



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**University of Illinois Extension
Sangamon, Menard, and Logan Counties
Extension Council Meeting Minutes
January 14, 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, David Mendenhall, Gary Letterly, Elsie Ransdell, Jennifer Taylor-Brown, Phil Sidles, Nancy Dixon, Zach Dixon, Rachel Fishburn, and Terri Miller
- **Previous Meeting Minutes**
A motion to accept the previous meeting minutes was made by David Opperman and seconded by Gary Letterly. The motion passed.
- **Introductions Guest** – No guest joined the meeting.
- **Open Meetings Act Training Requirement**
Miller reported that this training is offered for free on-line through the State of Illinois. All members who have not already completed this training should do so as soon as possible. Once you have completed the training, you will send Terri either a hard copy of your certificate of completion to our office, or you can send a digital copy to her via email. This training must be done by January 25.
- **Financial Report**
Miller gave a financial report. She noted that the financial impacts of COVID-19 are top of everyone's mind and are not yet known, as we are still going through the crisis. The Unit operates under a balanced budget and their approach has always been to cut all non-essential purchase/costs and exercise fiscal frugality. Something Extension has gotten very good at over the years. They are continuing to follow the situation as it relates to funding and expenditures.
- **Program Updates**
Currently the offices are being staffed by support staff, but are not open to "walk-in" traffic, however, they are assisting people by appointment and doing "curb side" service for people needing materials, literature, or manuals. Most staff are working hybrid meaning that they work primarily from home and working in the offices as needed in order to perform their work or assist clients. Extension is continuing to follow its safety plan and so far staff have been doing well. All programming is currently virtual, due to the IDPH mitigations for the state of Illinois. Miller hopes that the mitigations can be lifted soon and they can resume some in-person programs following all IDPH, CDC, and campus safety protocols. Staff, volunteers, and program participants have all done an excellent job of keeping everyone safe.

Extension are planning as though there will be in-person 4-H shows this year. However, things may change depending on what is happening at any given moment. This year the state 4-H office is hoping that show planning and mitigations/adaptations/changes can take place at a county or Unit level rather

than a state wide decision from campus effecting the whole state. Bottom line, no matter what, the shows will go. Whether it be in-person, virtual, or in some modified format in order to remain safe and to follow health and safety rules and guidelines. Unit staff are hoping for the best while considering the worse. The 4-H staff and volunteers have performed outstanding in their efforts to make sure the shows and 4-H meetings and programs continue during these challenging times. In the words of one of our 4-H'ers, "We ain't stopping for nothing!"

Staff have also conducted virtual meeting trainings with 4-H leaders and from this two new Clover Bud clubs are forming in Menard and Logan counties. The new leaders have even been collaborating with each other and are planning to offer shared clover bud opportunities in the future.

Master Gardener training and the very popular Beginner Beekeeping courses will go on this year and they are currently taking applications and registrations for them both on the Unit website. The programs are being planned with a flexible hybrid approach so that lessons can be conducted either virtually or remotely depending on circumstances and also with the flexibility of breaking up classes into multiple sites to allow them to meet spacing and occupancy requirements. Miller shared that she was very proud of the efforts of Unit Horticulture educator Jennifer Fishburn, as well as our Master Gardener and beekeeper volunteers for working through the logistics to insure that programming continues.

There are also an amazing number of virtual Ag and natural resource programs and conferences coming up in the next few months. Covering everything from field crops, pesticide applicator trainings, fruit trees, cover crops, and specialty crops. Miller explained that the public can view a list by visiting the following link: <https://emails.illinois.edu/newsletter/1431796465.html> She noted she has been enjoying many of these programs herself and learning a lot.

- **Staffing Update**

Carrie Winkelmann, Program Coordinator for Ag in the Classroom program, left Extension the first of January to become the director of the Petersburg Library. Miller thanked her for her 17 years of service and excellent contribution to the AITC program and said she would be greatly missed. In consultation with the Ag Educational Partnership (AEP -the non-for-profit organization that funds the program for Logan, Menard, and Sangamon Counties), it was decided that now would not be a good time to fill the position. Carrie was a 60% time employee, and so they are dividing up her responsibilities bet Jen Amy Hyde, a 4-H Program Coordinator for Logan County who has served as the Logan County AITC Program Coordinator for many years, as well as Miller herself, Extension support staff, extra help staff, and Sangamon and Menard County Farm Bureau staff. They will be working the AEP to reassess program need and available resources through the current challenges.

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 have until January 15 to file their intent to accept the package and must retire by June 30, 2021. There are several Unit staff who qualify, but doesn't yet know the impact this will have on the Unit and will know more after the January 15 deadline.

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

The United Way of Illinois is offering a free 21-week program that encourages Illinois residents to engage in equity conversations and to gain a deeper understanding about the impact systemic inequity has on our state and in our local communities.

About the Challenge:

100% FREE to participate.

Receive one email per week from Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Jan. 18, 2021 to June 19, 2021.

Spend approximately 15 minutes per week completing each challenge activity.

Participants who complete all of the weekly challenges will receive a certificate of completion, a digital badge, and links to tips and training tools to help continue the conversation.

<https://unitedwayillinois.org/equity-challenge/>

- **Upcoming Meetings:**

Thursday, March 18, 2021 – 7 PM (Location Zoom)

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 David Opperman seconded by Phil Sidles. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 7:33 pm.