

DeWitt-Macon-Piatt County Extension Council
Minutes for January 27, 2025
6:00 pm at Macon County Office

6:02 pm - Call to Order – Jamie Boas

Welcome and introduction

Sonya Anthony	
Janet Boomer	
Anthony Cheatham	
Grace Clark	
Cassie Crouch	Present
Morgan Crouch	Present
Wayne Dunning	
Jerry Edwards	Present
Todd Henricks	
Merry Lanker	Present
Jennifer Jamison	Present
Mike Randall	Present
Annilee Rohrscheib	
Sydnee Shafer	

Haley Jones- staff	
Doug Gucker- staff	Present
Sarah Vogel- staff	Present
Caitlin Mellendorf- staff	Present
Jamie Boas- staff	Present
Alexa McCoy- staff	Present
Henry Craft- staff	Present

There were no public comments.

Extension Council Orientation

Jamie invited each of the educators to talk about their program area, including any programs they do and staff they work with. Jamie talked about the SNAP-Ed program that provides nutrition education to SNAP benefit audiences. There are two community outreach workers that work in this area- A.J. Ruckmann and Toma Romero.

Caitlin is a nutrition and wellness educator, which is under the Family and Consumer Science (FCS) program area. Statewide their team focuses on chronic disease prevention (heart disease and diabetes mainly), food preservation, food safety and food skills. Tammy Buse, is the Extension Program Coordinator (EPC) for this area.

Doug Gucker is a local foods, small farms educator. His focus is on helping farmers produce food safely, stressing the importance of sanitation in fresh food. He has programs on baby ginger, a high value specialty crop. He also answers commercial ag questions, does pesticide applicator testing and provides weekly crop reports for our area. He also oversees the Master Naturalist program which is a volunteer program that learns about caring for the environment and natural resources. Stephanie Hale is the EPC that works in that program area. He's hoping for a virtual/hybrid option for this volunteer training program in the future.

Sarah Vogel is a horticulture educator with training as an arborist. She works on statewide programs that she can then bring to the local counties. Two of these large programs are the Homegrown Harvest workshops and the Community Tree Care series. Whitney Allison (Macon County) and Beth Miglin (Piatt and DeWitt Counties) are the EPCs that work with the Master Gardeners. Master Gardeners invest their time and talents to grow food, support pollinators, sustain resilient home gardens, and share their knowledge with others. She shared a written report with members and staff. Feb 22 is Macon County's Gardening Insights event. July 12 is the Piatt County Garden Walk.

Jenny with Blue Ridge Junior High School asked for information and assistance in landscaping the building. Sarah is going to follow up with her.

Henry Craft is the 4-H Youth Development Educator (YDE) for DeWitt and Piatt Counties. He mentioned that Haley Jones is the 4-H YDE for Macon County but is unable to be at the meeting. 4-H focuses on signature programs that provide education in schools and at community sites with partners. They also support 4-H clubs. He spoke about the vision of Beyond Ready in which Illinois 4-H has a statewide goal of reaching 415k youth and 10 mil youth across the United States this year. Henry's focus has been on cooking program and social emotional learning through table top gaming. There are six EPCs that work in 4-H. Macon County: Anay Hunt and

Marisa Capps, DeWitt County: Kendra Wallace, Piatt County: Eric Eickmeier, Rachel Davidson, Anne Reinbold

Alexa McCoy is the first Integrated Health Disparities (IHD) educator in the state. The program area has a focus to promote healthy living to marginalized communities to decrease health disparities. The target audiences are Hispanic and African American families. She works in both Unit 17 (Macon, Piatt DeWitt) and Unit 13 (Champaign, Ford, Iroquois and Vermilion). Her interests are maternal and child health, chronic disease prevention, bullying, eating disorders and mental health. She has attended three health fairs where the veggie meter was available. Council discussed the veggie meter and would like to learn more (even try it!). She is currently piloting a cultural humility curriculum with Extension staff. She is looking to deliver this program in health care settings and schools.

Election of officers

Jerry was elected as chair and Cassie was elected as vice chair. Nominations for the secretary position were postponed until the next meeting.

Read and Approve May 2024 Minutes

Minutes were read and approved with a change of the word “personal” to “personnel”. Cassie moved and Jerry seconded. Motion approved.

Fiscal Update

Jamie explained that typically all of the educators are signatories on the checking account and since Alexa is no longer SNAP-Ed and Haley is new, she'd like to add them too. Cassie moved that “The following employees should stay on as signatories are: Jamie Boas, Doug Gucker, Henry Craft, Sarah Vogel, and Caitlin Mellendorf and those to be added are Alexa McCoy and Haley Jones.” Mike second the motion. Motion passed.

Personnel Update

Jamie reported that Macon County Office Support Assistant is Ella Claxon and she started 1/22. The Macon County SNAP-Ed Community Outreach Workers are AJ Ruckmann and Toma Romero and they started 12/11. The Macon County 4-H YDE is Haley Jones and she started 12/10. There is a SNAP-Ed educator position open in Decatur but it's not posted.

Other Business

Extension went through a strategic planning process this past year and our unit will do a needs assessment starting in March. Unit Council members will take part in this at the April meeting.

The addition for more space in DeWitt County is moving along. The trusses are being delivered Wednesday and it should be framed by the weekend. The addition is another office, storage room and exit for Extension.

Next meeting is April 28 at 6pm with dinner served at 5:15pm. It will be held at the DeWitt County Extension Office located at 1160 IL-54 Ste B, Clinton.

Adjournment –

Motion by Mike

2nd by Cassie

Meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm

Submitted by Jamie Boas, County Director