

Agriculture & Extension Committee Minutes
Thursday, November 16th, 2023 5:00pm
Health & Human Services Center & Zoom
303 W. Chapel Street

Dan Nankee called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Roll call: Dan, Ricky, and Darrell attended the meeting in person. Lynn, Barry, Dan, Magie, Jackie, and Tom were at the meeting.

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

Motion to approve minutes of the July 20th, 2023, meeting by Ricky, seconded by Darrell. The motion passed.

Report from Committee Members – There were no additional items from the committee members to bring up for discussion, but there was a visitor at the meeting who had some questions for the committee and the Extension educators. Rick Zemlicka inquired as to if Extension had any sort of curriculum or education resources regarding legal contract law assistance for farmers, specifically in areas such as solar, wind farms, ATC, etc. It was explained to Mr. Zemlicka that Extension itself does not typically handle legal-type issues such as these. Some possible avenues for him to explore include the UW Law & Entrepreneurship Clinic and the DATCP Farm Center.

AED Update – Lynn provided an update on the status of filling the staffing vacancies. There is a final interview for Ruth's position tomorrow; she is excited about this candidate and is hoping that the position will be offered and accepted. Both the Livestock and Soils & Crops Educator positions had a number of strong applicants. The interviews for the Livestock position will take place on November 28th in Lancaster, and the Crops & Soils position interviews will be on December 1st. Between these two interview sessions, all four counties will be represented (two counties for each of the interview sessions).

Lynn briefly reviewed the 2024 contract between Iowa County and the UW Board of Regents regarding educator fees. This contract is to be signed by Larry Bierke (Lynn is meeting with him next Tuesday). As discussed in previous meetings, the fee that Iowa County pays for the 4-H Educator is now the same as the other educators; up until now, the county had been paying a higher fee for that position (stemming from negotiations from years ago). Lynn mentioned that the invoice that was recently sent to Iowa County for the second half of the 2023 educator fees had been adjusted/prorated due to the vacancies in the Livestock and the Crops & Soils positions, as well as the 4-H Educator position, since Dan didn't begin a few months into the year. Lynn also referenced paragraph #4 of the contract, which essentially gives her the authority as the AED to work with the county support personnel in areas such as budgeting and signing vouchers. Currently, Tom, Barry, and Lynn work together on the budget.

A question was asked regarding the Natural Resources position (Joe's position). To this point, there has not been any clear indication of what direction the Natural Resources Institute will take or what the plan is going to be. Ricky raised questions about farmer conservation efforts in Hollandale, which had been talked about earlier in the year. It is believed that Joe had been working on this, possibly with Land Conservation, but with his departure and the Land Conservation office also currently short-staffed, it may have gotten lost in the shuffle. It was suggested that Ricky contact Katie in Land Conservation to see if she has any information; Barry said he would reach out to Joe and see what he could find out, too.

Highlights from Educator Reports

Agriculture

Jackie – Jackie shared that there are a number of Iowa County dairy farms that are participating in a research project involving prototheca mastitis on dairy farms, a contagious disease affecting dairy cows. They are taking milk samples from ten cows on various farms to track the disease. It's good to see participation in Iowa County.

Jackie participated in the Iowa County Safety Day, discussing farm safety with area fifth graders. She highlighted large animals as well as smaller animals, such as rabbits, fish, etc, since increasing numbers of youth are working more with smaller animals as opposed to large animals.

Dan Nankee had some questions regarding winter rye. Although more of a crops & soils topic, Jackie did explain that because rye takes up a lot of water, farmers who plant crops after the rye is harvested experience soil that is not as moist – which is resulting in up to a 10% yield loss.

Community Development Institute

Barry – Barry spoke of the Youth Conservation Field Day that was held on September 19th at Bloomfield Prairie. There were 124 sixth graders from four area school districts who attended educational sessions led by nine presenters. Topics included fishing (led by the DNR), ecosystems, and pollinators, just to name a few. This was the 12th year that the Youth Conservation Field Day has been held.

In addition, Barry has been involved with the discussion and planning of a long-range plan for the county farm, assisted in continuing broadband education (he attended four 2-day seminars throughout the state and has participated in several webinars), presented at the Green County Leaders Day on community engagement, and participated in several interview sessions at both the state and county levels.

Ricky asked if there had been any news regarding the status of the car charger grants. Per Barry, there has been no news thus far, for anyone. No funds have been released yet.

Health and Well-Being Institute

Maggie – October was the end of the FoodWise fiscal year. In Livingston, in addition to the food that was harvested and used by the residents, the Soul Food Community Garden donated approximately 420 pounds of vegetables to their food pantry...consisting of 32 different varieties. Fourteen volunteers donated over 700 hours working in the garden (planting, harvesting, maintaining, and cleaning-up).

They are working on planning for a possible community garden on-site at Meridian Housing Properties in Dodgeville. There are discussions taking place to determine interest, planning, and finding someone to be the point person on-site to oversee the garden.

There are also plans underway for possible HungerCare wellness program classes to be held at Upland Hills heath in partnership with the Second Harvest Food Bank. Discussions regarding this have slowed, but will hopefully pick up again after the first of the year.

A question was raised regarding Head Start. Head Start is currently not operating in Iowa County due to staffing issues (the director has left). This is the only school program in the county that would qualify for FoodWise programs due to qualification requirements.

Positive Youth Development

Dan – Dan highlighted the Iowa County Safety Day held on September 26th at the Iowa County Fairgrounds. Almost 500 fifth graders from every school district in Iowa County attended, where they were able to visit

fourteen stations and learn about topics ranging from tornado safety and lawn mower safety to vaping and ticks. It was a successful day, made even better because the rain held off until the program was finished!

Dan also highlighted the 4-H Thrive Survey, which was recently sent out to youth ages 13-19 in 4-H. This is a statewide survey that asks youth about their experiences in 4-H. The goal is to achieve a 20% response rate to this survey (Iowa County is currently at 12.7% - 2nd in the state!). The survey provides actual data showing the impact that 4-H has on young people. Once the data has been analyzed, Dan will prepare a presentation of the results for a meeting in the spring.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 19th at 5:00 pm. Darrell made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Ricky. Motion passed.