



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**Sangamon, Menard, and Logan Counties
Extension Council & Board Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2021 - 7:00 p.m.
Sangamon County Extension Office and Online Via Zoom**

Agenda Items:

- **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Nancy Dixon at 7:02 pm. The meeting started with a moment of silence in memory of Brian Satorius (Council member representing Menard County) who recently passed away. Council members also were asked to keep Dave Opperman and his family in their thoughts on the passing of his mother.
- **Present:** Clay Irwin, Elsie Ransdell, Jennifer Taylor-Brown, Vera Small, Nancy Dixon, Keenan Leesman, Janet Estill, Emma Wankel, Katie Smith, Rachel Fishburn, and Extension staff Jennifer Fishburn and Terri Miller Casey.
- **Previous Meeting Minutes**
MOTION: Motion to accept last meetings minutes was made by Elise Ransdell and seconded by Jennifer Taylor-Brown. Motion passed unanimously.
- **Introductions of Members**
Dixon asked that everyone present give a brief introduction of themselves, where they are from, and if they had a connection with Extension.
- **Recognition of Retiring Council Members**
Casey acknowledged Gary Letterly, Jennifer Taylor-Brown, Rachel Fishburn, and Zach Dixon for their service on Extension Council as their terms have expired and handed out certificates of appreciation to those retiring members who were present.
- **New Council Members**
The following nominees were recommended to serve on the Extension Council: Clay Irwin from Logan County, Vera Small from Sangamon County, Emma Wankel, youth representative from Menard County, Jacob Hartman, youth representative from Sangamon County, and Kaitlyn Smith, youth representative from Sangamon County.

MOTION: A motion was made by Jennifer Taylor-Brown and seconded by Janet Estill to appoint Clay Irwin, Vera Small, Emma Wankel, Jacob Harman, and Kaitlyn Smith to the Extension Council to serve a two year term. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: A motion to reappoint Nancy Dixon, Phil Sidles, and Dave Opperman to another 2 year term was made by Elise Ransdell and seconded by Katie Smith. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Nomination of Officers and Council Board**

The following slate of officers was recommended to the council: Nancy Dixon as Chairman, David Mendenhall as Vice Chairman, and Bill Bree as Secretary/Financial Reporter.

The following slate of Council Board representatives was recommended: Craig Hall, Janet Estell, David Mendenhall, Ed Whitcomb, Jr, Nancy Dixon, and Bill Bree.

MOTION: A motion was made to accept the slate of officers and Extension Board by Katie Smith seconded by Vera Small. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Open Meetings Act Training Requirement**

Casey explained that because Extension is a public entity they are required to follow the rules of the Open Meetings Act which was established to ensure that meetings were held publicly and in an open manner. The training is pretty straight forward and is offered for free on-line at the Attorney General's website. All new members who have not already completed this training will receive an email from Casey with a link and instructions on how to complete the training. Once they have completed the training, they should send her either a hard copy of your certificate of completion to the Springfield Extension office, or they can send a digital copy to her via email. This training must be done within 90 days of this meeting. Unfortunately, the state's website where people take the online training is down and has been for some time. They do not have an ETA on when it will be back up. If it doesn't come back up soon, we may have to look into other options.

- **Financial/Fiscal Updates**

 - **Bank Account Signature List Approval**

 - MOTION: A motion to authorize checking account signature authority for Logan In/Out Account: Carissa Davis, Sarah Swaar, and Terri Casey and Sangamon In/Out Account: Jennifer Fishburn, Carissa Davis, Kayla Swaar, and Terri Casey was made by Vera Small and seconded by Elisa Ransdell. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Program Updates**

Casey reported that the 4-H shows were a success. In order to protect participants and volunteers from COVID, numerous changes were made and new ways of doing things tried. They found that most of these changes were very positively received, with families and volunteers requesting that some changes be made permanent such as assigned judging times.

She also reported that the SNAP-Ed program was able to preserve despite COVID and the various restriction it caused to successfully offer summer programs. For example staff were able to form a new partnership with Table of Life Ministries in Springfield and their backpack program that lessened the nutritional burden on families. Extension nutrition staff members were invited to join Table of Life to provide educational materials, recipes, and additional nutrition and physical activity information and handouts to families participating in the backpack program.

In addition to in-person programming which is back up and running, Extension is still offering virtual and online programs and courses. There are also a lot of upcoming virtual horticulture, family life, and financial workshops coming up.

Casey then discussed that all three of the Extension Regional Directors had retired this summer and interims have been selected to serve until replacements can be hired. These simultaneous retirements provided an opportunity for Extension leadership to reevaluate the positions and regional offices to look for opportunities to operate more efficiently as well as save expenses.

During the process it was determined that the Region 2 office that is located in Springfield on Montvale Drive was no longer necessary.

She explained that having two Extension offices in Springfield has often caused confusion for the public and it also created duplicate expenses when it comes to utilities and other resources. So in February the Regional office staff will be moving into our Sangamon County Extension office. They will be occupying the large room which is currently her office. She will be moving to an empty office upfront west of the reception area.

The Regional office has a part time secretary who will report to the Regional “office” several days a week and she will be responsible for the support needs of the Regional office. They will also have “floating” space for the Regional Director and other staff, such as IT, regional specialist who need a physical office when working in the area. The Regional Director and IT staff spend most of their time either on the road at other locations, or carrying out tasks that can be accomplished remotely.

The Regional office will reimburse the Unit for their portion of the rent and any resources/utilities they utilize. They are also giving us first dibs on any equipment or furniture of theirs that we would like to use at no cost to us. This move will help our Unit recover some of the cost of our facilities, which goes up every year, while lowering our operating cost.

- **Office Holiday Closures**

MOTION: A motion was made to accept the 2021 holiday office closure dates of December 23 – January 3, 2021 and also December 10, 2021 for all staff meeting by Elisa Ransdell seconded by Katie Smith. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Staffing Update**

Casey announced that Extension hired Melissa Bland as the new Menard/Sangamon County office support associate. She started on August 30.

She also reported that they had failed searches for both the Sangamon (Springfield area) SNAP-Ed Community Worker and Logan County 4-H Program Coordinator positions. They reposted the 4-H position and it closed last week. They are currently waiting to see if they have any qualified applicants apply. She mentioned that she is considering not reposting the Community Worker position until the new union contract is completed and they get new salary numbers, or until there is interest by at least one qualified applicant.

Casey reported that the Sangamon County Farm Bureau hired Candice McKown as the new Ag in the Classroom coordinator for Logan, Menard, and Sangamon Counties. She lives in Logan County and started at the end of August. She has already met with Casey and Extension Ag in the Classroom program Extra Help Rachel Frost. She has also been working with Amy Hyde, Logan County 4-H Program Coordinator who teaches the Ag in the Classroom program in Logan County.

- **Reaching New Audiences/Meeting Community Need**

Casey explained that there are currently open seats on the council and they are seeking diverse voices to join Extension Council, especially those who understand the needs of historically underserved audiences, as well as serving audiences most at risk and in need of our services. Casey asked that if any council member knows of someone who could represent these audiences and whose experience would be helpful, to please reach out to her.

- **Set Future Meeting Dates**

The following dates were set for this year's upcoming council meetings.

Thursday, January 13, 2022 – 7 PM (Logan County Extension Office)

Thursday, March 10, 2022 – 7 PM (Sangamon County Extension Office)

Thursday, June 9, 2022 – 7 PM (Menard County Extension Office)

Thursday, October 13, 2022 – 7 PM (Logan County Extension Office)

- **Public Input**

There were no members of the public present.

- **Adjournment**

MOTION: A motion was made by Clay Irwin seconded by Janet Estill. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.