

Agriculture & Extension Committee Minutes
Wednesday, September 15, 2021 12:00pm
Health & Human Services Center & Zoom
303 W. Chapel Street

Dan Nankee called the meeting to order at 12:01 PM.

Roll call, Dan, Ricky, Don, and Kevin were at the meeting. Lynn, Barry, Sarah, Donna, Gene, Joe, and Tom were at the meeting.

Motion to approve the agenda by Ricky, seconded by Don, motion passed.

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2021 meeting by Ricky, seconded by Don, motion passed.

Reports from Committee Members – Dan shared that the dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Kathryn VandenBosch, is planning on retiring. She has been the dean of the college since 2012.

Barry introduced Lynn Perkins as the new Area Extension Director. Lynn gave a brief introduction and background. She comes to us from UW-Whitewater, where she worked in recruitment. She is a former 4-H educator, and she grew up on a farm in Rock County. She will be working out what was Paul's office.

Area Update from Lynn – Donna Peterson is retiring at the end of the month. Her position has been posted, but the deadline for applications has been extended through September 20 due to a lack of ideal candidates in the pool. COVID updates: Extension offices are following their local county guidelines. If you go to campus, you must follow the campus guidelines and provide proof of vaccination. N95 masks are available for use if desired. Budget: Barry discussed issues regarding the recently approved budget. As opposed to one person doing the budget themselves, the department met as a group to discuss the budget. The tax levy is about \$15k less than last year. Larry requested a couple of changes to the original budget that was submitted: conference expenses were reduced from \$4k to \$3k and resources/mileage was reduced from \$12k to \$7k. There was discussion regarding the intern position: is it necessary to raise the pay to \$13/hour (up from \$10/hr)? We are not getting much, if any, interest in the position for \$10/hr...some summer internships are paying \$16-\$20/hr.

Agent Reports –

Sarah – Approved volunteers are required to complete mandated reporter training. See her report for updates on Iowa County 4-H.

Joe – Clean Sweep grant: Iowa, Grant, and Lafayette Counties are participating. All have approved match-funding (\$15k each, for a total of \$45k). They applied for a \$90k grant from the state, they received about half of that. That along with the matching funds from the counties should be enough, but we may need to be careful with how much is taken in with the funds available. Need to think about how to handle this...don't want to turn people away, but can't go over the funding. Perhaps have those with more to dispose of register first. This applies to household/business chemicals...not tires or

electronics. All chemicals are charged the same – it is a flat fee based upon weight. There will be one collection day/period in each county.

Gene – A company from California, Miyokos, has been in contact regarding a vegan dairy proposal. They are interested in working with Wisconsin former dairy farms, converting them to plant-based alternative crops/products for use in their products. The committee in general was not in favor of such a proposal. Need to find out if converting to those types of products would deplete resources (some take much more water than traditional crops, etc). Discussions of a USDA poultry meat processing facility are back on. Current processor in Illinois plans on relocating to Wisconsin. May apply for a grant for this. Most farmers surveyed indicated that having it would allow them to expand their operations.

Donna – There was a question whether FoodShare and FoodWise are the same thing. No, they are not. FoodShare is the program people apply to in order to receive their card. FoodWise is an educational program. Money for this comes out of the farm bill.

Barry – Barry pointed out that the grant application amount for Reedsburg Utility Commission was missing a “0” in his report...it should read \$2,025,000. Barry fielded questions/concerns from Don regarding coordination between broadband companies so that work is not duplicated, concerns regarding opposition to solar/wind farms, and funding for EV charging stations. Ricky pointed out that having modern conveniences like EV charging stations may attract younger people to Iowa County. In addition, if these charging stations can be strategically placed by local businesses, visitors may visit these businesses while their vehicle is charging.

Barry will look at the calendar for possible dates for the next Ag & Extension meeting in December. Will also verify the availability of the conference room.

Don made a motion to adjourn at 1:10PM, Ricky seconded, motion passed.