



Unit 25 Extension Council Meeting
Tuesday, March 22, 2022
Edwards County Extension Office
350 N 7th Street
Albion, IL 62806
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Members Present: Jim Brewer, Terry Bruce, Paul Bruinsma, Haleigh Buchanan, Kacie Haag, Sara McGehee, Doug Raber, Jan Ridgely, Don Robbins, and Kathy St. Ledger

Members Absent: Rhiannon Anderson, Justine Basnett, Kelley Biggs, and Tonya Potts

Staff Member Present: Tara Buerster and Samantha Gaither

CALL TO ORDER

Kathy St. Ledger called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m. Each council member introduced themselves again due to some council members being absent from the first meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the November 3, 2021 meeting were reviewed by the council. Jim Brewer made a motion to accept the minutes as reviewed, Don Robbins seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Tara Buerster presented the financial report to the council showing local funding by county and personnel costs by county. She also explained what all is considered local funding. A chart was also shared showing the percentages that make up the funding for the Unit. Mrs. Buerster also shared local commitments for this year and what had been collected at this point. The council had a few questions on the 4-H Foundations, how they worked and how did counties without Foundations conduct their livestock auctions.

Kathy St. Ledger asked if there were any more questions regarding the financial report. There were none.

Jim Brewer made a motion to approve the financial report as reviewed by the council. Motion was seconded by Kacie Haag. All were in favor; the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Needs Assessment – Tara Buerster reminded the council that each Unit in Illinois Extension is encouraged to have 2 Educators, one Youth Development Educator, and one other depending on the needs of the

community. Unit 25 currently has one educator, 4-H Youth Development. She then presented the council with the final version of the Needs Assessment as previously reviewed by the council. Terry Bruce suggested adding a question about high speed internet and the need for it in our communities. The council agreed that while that question may not help us determine a secondary Educator to employ, it would be valuable information to gather on the survey. Mrs. Buerster indicated the survey would be mainly online with a Facebook push, on the Extension website, mass email to 4-H members, 4-H Leaders, Extension Volunteers and to Council members. Council members were asked to share that email when it goes out and were asked to provide Tara Buerster with the number of paper copies of surveys they may want to sit out at their local businesses. Extension cannot buy gift cards to incentivize individuals to complete the survey. Doug Raber, Don Robbins, and Terry Bruce all offered to purchase fuel gift cards to donate as an incentive to get individuals to complete the survey.

Kathy St. Ledger asked if there were any more questions or suggestions for the need's assessment document. There were none.

Terry Bruce made a motion to approve the needs assessment with the added question on high speed internet. Don Robbins seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion carried.

County Office Spaces – Tara Buerster shared with the council that the building that had been looked at for the Edwards County will not work, due to some heating and air conditioning issues of the shipping room that would be converted into a meeting room and overflow office space. Mrs. Buerster will notify the building owner that we will not be pursuing a lease with them. She will revisit options with the Edwards County Fair Board and continue to look around the county. The Richland County office also has concerns due to wiring issues and due to the age of the building the landlord prefers not to put a lot of money into the wiring issue. Tara Buerster will be looking at a few options in Olney later this week. The council also discussed concerns with the Wabash County Office building as far as internal set-up and visibility for the community.

NEW BUSINESS

Council Appointments for 2022-23 - Tara Buerster shared with the Council that there are three members with terms expiring this year: Terry Bruce, Kelley Biggs, and Jan Ridgely. Kelley Biggs has indicated she will serve a second term. Terry Bruce and Jan Ridgely were asked if they would consider serving a second term and to let Mrs. Buerster know their intent. Kathy St. Ledger is currently serving the second year of her second term and will have to go off Council. There is also currently a vacant spot for Richland County. Tara Buerster asked the council to think of individuals in Edwards and Richland who would be good selections to fill these spots. She also shared with the council a few names of individuals she had considered for the spots. One a current 4-H Leader and Alumni and the other a 4-H Alumni and County Board Member. Mrs. Buerster pointed out to the council that Extension likes to have a few County Board members on council and currently we only have one, Jim Brewer. Kathy St. Ledger also recommended a name of an individual who has served on council in the past.

Open Meetings Act Training – Tara Buerster shared with the council that the State's Open Meetings Act training system is back up and running and all council members who are continuing next year need to complete the training. If a council member has already taken the training for another entity, they sit on they do not need to take the training again. All council members will need to email their Open meetings Act training certificates to Tara Buerster for filing with the Unit's Civil Rights files. Tara Buerster provided council members with the training link at the meeting and indicated she would follow-up by emailing it to everyone as well.

STAFF REPORTS

Samantha Gaither, 4-H & Youth Development Educator – Samantha Gaither introduced herself to the council and her background with Extension and 4-H. Mrs. Gaither shared her vision for the Unit and that she hoped to see more growth in members over the next few years, plans to bring more state issued programming to our area with the desire to create more opportunities for the youth in our Unit. She then shared with the council things currently going on in 4-H programming by county along with 4-H members who have recently been recognized at the State level for their accomplishments. Samantha then shared upcoming state events available for our 4-H members.

Tara Buerster, County Director – Tara Buerster shared with the council that at this time all vacancies have been filled with two waiting on background check completion. Upcoming fair dates for all five counties were shared with the council along with the Unit's State Fair day for 4-H members. Mrs. Buerster shared that the SNAP-Ed Community Workers would be starting their cooking schools back up this summer, after a hiatus during COVID. Tara shared with the council about the partnership with United Way to bring Blessing Boxes to our area and partnership with Purdue Extension to bring Purdue's "Reaching Rural Veterans" program to Wabash County. An update on the status of the unit's Master Gardener program was given. Since starting the program in January of 2021 we now have 8 volunteers: Edwards County – 2 Master Gardener and 1 Master Gardener Intern, Richland County – 3 Master Gardener Interns, and Wayne County – 1 Master Gardener Intern and 1 in training. Master Gardener volunteers are working on spring events now. Mrs. Buerster shared with the council that the Unit was able to obtain a significant amount of gently used office furniture and cabinets from the Regional Office due to their consolidation with another unit office. Tara shared with the council she is currently working on 5 searches for positions outside of the Unit and chairing the state Fiscal/Business Committee and the Regional Advisory Committee. Finally, she shared with the council that she and the unit staff are continually focusing on serving underserved or at-risk audiences. Mrs. Buerster shared with her Educator the list of places the council had provided at the November meeting. She added they would also like to start looking at serving students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEP's) at the local schools. Samantha indicated she has also been working with the EPC's on reaching audiences that are underserved in our area.

MEETING DATES FOR 2022-23 YEAR

Tara Buerster indicated the council needed to set meeting dates for next year's council meetings. She suggested meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the following months: September, November, January, and March. Mrs. Buerster told the council she would send an email out to all council members to check availability and get meeting dates set.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kathy St. Ledger opened the floor for public comment. There was no public comment.

ADJOURN

Kacie Haag made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Terry Bruce seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.