

**University of Illinois Extension
Unit #9 – Grundy, Kankakee & Will
Counties Extension Meeting Minutes**

Will County Office

June 16, 2020

Call to Order

Due to the Covid-19 regulations, this meeting was conducted electronically.

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Johari Kweli at 6:35 pm.

In attendance: Christina Basham, Shelby Basham, Janice Blanchette, Johari Kweli, Randy Seggebruch, Doug Tweeten Secretary, Jennifer Wick, Jamita Brown, Sasha Grabenstetter, Debra Koch, Shannon Range, James Theuri, Deloris Walker, and Megan Walsh.

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Doug Tweeten and seconded by Jennifer Wick. The motion passed.

Financial Reports

Megan presented the financial report. FY20 will close as expected. The state FY21 Budget has been enacted into law and maintains level funding for Extension activities. However, due to many uncertainties in state revenues, we could see changes later in the year.

On the local level our funding from some of the charitable foundations will decrease. The Will County fundraiser has been cancelled. The Kankakee County fundraiser has been completed and the Grundy County fundraiser will be held at a later date.

Johari raised the question of contingency plans to curtail activities or find new sources of revenue. Megan replied they have spent time planning for the reopening of the office and face-to-face activities. At the present time they have reduced several expenditures such as travel, paper, and supplies. The savings here will be applied to the

expenses incurred in the reopening. If needed, the Extension can tap into some funds that have been saved for emergencies and they could expect short term loan funds from Campus.

Business

Civil Rights

The staff has discussed this issue in light of current events throughout the country. In addition, a task force on civil rights and racial equity has been formed on Campus. The staff is open to any suggestions and comments from Council members.

COVID-19 Response and Return to Office

The extension will follow the Governor's guidelines and directions from the U of I. At the present, August 15 is the target date to reopen the Extension Office. That date is subject to change.

The staff has had meetings on the changes needed for reopening and plans include even the smallest details needed to assure the safety of staff and Extension users.

Summer Programming Update

Many of the activities have been transitioned to virtual formats. As an example the 4-H projects will be submitted and judged online. Most of the programs that did not fit the online format have been cancelled. A few Master Gardener programs that can meet the safety guidelines will be starting up shortly.

New Council Members

Megan pointed out that we still need four Council members from Grundy County and two from Kankakee County. Megan requested assistance from the Council in filling those vacancies.

Foundation Updates

As reported earlier the Kankakee County Foundation completed their fundraiser prior to the pandemic shutdown, Will County has cancelled their fundraiser, and Grundy County has postponed their fundraiser.

ESAC (Extension State Advisory Committee)

Megan reported that due to the pandemic there have been no

meetings. A grant for marketing, regarding the census, has been received. Jan added that although there have been no meetings a lot of emails have been exchanged. Some of the 4-H participants with livestock projects have expressed their disappointment that they will be unable to show their projects. Jan stated that some opportunities throughout the state and even NW Indiana are being planned. However, they would be outside 4-H.

Program Planning

Educator Reports

Sasha reported on the Consumer Economics Program. She has distributed information and interacted with constituents through blog posts, podcasts, and webinars. The statistics on participation have been very good, with 416 registrants through June 11. Additionally 71 participants attended the "How to Save Money on Food Costs" webinar. The program, "Money Matters" is progressing with four volunteers from Kankakee County and Sasha is looking for more volunteers.

Deloris Walker reported on her efforts to provide information on SNAP. Due to the limitations imposed by COVID she has reached out to food pantries as a tool to reach clients. The SNAP-ED Community Workers are joining Deloris in finding ways to reach the SNAP participants and provide them with information and assistance.

Deloris is working with state and unit teams to examine and improve racial equity.

James Theuri has been meeting the needs of Extension clients by teaching online classes on beekeeping, growing asparagus, raising chickens in the backyard, honeybee swarming, raising rabbits, and cover crops. He serves on the Board of the Rehoboth Blueberry Farm and on the Alliance for Produce Safety. He has responded to various client problems regarding soils, plants and plant IDs. In addition to his professional development activities, he has written two articles.

Jamita Brown's report included a brief description of the virtual fairgrounds that has been planned for 4-H exhibits. She has created a platform that will aggregate national, state, and unit workshops for 4-H members of all ages. Two grants have been acquired. One will provide Kamp Kits containing self-guided activities and lessons. The second grant, Healthy Habits, will

provide lessons on nutrition and cooking. She announced the virtual fair/show dates are June 10-July 10.

Sharon Range reported on the many methods she has used to shift to online service. She created and conducted online embryology experiments, created a photography webinar, created wildlife videos for two elementary schools. Additionally, she wrote two grants, sent 4-H postcards to families, and fulfilled many other responsibilities of her office.

The report from Debra Koch emphasizes the efforts that are taking place to produce a virtual 4-H fair. The Fair Entry Database is being rebuilt and updated. The Livestock Auction and AG committees have met via Zoom to make changes and updates. Leader meetings have been scheduled to iron out details. The new 4-H year begins on September 1, 2020.

Next Meeting

Megan announced the next meeting will be in Will County on September 22. Hopefully it will be a face-to-face meeting

Johari closed the meeting at 8:53 pm.