

DeWitt-Macon-Piatt Extension Council Meeting
March 8th, 2021

The Unit 17 Extension Council Meeting was held via Zoom due to COVID -19 pandemic.

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m. by Doug Harlan. Introductions were given by each attendee to include the county they represented. Chair Nancy Derby joined us late due to difficulties calling in to the meeting. Time was given to read the November minutes. No corrections were given, a motion to approve the minutes was given with no nays. Minutes accepted as submitted.

Members present were: Nancy Derby, Kristi Pyatt, David White, Robin Stapf, Ben Suckow, Jennifer Suckow, Katie Sellmeyer, Trinity Mata, Jo Bauer, April Gum, Janell Baum Thomas, Kathi Drozs, Morgan Drozs and Zach Howell.

Staff members present were: Doug Harlan, Doug Gucker, Trinity Johnson, Jamie Boas, Caitlin Mellendorf, Sarah Vogel and Staci Coussens.

President Nancy Derby asked Doug to continue with the agenda. The fiscal report was given. Doug shared that the Unit has \$3.1 million in its Trust account as of December 2020. He stated that fiscally the Unit was doing very well. Expenses are below budget – as of December the Unit was at 21.3 % spent. Doug said that this low percentage was primarily due to the pandemic and the staff working remotely. He said that normal expenses for programming were not incurred. Vote was taken to approve the budget. All were in favor of approval.

Doug gave a personnel update. He said that Louise Hyneman was hired in January as the Unit's SNAP-Ed Extension Program Coordinator. She is a new graduate from grad school. She has had the misfortune of breaking her ankle and is doing her training from home.

Our new Marketing EPC has been hired: Laura Crider. Finally, the two open clerical positions in Macon County have interviews scheduled the week of 3/15.

The Unit returned to work in the offices on March 1, 2021. All three offices are open to the public. Staff are working on a hybrid schedule in order to reduce the number of people in the office at any one time. It is advised to call ahead and set

up an appointment if one wishes to come in person to make sure staff is available. Numbers at any given county location are reduced until more can be vaccinated and safety protocols continue to be followed.

Doug provided an update on the 4H Fair for 2021. He stated that some form of in person hybrid show will be in store. Current plans call for a 4H Fair that has been lengthened by one day. Some will show their projects and leave and others will then be assigned to come in with their livestock, show and leave the grounds. This is to comply with University rules. There will be no more than 50 in attendance at any one time with masks and social distancing. Currently in process to secure tents for the general projects. Judging will be done differently than other years due to Covid restrictions. There will be no public viewing. Doug emphasized that he is monitoring the situation daily. If things improve or the Governor takes the state to Phase 5, he will move the 4H Fair to a normal full in person fair. Dates of the fair are July 8th through the 12th. Updates will be forthcoming.

Doug asked council members if they had identified any programming needs in the communities. None were identified. Doug then reminded the Council of Extension's EEO and Affirmative Action programs. These were reviewed and discussed.

Program updates were then given. Our program highlight was given by Caitlin on Cottage Foods. She gave information for those that were interested that cook or bake out of their kitchen and wish to sell their products. Websites were provided to help understand the cottage foods industry and its associated laws. There is to be an event March 11th to help one learn more about this and its effects on Farmer Markets.

Doug Gucker has been doing virtual training for hybrid field days, grazing webinar and answering many questions regarding pesticide testing. He has numerous other activities that he has attended to as well as doing radio, TV, podcasts and blogs to name a few.

Macon County 4-H and Youth development update was given by Trinity Johnson. She shared STEM programs to break systemic barriers. Trinity mention an upcoming program for public speaking training. She also updated the council

on the little dreamers program and getting students moving with hustle for that muscle.

Jamie Boas provided an update on DeWitt and Piatt County 4H and Youth Development. She and her staff have been working on starting new 4-H clubs. The new photography club had great success. Here students learned to use their cell phones to take pictures. She also shared an update on the "Stitches Club." This is a sewing club. Members learn to use a machine to sew.

Sarah Vogel updated us on Crossing Healthcare and a project that received a grant for \$4000 to advance their garden and orchard program to grow fresh produce in raised beds. She has planned a present a program on tree pruning for fruit trees and trimming evergreens.

Caitlin Mellendorf updated the council on an issue they identified at the November meeting regarding isolation of seniors at home. Caitlin took this concern to her Nutrition and Wellness team at the state level. They are now addressing the nutrition and wellness of seniors homebound with a quarterly newsletter covering items of nutrition, financial needs and emotional needs.

Staci Coussens, our SNAP-ED Educator, to the council that she was working on a 1/2 day program to address food insecurities. She too updated us on the eastern Illinois Food Bank Grant and her many projects.

Doug thanked all the council members that were in attendance for their support. He stated that attendance has been excellent and appreciated our efforts.

President Nancy asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Kristen Pyatt and seconded by Dave White. Next meeting will be May 10th, 2021 at the Piatt County Extension Office, Monticello, IL. Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Bauer