, Sunny Porter, Mary Nelson, Bruce Black, Veronica Skaradzinski, Kathy Book, Marilyn Kemmerer, Molly Sedig, Jane Shaw, Susan O'Connor, Martha Ebbesmeyer, Sheila Miller, Marcia Cruse, Mike Delany, Mary Finney
Pam Martinez, Greg Gates, Marcia Zell, Mark Ward

Dr. Shelly began the meeting by thanking everyone for participating in the virtual road show. She extended her thanks to our volunteer council members for joining us as well.

Mission of Extension is to translate scientific findings from the University into knowledge, information, and practice so that individuals, families, and businesses can make informed decisions to live their best life.

Food, Environment, Economy, Health, Community are the five grand challenges that we work in an interdisciplinary manner to solve problems. Dr. Shelly spoke about our strategic pillars and drawing upon our past and history to solve today's challenges.

Angie Barnard, Executive Director of Illinois 4-H Foundation and Major Gifts Officer, Angie discussed her role as a fundraiser. Angie spoke about the variety of gifts that people may choose to give in support of 4-H and Extension. Angie has a goal of unrestricted farmland for every unit in Extension for unrestricted support. IRA distributions, Major gifts are \$25,000 or more, but Angie works with all sizes of gifts. Angie announced a memorial scholarship that was recently set up for Lee County 4-H.

Harry Clore, follow the donor intent when we receive gifts. Spend those dollars timely and in the manner that the donor intended. Commended unit 4 for being good stewards of dollars with a healthy budget.

Carissa Nelson, Media and Communications Manager, 4-H—Use of 4-H name and emblem. It is a federal mark that exceeds that of trademarks and copyrights. Similar to the Presidential seal and Smoky the Bear. The emblem is authorized by NIFA for cross-state use, state uses go through Lisa Diaz, Local use is approved by the county director.

Cannot use clover to raise funds for outside entities. Clubs can donate to outside organizations...more than \$100 needs county director approval and must be transparent with the public that that is who they are raising funds for.

Communications Director, Sam Koon, gave an update on strategic communications for the coming year:

- Crisis communication took the place of some projects that are now coming down the pike.
- Best practice guides have been created for staff and volunteers to use. The team is trying to help our entire system create a foundational understanding to work from.
- Wednesday wake up---marketing training opportunities each week for all staff.

- Written social media strategy---working on standardizing our practice. Tik Tok may not become an accepted use media. We are letting the media mature a bit before a decision is made about its use.
- Measuring our digital footprint. We are generating about 12 million hits on our educational websites and 200 million impressions on social media.
- Developed a communications workflow to help determine how to and who should market events.
- The state communications team has a desire to develop the local/state partnerships in the area of marketing to put all of our talents to best use.

James Hazzard—IT Director

- James outlined extension IT goals for 2021
- State Level
 - State Extension Website was launched in 2019. Two new projects will be offered this year: Newsletter module, Language Translation
 - Moodle—Learning Management System. Has 43 courses online already with over 9,000 individual courses taken so far.
 - 4-H website will be redesigned and add a couple of new functions including 4-H alumni and foundation
 - Single Topic Websites will be refreshed, repurposed, or retired.
 - Broadband efforts—parking lot public wifi will be expanded. Some grants in the works for Digital Navigator for the public. Access, affordability, digital literacy.
 - Mobile workforce efforts—Extension did a great job and the system wants to continue to support that effort. E.G. Hot spots to work from anywhere.
- Unit Level
 - ERC with laptops, including headsets, lighting, etc.
 - Basic and Digital skills training
 - MS Teams
- New Tools
 - Give Pulse—Volunteer management software
 - Inventory Dashboard—new system to manage inventory—both p and non-ptags
 - CiviCRM—Customer Relations Software

COVID-19 Pandemic Response—Tony Fraklin

- Tony expressed his thanks to everyone for their cooperation, patience and productivity during COVID. As we moved into remote work, Extension moved to remote work very smoothly. Everyone in our system was very cooperative and understanding during the need to work remotely.
- It was our priority to focus on the health, safety, and security of our staff, volunteers, and clients. We were driven by the Campus policies as we worked remotely but sometimes they didn't translate well to Extension work. Campus staff participated in weekly COVID meetings in both Extension, ACES, and the Campus.
- Return to Office Operations committee is also meeting regularly. The group decided to let the CD's manage the RTO process at the local level. We wanted to manage the RTO safely and not just put everyone back together in one big lump.
- Campus had access to some services and technology, Like the SHIELD test, to create a safer environment than we could in field offices.

- Approved activities form is available for staff to use and understand what was acceptable at various times.

Lisa Diaz—4-H Program Leader remarks related to COVID

- Gave personal thanks to the 4-H team for their work this past year. We have not just survived but thrived in our unit.
- Congratulations on such a great virtual fair in 2020.
- Guidance about summer is being developed and the state 4-H office stands ready to assist us.
- Lisa shared best practices:
 - We have aligned with the University to put Health first. Communication will be especially important in the coming months. It will be important to have conversations early rather than when young people should be at the center of attention.
 - She has added some language to 4-H online that has folks acknowledge that they will follow our health guidelines.

DEI—Tony & Lisa

- In the middle of the pandemic we also experienced a great deal of racial injustice across the country. For Extension, it is important that we be inclusive and welcome them through our system, whether our workforce, programs, etc. We value optimizing the experience that people have as they encounter us. Shelly explained that we have a oral imperative to provide open access to all of our programs and the ability to understand, embrace and be inclusive.
- Tony Franklin shared his personal experience of the racial injustice situations from the summer.
- Staff in Extension didn't have to wait to respond. They responded with the Race Matters series for staff.
- We do annual civil rights reports for the unit and state. Each unit also has a civil rights review every three years. We assess what is working and what we can improve upon.
- 4-H and SNAP have been heavy hitters at reaching underserved audiences.
- We have ongoing training. Visions training was held in 2015. We now have Navigating Difference training that everyone in our Extension system has participated in. It is also being taught to a variety of groups on campus.
- Intercultural Development Inventory was done by leadership team and county directors several years ago.
- OUCH that hurts—how to respond to stereotypical language is available for offices to learn how to communicate better.
- 4-H Real Talk—honest conversations around race and racism. Highlights some of the hard work that still needs to happen everywhere.
- New 4-H DEI task force.
- Standing Together and Taking Action SPIN Club
- Dedicated funding for youth-driven /staff-driven DEI projects.
- 4-H is also building internal capacity as well as offering opportunities for youth.
- Teen led equity dialogues---these are scripted discussion guides around topics of race, privilege, bias, equity. I thin

**Carroll, Lee & Whiteside Counties
Extension Council
MINUTES
Monday, November 16, 2020**

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom by Katie Vandewostine.

Attendance:

Katie Vandewostine, Greg Gates, Pam Martinez, Mark Ward, Teresa Smith, Marsha Zell, Jean Eggemeyer, Mark Ward, Ethel Ward. Others present: Janice McCoy, Bruce Black and Karla Belzer.

Public Comment: None

Minutes: Pam Martinez made a **motion** to accept the minutes of the October meeting. The motion was seconded by Teresa Smith and approved.

Reports:

Janice provided an update on COVID procedures and impacts. In current Stage 2 mitigations, in-person meetings are required to be of 10 or fewer people. Staff continue to work a hybrid remote and in-person schedule. She noted that the university of Illinois is getting ready to roll out its saliva COVID test throughout the university system.

Programming Updates:

Bruce reported that he has recently completed the Gardening in the Air virtual conference in cooperation with the Iowa State Extension. Eighteen sessions were offered over two Saturday mornings. Attendance was more than 200 the first Saturday; a bit lower the second Saturday. The full conference was recorded and he, and other staff members, have been editing the content and close captioning it to prepare it to be made available publically. A second, winter Gardening in the Air program will be offered in late December/early January.

Janice reported that the 4-H program were able to offer “projects in a bag” of science-based activities monthly throughout the year to augment the science curriculum at Merrill School.

Master Gardeners have been presenting virtual programs, including a modified version of their Storybook Trail concept. A story is shared and then they lead participants in a related activity. The Learning in Lawn Chairs series wrapped up and averaged 6-10 participants per session.

Janice reported that Karla Belzer has been busy providing Wits Fitness programming virtually. Karla noted that she plans to continue with virtual offerings even when in-person gatherings are allowable to reach a larger audience.

Budget Update:

Janice reported that County Board dollars are being received as expected. State dollars still lag but she is comfortable with the Unit’s income position. On the expense side, she noted that some expenses, including some staff salaries, were transferred into the Smith-Lever line item. Travel expenses are, of course, lower this year due to the pandemic. Cash reserves are strong and she is comfortable where the Unit is related to expenses as well. Janice provided an explanation of the negative balance for the Carroll County carry over in answer to a question.

New Business:

There will be no merit wage increases for staff in 2021, as well as throughout the University system. Extension staff will get extras days off at the holidays, however, which equates to 1% of their salaries. The Extension offices will be closed December 24 through January 3.

Martha Ebesmeyer, who has been out on leave with an injury, is due to return November 18. She will work remotely.

Janice described a new effort staff will be embarking on, a Positive Youth Development Committee. The goal is to bring together all the various agencies serving youth in the county to coordinate efforts to make a better impact. The first meeting will be in December or January.

Other Business:

4-H premium checks from the 2019 4-H Shows have been issued. They will be mailed directly to families this year, rather than distributed through the clubs as in past years due to COVID meeting restrictions.

Janice introduced Marsha Zell, a new Council member representing Carroll County.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

--Jean Eggemeyer, Secretary

**Carroll, Lee & Whiteside Counties
Extension Council
MINUTES
Monday, October 12, 2020**

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom by Janice McCoy

Attendance:

Rachel Hill, Teresa Smith, Pam Martinez, Jean Eggemeyer, Mark Ward, Greg Gates and Terry Durham. Others present: Janice McCoy, Bruce Black and Karla Belzer

Public Comment: None

Minutes: Terry made a **motion** to accept the minutes of the February and August meetings. The motion was seconded by Mark and approved.

Reports:

Janice reported that staff returned to the Extension office in mid-August and the office was re-opened to the public on September 14. There have been no issues related to COVID-19 and everyone has been following safety protocols. Currently, due to State mitigation mandates, 10 people may be present in the office at one time. Most staff members are working a hybrid schedule with some days in the office and some days working from home. A few of the 4-H Clubs may be affected by meeting number limits but will be able to manage.

Janice noted that Martha Ebesmeyer was injured and her recovery will continue likely through the end of November.

Bruce reported that he has been offering a lot of virtual programming. Teacher credits were offered for the series of spring webinars. He noted that he learned a lot about the Zoom platform and was able to share that learning with colleagues as they prepared online offerings. Bruce has also been a guest lecturer at Sauk Valley Community College, teaching classes about insects and pest management and soil sciences within the agriculture department. He is currently teaching the Master Gardener trainees virtually. They do come together in-person for a portion of their training. His written report was provided.

Karla reported that she has been a lead trainer for two state-wide webinars. The Discover Wellness and Brain Health series have attracted more than 1000 registrants from across the U.S. This means Extension now has an extensive e-mail list to market any other digital programs offered. Locally, she has led virtual Life Story Writing classes. A few locations will begin meeting in-person again soon. She has also been doing training for Community Coordinated Child Care (4C) once a month and a larger conference will be offered in March 2021. In-person gatherings for Wits Fitness classes will also resume soon at a couple of locations. She plans to continue to offer virtual classes, however, even when COVID restrictions are lifted. Some new classes on navigating relationships are in the works. Her written report was provided.

Janice reported for 4-H: Allie Johnston has been meeting with club leaders to figure out the best ways to support clubs through the pandemic restrictions and resulting challenges. She and the Federation young adults are working on the virtual Awards Night to be held in November, most likely on Facebook Live. The Federation youth will continue to take ownership of the event as a method to improve their presentation and leadership skills. Actual awards will be presented to 4-H kids at their club meetings. A virtual Leaders Training will be held Saturday, October 17. Jean reported on the Candy Making SPIN Club that is continuing this fall. Staff is working with the Rock Falls after school program to offer activities in November and early December for K-5th graders. A 6-session virtual workshop for teens, Your Thoughts Matter, will be offered starting November 2, focusing on mental health and wellness issues.

Teresa reported that Master Naturalists have been seed collecting with the Audubon Society on the Nachusa prairie.

Janice reported that the SNAP-ED staff have been focusing on creating as much connection and interaction as possible with the low-income students they serve in their virtual programming.

Budget Update:

Janice and county representatives met with all three county boards and every county levied what was requested. The Extension carry-over funds get some questions, which is understandable, since it is a 18-20 month reserve.

Other Business: None.

New Business:

Janice asked for approval for four people—Karla Belzer, Bruce Black, Janice McCoy and Marilyn Kemmerer—to continue to be authorized to sign checks. Two signatures are required on each check. Mark **moved** to accept the noted signers, Rachel seconded the motion and it was approved.

Janice noted that the needs assessment will begin soon, starting with key informant interviews. Council members are likely to get phone calls asking a few questions in the coming weeks. The information gathered with the needs assessment will lead to decisions on where to focus energies and resources in the next couple of years.

Mark reported briefly on the Extension State Advisory Committee meeting held earlier in the day, including information on the Jackie Joiner Kersey Foundation, the search for an assistant dean, financial reports, COVID-19 policy updates, and more.

The next meeting will be November 16.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

--Jean Eggemeyer, Secretary