



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

University of Illinois Extension
Sangamon, Menard, and Logan Counties
Extension Council Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2021 - 7:00 p.m.
Online Via Zoom

Agenda Items:

- **Call to Order** Chairman Bill Bree called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.
- **Present:** Bill Bree, David Opperman, Elsie Ransdell, Nancy Dixon, Zach Dixon, Rachel Fishburn, Brian Satorius, Sophia Schneider, and Terri Miller
- **Previous Meeting Minutes**
A motion to accept the previous meeting minutes was made by David Opperman and seconded by Elsie Ransdell. The motion passed.
- **Introduction of Guest** – No guest joined the meeting, however all those present introduced themselves.
- **Financial Report**
Facility leases have been renewed for the County offices. Logan and Menard are for three years, and we are in the second year of a five year lease in Sangamon.

Miller is currently working on the FY22 Budget which will be submitted in July.

- **Program Updates**
Miller stated that the offices are open to walk-in traffic, with safety measures in place. Most staff are working from the offices with some on a hybrid schedule between remote work and in office work. No word yet on when mitigations or occupancy limits may be lifted or increased, as they are awaiting changes or announcements from the Governor and IDPH.

Miller invited board members to look through the program reports submitted and emailed to them in advance of the meeting. There is a lot of great programming going on and being delivered remotely, or in person with limited capacities. She noted that the Master Gardener and Beekeeper trainings are going well utilizing the hybrid delivery method put in place due to COVID. Master Gardeners and Naturalist are also making plans for spring/summer activities and hope to have in-person programs following safety mitigations soon, as well as social distanced/curb side plant sales again this year.

4-H Clubs have been meeting virtually and are beginning in-person meeting options again following safety protocols. As the weather gets warmer, clubs will be able to do more activities outdoors and everyone is grateful and excited about that.

Plans are being put in place for in-person 4-H shows this year, however they may look different, as safety protocols are put in place to keep volunteers, staff, kids, their families safe. The Youth Livestock

Conference will be held on April 24 & 25 at the Illinois State Fairgrounds and will be in-person following safety mitigation measures.

Miller added that we are seeing a steady increase in office visitors, phone calls, and requests for assistance, which all indicates life is starting to return to normal slowly. She expects that once the warm weather hits, there will be heavy volume of request for services, as a result of pent-up demand.

- **Staffing Update**

Miller gave a followed up report on the University's Staff Voluntary Retirement Program. In order to proactively cut cost, the University is offering a retirement package to workers with at least 20 years of service and who also meet certain age and other requirements. Those eligible for the retirement package had until March 16 to accept the package and must retire by June 30, 2021. Until all paperwork is final, I cannot discuss who or when, but I can say that our Unit will be effected by retirements. It is not yet known when rehiring could take place. This does present a good opportunity to look at Unit staff and current program need to find efficiencies and ways to utilize staff to best support programs in the Unit.

Ryan Hobson, Extension Region 2 Director, is retiring March 31. They will be naming an interim regional director soon.

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

Miller mentioned that during COVID they have been limited in their ability to meet with folks or to reach out to new groups. As things begin to open up a bit, she asked that each of council think of an individual or group that understands or serves and underserved or at-risk audience that Extension could be reaching out to and talk about community need and how Extension might be able to serve their communities or clients. She mentioned that those who know and love Extension well, often forget that there is a large portion of the population that have no idea who we are, or that we are here to help.

Sophia Schneider and Zach Dixon mentioned possible programming at schools to let teens know more about Ag careers. Elsie Ransdell mentioned reaching out to Stewardship Alliance and other similar groups to help recruit Master Gardeners and Master Naturalist. David Opperman mentioned that there was a shortage of concealed carry safety classes in the area. Brian Satorius would putting together a list of organizations that Extension could reach out to in the Menard County area.

- **Upcoming Meetings:**

Thursday, June 17, 2021 – 7 PM (Location TBD)

Thursday, October 21, 2021 – 7 PM (Location TBD)

- **Public Input**

There was no public input.

- **Adjournment**

MOTION made by Brian Satorius seconded by Zach Dixon to adjourn. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 7:39 pm.