Unit 27 Council Meeting September 29, 2021 11:00a.m. – 1:00 pm In-person and ZOOM

MINUTES

An informational Unit Council "orientation" was offered at 10:00 am for anyone wanting to gain information and insight to the organization, structure, and purpose of the Extension Council a/k/a Unit Council. The orientation was attended by County Director Johnson, Jonathan Voelz, Lizz Cooley-Questelle, Amy Shuck, Shannon Pulliam, Monica Meyer, Angela Ralls, Sarita Sawyer and Vickie Taylor.

The official meeting was called to order by County Director Johnson at 11:14 a.m. Phyllis Webb opened the meeting with an inspirational poem about the beauty around us. She talked about a book she recently read, Sooley, by John Grisham. This book talks about basketball, working hard, what most people want for their life and what wrong choices can do a life plan.

Council members present:

Alexander/Pulaski	Johnson	Massac	Union		
Shawna Rhine	Phyllis Webb	Cheryl Vanderford	Chris Boyd		
Derek Eurales	Jonathan Voelz	Megan Henderson	-		
Josie Eason					

Staff present: County Director Johnson, Angela Ralls, Sarita Sawyer, Monica Meyer, Tami Crest, Vickie Taylor, Erin Garrett, Amy Shuck, Shannon Pulliam, Kristi Stout, Lizz Cooley-Questelle.

Meeting minutes from April 28, 2021, were reviewed. Motion made by Phyllis Webb and seconded by Josie Eason to approve prior minutes. Motion carried.

• Elect Officers

Current officers:	President	Phyllis Webb (Johnson Co)	
	Vice- President	Ann Terry (Pul-Alex Co)	
	Secretary	Chris Boyd (Union Co)	
	Financial Reporter	Pearl Meadows (Massac Co)	

- Nomination made by County Director Johnson for Phyllis Webb to serve as President.
- Nomination made by County Director Johnson for Anganetta Terry to serve as Vice-President.
- Nomination made by County Director Johnson for Chris Boyd to serve as Secretary.
- Nomination made by County Director Johnson for Pearl Meadows to serve as Financial Reporter.

• Motion made by Jonathon Voelz to approve all nominations, seconded by Chris Boyd. Motion carried. Brief discussion was held to acknowledge and approve Phyllis Webb signing forms to send to campus with officer designations.

• Proposed Check Signers

County Director Johnson gave a brief explanation of the in/out checking accounts maintained by each County office and the purpose of dual check signers. Motion was made by Jonathan Voelz, seconded by Phyllis Webb for the following individuals to serve as check signers at the specified County office. Motion carried.

Alexander/Pulaski	Johnson	Massac	Union
Jody Johnson	Jody Johnson	Jody Johnson	Jody Johnson
Sarita Sawyer	Kim Rohling	Norma Korte	Linda Poston
Dena Wood	Tiffney Stewart	Vickie Taylor	Dena Wood

- A quick review of the campus holiday schedule was conducted by attendees to be aware of anticipated office closures. Juneteenth was not listed but will be added to 2022 campus calendar.
- Extension Board Officers from Unit Council will serve on Extension Board. Johnson County has appointed Gary Brumley and Pulaski County has appointed Rex Wilborn. County Director Johnson will work with Alexander, Massac, and Union to have their appointments made. The next Extension Board meeting will be scheduled prior to next scheduled Unit Council meeting.
- County Extension Director Report

• Plan of Work / New issues or concerns in community – The current Plan of Work was reviewed, core areas being Health, Food, Economy and Environment and all the subcategories of each.

• Budget – County Director Johnson praised Harry Clore, Associate Director of Budget and Finance, for his generosity in budgeting and assistance to Unit 27. Harry Clore has indicated that Extension has a 3-year carryover to sustain Extension in the drastic event that zero money was received from any sources. No State of IL funds received yet this fiscal year, but this is expected as it typically runs one year behind. Smith Lever funds continue to be received from campus allocations. Updated account balances were provided and discussed with no worries or concerns offered. County Director Johnson expressed thanks to County Commissioners and the County Boards in their continued payments and cooperation.

• Civil Rights and efforts to reach underserved audiences – Staff continue to participate in civil rights training that campus offers and provides.

• General updates (Facilities, vacancies, and other) – COVID-19, all staff are either vaccinated or given an exemption that requires weekly testing. Vienna High School is providing free weekly testing. The Union Co. office has new owners and management,

and new signage has been erected for visibility and locating services. Pulaski/Alexander, Massac and Johnson Co. offices continue to cooperate with COVID compliance cleaning measures. This has been an unexpected expense for the facilities groups, and some have asked to raise the rent starting next year. County Director Johnson advised that Johnson Co. has asked for \$200 more per month and the County Commissioners are willing to help cover and offset this expense. County Director Johnson expects the same from Massac. The Pulaski/Alexander County office is paid off and has the highest rent, County Director Johnson will have financial discussions with this facilities group.

• Staffing - Vacancies - SNAP Extension Program Coordinator, Lindsey Sadler has resigned. University is not allowing advertisement of this position at this time, but County Director Johnson will pursue hiring approval to fill the post by February for the garden projects to provide food donations to local pantries. We are currently advertising for a visiting CED Educator for the HEAT grant which is grant funded and will be to help facilitate a board of directors addressing food insecurity in the southern 11 counties in Illinois. This grant is also looking to hire an academic hourly researcher. The purpose of the HEAT project is to create an advisory board called Southern Illinois Food Access and will address food insecurity in the southern 11 counties. County Director Johnson and County Director Angie Messmer wrote the application, and both of their respective counties are facing the same issues. One major issue is transportation; many times, the main food pantry distributor has food available but local individual pantries do not have the resources to travel and obtain the food for distribution. County Director Messmer has already obtained a 15-passenger van (donated) to help address food delivery needs but has been advised that SNAP funds (such as the HEAT grant) can't be used to deliver food. Partners working with Extension on this project are taking steps to address the matter. Some communities do not have a food pantry for a delivery or distribution to be made to/from. This grant will attempt to address all these issues and many more.

• One Shawnee – Susan Odum and Quin Colson are working with a non-profit community development organization focusing on business retention and tourism in Southern Illinois.

- Unit Reports
 - ANR Environment and Energy Stewardship Erin Garrett, Kimberly Rohling

Erin & Kim recently hosted a Junior Master Gardener Teacher Training, a vision since February 2019. Eleven teachers (nine from Unit27) attended training and will now be ready to deliver the curriculum to youth and engage them in their classrooms. Hopes are high that this will continue to be an offered training to future educators.

Erin's Grass Identification Programming is getting attention across the country by webinar delivery and reached over 8,000. Erin is moving forward and developing a more in-depth curriculum with an end goal of a book publication.

Food donation gardens continue to be very successful. The Metropolis Garden has produced and donated almost 175 pounds of harvest and the Cairo Garden is just under 400 pounds of produce. More volunteers for both locations are sought and welcomed!

Kim has been offering a ton of volunteer opportunities including trash blasts, organizing habitat restoration, tree planting, pollinator planting and organization invasive species pulled. Over 1,700 pounds of invasive species plants have been pulled locally because of Kim leadership. Kim is also leading a virtual book club to engage and reconnect with groups and individuals.

Kim and Chris Evans, Dixon Springs forestry specialist, just finished organization of the 4th Annual Southern Illinois Conservation Workshop in person a Shawnee College.

The Unit's Facebook page and Extension webpage will advertise upcoming events and programs available.

Shawna Rhine, Unit Council member and employee of Southern 7 offered to send out any available information to her interagency contacts and underserved population.

October 12 there will be a garden tour for Cairo elementary school students. Garden and SNAP-Ed programs will be delivered throughout the day. The same day 400 meals are going to be delivered to the Mounds office for distribution by MeridianHealth to any person or family in need.

• SNAP/INEP– Lindsey Sadler, Patsy Bishop, Sarita Sawyer, Tiffney Stewart, Shannon Pulliam

A Tri-State food distribution tour was led by Glenn Roberts, Executive Director of the Evansville Tri-State food bank; Glenn will be a member of the Executive Board in conjunction with the HEAT grant. This food bank partners with 15 different food pantries and soup kitchens in Unit 27 and has refrigerator food space in Vienna. They just wrote a \$1 million USDA grant for a dry product warehouse to be built in Vienna.

Toni Kay Wright, Extension SNAP-Ed Educator, works with the Southern Illinois Food Pantry Network and was able to recently award nearly \$180,000 in refrigerators and freezers to food pantries in our area.

Shannon Pulliam highlighted a Salad Dressing Drive held in conjunction with the Union County Garden and Shawnee Development Council's food pantry. According to the Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap there are 2,400 people in Union County who need food. To help reach this population a salad dressing drive was held to increase awareness and provided 74 bottles of salad dressing to the food pantry to be distributed along with donated produce to give a complete meal to individuals and families in need.

A video presentation of Unit 27's SNAP-Ed staff's "lightning talk", produced for their annual conference, was planned. The presentation outlined the delivery of SNAP-Ed's

cooking schools, "Illinois Junior Chef, the COVID edition". Staff was recognized for their safety and protocols they implemented in order to provide in-person programming with the youth. Cooking schools were held at Vienna High School and Shawnee College. For delivery of the cooking schools, SNAP-Ed partnered with Dixon Springs Ag Center who provided fresh produce and Arrowleaf who provided food boxes the families of participants. This gave each kid the ingredients for a family of 4 to prepare some of the recipes they learned. Vienna High School also produced breakfast and lunch sacked meals for the kids to take home for an entire week. The Illinois Junior Chef program reached 40 families.

Lizz Cooley-Questelle is the new SNAP-Ed Educator covering Units 24 and 27. Lizz wants to develop a questionnaire to follow up with families on their experience and impact on the kids and their families. As an incentive, a portion of the families who respond first will be given a holiday food box put together with funds and efforts from Arrowleaf.

- 4-H Youth Development staff Kristi Stout, Vickie Taylor, Dena Wood
 - Kristi Stout 4-H Premium Distribution

Kristi asked members to refer to the information provided in their packets and wanted to outline upcoming events. Schools are just starting to allow 4-H staff back in person. 10 schools are ready to receive teen leadership program to give each teen 6-10 hours of training covering four project areas. Each teen will be trained and then they will select 4 classes in their elementary school to train. This should allow 4-H to reach over 100 teens.

4-H fairs were successful and one of the counties had the highest participation ever. The new model is for a teacher sponsor to select one hour of their day and the entire class will be enrolled. This will allow for more youth to be reached. Not all schools are ready to participate but ongoing efforts are being made.

4-H and other staff participated in the Cairo parade to be seen and hand out information. The Vienna parade and Union County Veterans parade are coming up and the same truck/float will be used, and information give out to the public. Advertisements on the float covered all program areas provided by Unit 27.

National 4-H week begins October 3, Johnson County just signed their proclamation in support of 4-H. Other counties will likely follow in the same fashion.

Kristi has been working on Welcome to the Real World revisions with the state committee and the program will be returning to interested schools as soon as possible.

• Other information/questions – all upcoming dates/events can be found on our Facebook page and home page at <u>https://extension.illinois.edu/ajmpu/events</u>.

Jonathon Voelz and Josie Eason asked for more clarification on 4-H premium payments from the last meetings minutes. Kristi gave a summary and advised that a more in-depth explanation with definitive answers should be given at the December meeting.

Cheryl Vanderford shared that Brookport has gone without a grocery store for over two years. The town has three "portable pantries" in town, one at the library, church and on the main highway, by providing a donation box that has non-perishable items available. Donation are made on a strictly volunteer basis.

Dates and Times of future council meetings

- December 15, 2021 @ Vienna Diner 11am to 1pm
- February 16, 2022 @ Vienna office 11am to 1pm
- May 18, 2022 @ Vienna office 11am to 1pm

Motion to adjourn made by Josie Eason and seconded by Jonathon Voelz. No objections, meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Monica Meyer Unit 27 - Office Support Associate For Unit 27 Unit Council secretary, Chris Boyd