

Unit 27 Council Meeting
December 17, 2020
11:00a.m. – 1:00 pm
ZOOM meeting

MINUTES WORKSHEET

The meeting was called to order by County Director Johnson at 11:10 a.m. Council members and staff present introduced themselves via ZOOM meeting and gave a brief synopsis of themselves.

Council members present:

Alexander/Pulaski	Johnson	Massac	Union
Anganetta Terry Derek Eurales Josie Eason	Zach Garrett Jonathan Voelz	Megan Henderson	Chris Boyd

Staff present: County Director Johnson, Sarita Sawyer, Monica Reid, Tiffney Stewart, Erin Garrett, Kristi Stout, Angela Ralls, Shannon Pulliam, Kimberly Rohling.

Meeting minutes from September 24, 2020 were reviewed. Motion made by Derek Eurales and seconded by Josie Eason to approve prior minutes. Motion carried.

o **Council Business**

County Director Johnson offered the upcoming Unit holiday schedule as set by campus to notify Council. County Director Johnson also commended campus on their generosity in giving employees multiple holiday and gift days to enjoy time off without needing to use personal time. Pursuant to COVID guidelines from campus, the offices will remain closed thru January 31, 2021. Reopening dates will be determined by campus. Josie inquired what a “campus holiday” was and County Director Johnson advised that it is just a generic term used internally to reference days that there would be a very limited amount of people on campus.

o **County Director Report**

Plan of Work Plan of Work / New issues or concerns in community – County Director Johnson offered a a brief overview of Unit 27’s POW. Due to COVID, programming and normal opportunities have been greatly limited and County Director Johnson commended staff on learning new skills and developing ideas to adapt to circumstances.

COVID-19 has had many effects on Extension operations. Staff began working from home on Friday, March 13, 2020, and are continuing to do so. Attempts were made to come back in August but COVID cases rose and in October working from home was reimplemented. Monica was deemed “essential” and allowed to continue working from the office to oversee normal operations of mail and necessary matters. Other staff can do limited work from their office with prior permission from County Director Johnson. Unit 27 staff has a weekly staff briefing on Monday morning and each program area has a weekly meeting that this particular group of staff attend. These meetings are held virtually using either Skype or Zoom.

Budget update – The Governor has requested 5% of University’s budget back but this should not have an impact on Extension as we operate on blended fund sources. The University has offered an early buyout retirement for eligible. Campus wide 1,400 are eligible with 200 being Extension staff. If all 200 left today that would be 20% of the entire Extension staff!

Unit 27 was again given \$300,000 in Smith-Lever Funds, which must be expended by the end of September 2021. County Director Johnson presented a PowerPoint slide showing Unit 27’s current account balances available and brief description of each account type and source.

Three of Unit 27’s vacant positions have been filled; one vacancy remains. The vacancy is for a SNAP Ed Educator and County Director Johnson is waiting on the program leader to give approval to move forward with hiring. Shannon Pulliam was hired for the Union County SNAP-Ed Community Worker, Kimberly Rohling is the Extension Program Coordinator for the EES program work with Erin Garrett and Angela Ralls is the new office support assistant in the Pulaski/Alexander office. All new staff are full-time positions.

Facilities – Massac County office shares spaces with Massac County Soil & Water and Megan Henderson (Unit Council member and Soil & Water employee) is helping look out for deliveries and needs at the Metropolis office. The Union County and Pulaski/Alexander County offices are closed but Angela Ralls makes weekly trips to buildings and picks up mail. The Union County facility is under new management and they have approached County Director Johnson to expand the space. At this time with COVID closures Extension cannot commit to expanding but would like to pursue this option in the future due to an increased need for space, due to increasing staff numbers, and the obvious need for social distancing and private work areas. Johnson County is the hub and while Monica is in the office the doors are locked and closed to the public. Shawnee College has donated office space that is being used by Kristi Stout. County Director Johnson expressed great thanks to SCC and Don Koch for their cooperation and willingness to help with deliveries and all manner of needs that arise.

○ **Civil Rights audit**

As a government funded organization, there is an ongoing need to demonstrate that we are serving, and continuing to reach, underserved audiences. County Director Johnson commended staff for reaching and surpassing this task. County Director Johnson feels that staff is constantly reaching and promoting to a “non-traditional” Extension programming population. This is evidenced by the recent work between County Director Johnson, Sarita Sawyer and Steve Tarver in the Mounds office to discuss P/A projects and has resulted in his willingness to create and oversee a new 4H club in Cairo. Anne Terry commended and encouraged the excitement of this opportunity for the community. Unit 27’s civil rights audit will be in 2023 and will likely be held virtually vs. an in-person audit. County Director Johnson thanked Monica Reid for taking the lead on civil rights documentation and making monthly efforts to remind staff on the documentations needs for audit purposes.

○ **General updates and other activities**

On behalf of Unit 27, County Director Johnson was able to coordinate and work with the local communities in Goreville and Mounds to participate in food distributions. County Director Johnson gave credit to Dale Fowler and the Union local 773, who had the grant to provide the

food. Both sites gave over 300 boxes of food to the communities. Sarita Sawyer was able to work with Southern 7 Headstart and provide SNAP related materials and resources to the community.

CREATE Bridges is a program being led by Extension CED Educator Susan Odum. More information will be provided to Council in the spring on this two-year funded program thru the Walmart Foundation and has the potential to bring as much as \$300,000 plus to business retail in the southern five counties.

County Director Johnson has completed an appointment to the fiscal/business office committee for the state Extension group.

Disaster preparedness planning, via MY PI Illinois, is currently on hold due to the pandemic mitigation measures. The state-wide committee continues to provide resources as needed at this time.

County Director Johnson is working with One Shawnee, as not-for-profit organization. This is working on community assessments in the southernmost 10 counties in Illinois with the purpose of becoming an outlet for the community and economic development for the entire area.

- **Unit Reports**

- PRESENTATION by ANR Environment and Energy Stewardship - Erin Garrett, Kimberly Rohling

PowerPoint presentation by was given by Kim as an introduction of herself and her background leading into her work for Extension. Kim has an extensive background in her education, work and volunteer history. Her vast knowledge and experiences, in addition to her broad outreach of relationships with community members, will help her help Extension to reach a greater range of the population. Kim is eager to assist and improve ongoing projects with the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs. Furthermore, Kim is excited provide, improve and promote new science-based educational opportunities and bring more citizen science programs to our communities. County Director Johnson expressed his excitement in having Kim join the team and looks forward to the wonderful ideas she has in the works.

Erin shared a review of her recent activities. Erin's work has been focused on virtual program delivery and she highlighted the participation in Walk and Talk webinars (in partnership with Austin Little), Caterpillar ID (developed and delivered by Erin), Grass ID (developed by Erin and exponentially grown), Everyday Environment webinars and Conservation Workshop.

Erin's Everyday Environment Webinar series started when the COVID home order began. This started as a temporary weekly webinar series and with a huge amount of success has grown to a monthly series with planning continuing into 2021. Erin has personally created and led 3 of the webinars in the series. These programs are offered virtually but recorded and placed on Extension's YouTube channel with great success.

The Southern Illinois Conservation Workshop is typically an in-person, all day, workshop, Saturday workshop consisting of around ten speakers. Due to COVID measures, this has been transitioned to a virtual workshop with the format of two hours per day over the course of a week. As a result, the virtual program has reached a greater range of attendees.

Erin took her grass identification series and created a three-part series. This course has been extremely popular, has reached viewers across the US and has surpassed 1,000 viewers on YouTube.

All About Caterpillars has reached over 500 viewers and Erin hopes to continue this program in person. Other webinars and programs Erin has been invited to teach and lead are Choosing Native Plants, Planning for Pollinators This Fall and Prairie Invaders. Erin has said on a positive note the COVID forced stay at home procedures has led to more online programs which has reduced the amount of travel required and allowed a greater reach to the population. Erin is excited to have Kim onboard and they are hoping to get the Metropolis and Cairo food donation gardens up and running and they are excited to move into 2021. They are planning to provide hybrid version of the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist training programs that include self-paced learning, Zoom guided training and in-person field trips. Erin is also working with 4H to create programs and kits help engage the youth in programs. Derek Eurales requested more information on the solar energy-based programs mentioned and Erin is going to provide more information to all Council members via email.

- 4-H Youth Development staff – Kristi Stout, Vickie Taylor, Dena Wood

Kristi spoke of the challenges to reach and engage the youth without in-person opportunities. 4-H has encouraged members to take and submit pictures of their projects and activities to share with others.

Recent activities have included a holiday cookbook, using the Cooking 101 curriculum, and encouraged the kids to have family activities and submit pictures. The kids made Thankful Pumpkins for Halloween that were delivered to local agencies and clubs have done individual food drives and delivered to the elderly by way of porch drop offs.

Kristi explained the new Health Rocks programs to be delivered in the Shawnee school district in the spring. This program comes to Extension by way of grant funds and will focus on drug use, vaping, drink and driving, texting and driving and offer hands on experience with the use of a small pedal-type car that will simulate real life experiences for high school aged participants. This is out of the “comfort zone” for youth development staff in Unit 27 and will be a new learning experience for all.

Kristi is also working with a state committee on revising the financial literacy program curriculum. It was last updated in 2010 and is taking the majority of Kristi’s time outside of youth engagement.

- SNAP/INEP– Lindsey Sadler, Patsy Bishop, Sarita Sawyer, Tiffney Stewart, Shannon Pulliam

SNAP program delivery has greatly been affected by COVID mitigation guidelines. With the cooperation of Arrowleaf (formerly Family Counseling), Tiffney has been able to offer programs by way of virtual programs to their group homes. Arrowleaf has purchased their own supplies for recipes and by virtual delivery of the program, and help of Arrowleaf staff, the client participants have been able to continue their SNAP related educational activities. Tiffney has been able to do this with three different sites, two in Vienna and one in Karnak. School virtual programs continue to be a difficulty, but she plans to try again in 2021.

Sarita has also been able to provide virtual program, again with the help with Arrowleaf, in the Cairo community. She has also been able to provide virtual program delivery with the assistance of the Pulaski County Housing Authority and is very grateful to the Meridian school district in working with her to allow delivery of the Organwise Guys program to kids in their gymnasium by way of a large screen tv.

Dates and Times of future council meetings

- February 25, 2021 @ Vienna – 11am-1pm
- April 29, 2021 @ Vienna - 11am-1pm

Motion to adjourn made by Josie Eason and seconded by Ann Terry. No objections, meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Monica Reid

Unit 27 - Office Support Associate

For Unit 27 Unit Council secretary, Chris Boyd