

Agriculture & Extension Committee Minutes
Thursday, January 16th, 2025 4:00pm
Health & Human Services Center & Zoom
303 W. Chapel Street, Dodgeville, WI 53533

Dan Nankee called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

Roll call: Dan, Ricky, Brad, Darrell, and Kevin attended the meeting in person; Andrea Larson joined via Zoom. Lynn, Dan, Maggie, Jackie, Barry, and Tom were at the meeting.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Kevin, seconded by Ricky. The motion passed.

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 17th, 2024, meeting was made by Brad, seconded by Kevin. The motion passed.

AED Update – Lynn presented the recently revised, fall 2024, *Division of Extension – County Partnership Guidance* document. The document was created in 2021, and although it isn't a legal document, it outlines the benefits and responsibilities of the partnership between Extension and the counties.

Ricky had a question regarding the Memorandum of Understanding that was developed by a WCA subcommittee, specifically who, if anyone, has signed it around the state. Lynn advised that because the MOU is not a legal document, Larry Bierke will not be signing it. The contract between Extension and Iowa County is the only legal document required by Extension. Some of the items included in the MOU are covered in the contract. Lynn mentioned that of all the counties throughout the state, to this date, only six counties have signed the MOU.

Ricky also asked about the discussion in previous meetings about going to the Extension Dean and seeing if they would be willing to help fund the HDR position that was eventually eliminated. Lynn said that the idea was proposed, but Extension was not in a position to help fund the position; they would not be able to fully fund any position, throughout the state, that may be at risk of being eliminated. However, in Bridget's case, they were able to extend Bridget's employment through mid-February (funded by Extension), since the decision to eliminate the position was not made until November.

In other Area 17 updates, interviews of the finalists for the HDR position in Green and Lafayette counties are happening; hopefully that position will be filled soon.

Advancing Extension Impact in Preparation of the 2026 Budget – Dan Nankee shared his belief that we need to start thinking about the 2026 budget and what we can do to spread the Extension message and share the impacts that Extension has in Iowa County. Conversations need to start in January on how to project the county's Return on Investment with Extension.

There was a discussion about what strategies can be used to help educate the board and the people of Iowa County. Ideas included having an article published in the newspaper and having educators speak at the county board meetings to share what they do. Brad mentioned that it is up to the supervisors/board members to come up with a plan regarding any possible upcoming cuts; it's up to them to figure out what cuts to make.

Dan proposed having a committee member-only meeting next month to continue discussions and brainstorm ideas as to how to promote and support Extension.

Highlights from Educator Reports

Agriculture

Jackie – Jackie highlighted several Ag events coming up in February, including a CAFO update on February 4th, a Forage meeting on February 6th, a Producing Quality Beef meeting on February 12th, statewide Dairy Feeder Workshops on February 20th, and PAT training on February 21st.

Community Development Institute

Barry – Barry is working on Elevando Wisconsin Spring 2025, which is to be held in southwestern Wisconsin. The CLA contributed \$3,000 to that program. He has also been busy working on entrepreneurship and community development programming. A grant was written for \$125,000 to be used for grants for Iowa County entrepreneurs. There is also another \$125,000 grant available...this one also provides for more assistance through revolving door loans at 1% interest.

Health and Well-Being Institute

Maggie – Julia has begun teaching in classrooms: she completed a course at Head Start in Platteville and has plan for two additional Head Starts in the spring. She has also started teaching in classrooms in Boscobel and has some other schools in other counties lined up for this spring. Maggie has a StrongBodies class beginning in Cuba City and is looking at ways to increase participation in those classes as well as Tai Chi, which aids with arthritis and fall prevention. She will also soon be starting on garden grants for the spring.

Positive Youth Development

Dan – Dan passed around a handout that outlined volunteer impact in Iowa County. The 4-H volunteers average 4 hours/month of their own time that they give to the 4-H program, which equates to almost \$105k worth of work hours that are donated annually. Self-reported youth volunteer hours add an additional \$87k worth of work hours.

The current enrollment for Iowa County 4-H stands at 365 members and 87 Cloverbuds, for a total of 452 youth reached by the program.

Dan is also starting an outreach at Feeding Friends, a free community meal held each Wednesday night at the Dodgeville United Methodist Church. The last Wednesday of each month, he will be hosting a “Kids Korner”, which will include activities and games, and will be a great way to introduce 4-H to community members who may not otherwise know what 4-H is.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 20th at 4:00 pm. Darrell made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ricky. Motion passed.