

Unit 27 Council Meeting  
May 11, 2022  
11:00a.m. – 1:00 pm  
IN PERSON

**MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order by County Director Johnson at 11:18am. Verbal introductions were made around the table and name cards were placed before each attendee. **Civil rights information slips were circulated around the room.**

Council members present:

Alexander/Pulaski	Johnson	Massac	Union
Ann Terry Josie Eason		Cheryl Vanderford Megan Henderson	

Staff present: County Director Johnson, Monica Meyer, Kimberly Rohling, Tami Crest, Erin Garrett, John Shadowens, Destenie Sullivan.

Meeting minutes from February 16, 2022, were reviewed. Motion made by Cheryl Vanderford and seconded by Ann Terry to approve prior minutes. Motion carried.

Council Business

- Unit Council members
  - Replacement of Unit Council members – need suggestions for nine members ending June 30:
    - Johnson County needs 2 – Suggestions needed? Erin has asked that Zach be removed due to work conflicts, this brings the replacements needed to 3.
    - Massac County needs 2 – Orlando McReynolds has agreed to return, Megan Henderson has a few ideas and will speak to them.
    - Pulaski/Alexander needs 1 – Ann has a few suggestions and will speak with them before giving names.
    - Union needs 4 - Megan Henderson has a few ideas and will speak to them.
  - Discussion was held as to meeting times, afternoon versus evening. Consensus was that daytime meetings would be best to avoid night travel.
- UIE AJMPU Unit 27 Foundation – County Director Johnson advised that the Unit has foundation funds that have sat dormant, and campus wants action taken to use or grow the account. A lengthy discussion was held as to the pros/cons of forming a foundation and the format, plans, purpose of such a board. County Director Johnson will gather more information from other foundations in existence and the discussion will continue at the next meeting when more specifics of restrictions and guidelines are known.

- County Extension Director Report
  - Plan of Work / New issues or concerns in community - County Director Johnson discussed the 5 grand challenges (Community, Economy, Environment, Food and Health) that guides the work of Extension education and programs and highlighted the work being done in Unit 27.
  - Budget - County Director Johnson shared Unit 27's account balances as of the meeting date and general discussion showed that no concerns were raised on fiscal matters. County Director Johnson shared the following a recent visit by President Killeen it was said that he wants to do more in Southern Illinois. As such, Units 24, 26 and 27 are to submit for a line-item request for Southern Illinois Initiative funds, comparable to the \$2.9 million given to the Cook County Initiative. Senator Fowler and Representative Windhorst were parties to this conversation and support such a request. County Director Johnson feels this could bring approximately \$800,000 dollars to the Unit and discussed what he would like to expand programs to be with such funds.
  - General updates (Facilities, vacancies, and other) –
    - Destenie Sullivan, Research Assistant, has been hired and is working with the staff on the HEAT grant focusing on food insecurity issues in the region.
    - Facilities – office leases are renewing with Massac and Johnson Co. increases; Union and P/A Co. will remain the same. P/A will be getting new windows, paint, and flooring. Johnson Co. will be getting an ADA compliant toilet replacement. Shawnee College continues to donate office space, which has recently moved and gained more space.
    - County Director Johnson continues to perform staff evaluations and was evaluated by Regional Director Harland. County Director Johnson has been invited to submit promotion papers to attain County Director Level 3.
- Grant(s), Donations and other Activities –
  - Connect Bridges project – Susan Odum and Quin Colson, unable to attend but they are focusing on tourism and business retention in Southern Illinois County Director Johnson hopes they can attend the fall meeting and give a full outline of their project.
  - AmeriCorps VISTA – ongoing program at Vienna High School with their after-school horticulture program using Extension's Jr. Master Gardener curriculum. AmeriCorps has expanded to Egyptian School and will begin in May 2022. Brenda Hileman as resigned, and two new VISTA will begin working.
  - MY PI Illinois – Vienna High School is completing the program and will graduate 11 students. County Director Johnson submitted a proposal to SPARC for a donation of \$15,000 to support and expand this program.
  - R3 ICJIA grant – Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, Restore, Reinvest and Renew, commonly known as the “marijuana money” as the money comes from the tax of marijuana sales. County Director Johnson and County Director Messmer has applied for a \$50,000 grant to address Youth Development and Violence Prevention in Cairo/Mounds and

Harrisburg communities. John Shadowens has experience with possible curriculum to use in addressing these issues.

- Civil Rights and efforts to reach underserved audiences – Staff continue to reach out to underserved audiences and promote programs to all parties. Monica Meyer sends a monthly reminder to staff to update specific folders in the civil rights collection files. County Director Johnson recently helped conduct a civil rights audit of Unit 4 via zoom and will help begin moving Unit 27 to an online civil rights collection and reporting system in FY23. County Director Johnson participated in the Healing Southern Illinois project by attending a Community Remembrance Project in Montgomery, AL in hosted by the Equal Justice Institute.

- Unit Reports

- Community and Economic Development – Destenie Sullivan and John Shadowens shared updates on the HEAT grant and activities to bring retail grocery stores to the food deserts in Southern Illinois. Grocery surveys are completed, and data has been compiled. Tri-State Food Bank held it's grand opening and honored the late Andy Sisulak for his work in making the project a success. A video created by Destenie Sullivan was shared showing the grand opening highlights of the day. The Rise Community Market in Cairo continues to be a growing reality for a cooperative for-profit business to bring a brick-and-mortar grocery store to Cairo, IL. John shared a FAQ about the Rise Community Market and shared information about the project's Facebook page and need for more sharing, visibility, and awareness. John shared pictures and plans of the existing building and the hopes, plans and potential for Cairo to have a market soon. Investment shares for this market will be available for purchase for anyone interested.

- Natural Resources Energy and Environment - Erin Garrett shared the preliminary results and responses of the Nature Programming Needs Assessment and discussed the actions that Unit 27 can take to help address the needs founds because of the survey. Erin hopes to partner more with IDNR, SNF and US FWS to host history talks of lesser-known sites, offer more workshops with relevant daily information, find ways to have more informal programs and market programs to families. Hopes are also to share information and engage more with existing groups in Illinois that offer outdoor activities.

- A list of upcoming dates and programs was shared, and printed copies passed around. Council members were reminded to check the local webpage and Facebook page for up-to-date volunteer opportunities.

Dates and Times of future council meetings

- September 21, 2022 @ Vienna – 11am-1pm

Motion to adjourn made by Josie Eason and seconded by Cheryl Vanderford. No objections, meeting adjourned at 1:06pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Monica Meyer - Unit 27 - Office Support Specialist - For Unit Council secretary, Chris Boyd