

**Green County
Agriculture and Extension Education Committee
January 5, 2022, MINUTES**

The January 5, 2022, meeting of the Agriculture and Extension Education Committee was called to order at 12:35 PM by Extension Green County Ag and Extension Chair, Erica Roth.

Members present were: Erica Roth, Sue Nelson, Oscar Olson, Dawn Sass, and Art Carter. Also present—Jayne Butts, Extension Green County Office Manager, Lynn Perkins, Area Extension Director, Jackie McCarville, Agriculture Educator, Ellen Andrews, 4-H Youth Development Educator, Lana Heins(z), Extension Activity Assistant, and 1 guest(z). (Note: (z) members/attendees were present via Zoom).

Green County Educator Reports—

Written Report for Educators

Roth asked if there were any comments for written reports. Sue Nelson proceeded to ask about:

- In Victoria's report, the ARPA application and where to find it. Butts noted final touches were being completed on the application for distribution tomorrow. Butts noted the applications will be available on the Green County Government website, the Green County Extension website, facebook, etc. Applications to become a participant will be due by 8:00am on Monday, January 24, 2022. An informational virtual meeting is being held January 17, from 6:30-7:30pm to learn more about the process.
- Questioned letters sent for the Dairy & Well Being Conference- McCarville noted the letters were sent to state papers yesterday and are being distributed locally soon.
- What means of Social Media for Dairy info? McCarville noted State Dairy Page for updates, UW-Madison Dairy Program Facebook Page, Green County webpage & Green County Facebook Page.

Ellen Andrews, 4-H Youth Development Educator

Andrews discussed updates to the Green County 4-H Program locally and across the nation. This program has been piloted twice in Green County and now has been launched statewide. With the handouts presented, the "soil" predicts how youth will develop long term outcomes. Andrews noted 43% of youth, 13 years plus, (90 kids) completed the survey. They were composed of 58% female and 41% male—This is fantastic! In the developmental context, Andrews discussed quality experiences are still happening thru 5 categories and Green County had high scores! Carter questioned 'repeat youth comparisons'—Andrews reported the state is working on generating reports to supply this data. The next detail, "youth sparks" rely on 4 components—1) Opportunity to explore something I really care about, 2) Passionate about things I do in 4-H, 3) Want to learn all I can about the topic of my 4-H program, 4) 4-H is an important part of who I am. Working on an in-person event in April taught by both Youth and Project Leaders. Wants to improve a get youth to be listened to and taken seriously. Andrews favorite part are quotes from the youth. Andrews ended with 4-H enrollment updates state youth numbers are up by 10 and Adult Leaders have continued to go down.

Minutes Approval –Carter moved, Olson seconded to approve the November meeting minutes. Motion passed.

Bill Approval --The committee reviewed the UW-Extension office bills for November and December 2021. Carter moved to approve the November EFT payments totaling \$121.78, the November check payments totaling \$1,793.42, the December Clean Sweep bills totaling \$7,900.26, the December EFT payments totaling \$244.21 and the December check payments totaling \$1,020.49. Sass seconded. Motion passed.

Discussion and Possible Action on Agriculture Education Staffing Plan

Perkins explained why this item is on the agenda. Gene Schriefer resigned from the Ag position in Iowa County, therefore creating a vacancy. Heidi Johnson presented at a recent meeting for some of our 4-County officials regarding moving to regional positions within our four counties. Discussion was made regarding 51 FTE positions for 72 counties. Changes in the industry have driven the need for more specialization and input supporting that was received from various entities and taken into consideration. Nelson added combining positions does create a concentration in specialty areas. The Illinois system is very regional and Carter expressed concern if UW Madison Extension is heading that direction. He further noted, he is not a fan of the complete regional method they have. Carter continued to say he knows many answers are resolved through social media or email; however, he is also still a fan of face-to-face conversation, which means people need to spend some time in the offices. Roth expressed a need for an evaluation system to know if residents are receiving the service they need and expect. McCarville noted if the programming is good, people will be serviced. McCarville also stated thru the regional method, she gains more experience for on farm visits including farms with similar issues. Funding from the state has been deteriorating, therefore causing additional cuts that are continuing to happen. Perkins spoke of her responsibility to make sure the regional model is successful. She further noted we are under a crucial time frame to have answers before county board changes due to elections in April. Discussion also included office support staff for each county. Grant has 2, Green has 2, Iowa has 1, and Lafayette has 1 shared position with 3 different Departments. Roth questioned if the entire County Board needed to review this model and Carter said the decision to accept/deny the regional plan can be made within the committee, it does not need to go to entire County Board. Carter expressed concern for support staff and asked for input. Butts requested a pros vs cons list of going to regional educators. It would be interesting to compare scenerios. Butts also expressed concern for additional expenses, mileage, offices equipment, etc. She noted her concern is to provide valued customer service to Green County and protect the county funds/equipment. Olson agreed with the personal contact for county residents. Perkins noted the details are not completed as to how the expenses would be handled. Perkins also noted counties would not pay mileage for Outreach Specialists. Butts also expressed concern with timely responses for residents. Butts further noted the extra work involved can be handled by our support staff, however, questioned how educators would determine which office would provide the various support. Answers are still being researched for this as well. Perkins asked what direction the Green County Committee would like to take and questions were asked if other counties in our area had decided yet, however no other counties have answers yet. Lafayette, Grant & Iowa county will be meeting soon, therefore Green County decided to postpone their decision to February. Sass suggested if other counties have not met or

decided by then, we could have them join our meeting in person or via zoom. If our 4-County region agrees to the regional Ag method, we would be only the 4th area in the state to do so. Questions were then asked if this is happening in the Ag sector, should we be concerned with 4-H or Community Development. Perkins said at this time, the separate institutes are not regionalizing like the Ag Institute.

Area Extension Director Updates

Health & Well Being Position- Perkins advised Bridget Mouchon has been hired for the 50/50 shared position with Lafayette County and will start 2/1/22.

FoodWise Coordinator Position - Perkins advised Jessa Engelken has been hired for the 4-County shared position and will start 1/31/22. Jessa will be based out of Iowa County.

Master Gardener Program Changes for Volunteers - Perkins noted per discussions with Mike Maddox, the Master Gardener Coordinator, policy changes, procedures, and report changes are being implemented. The biggest change is Master Gardener Volunteers will no longer be volunteers for UW Madison Extension. Because they are not classified as volunteers, insurance and background checks, as well as rule implementation would need to be followed on the local level with the organization they are volunteering for. McCarville noted removing them from the UW-Madison volunteer level, can be better for the groups with less rules to monitor for projects. Perkins noted they will still be training Master Gardeners, just not monitoring hours and education hours.

Office Manager Updates

Master Gardener Program Mutual Insurance Updates - Butts noted no new information is available for this as the State Master Gardener updates are still being determined and this will affect how our local association proceeds in the future.

Annual Report Timeline- Butts advised the Extension Green County Office will be presenting their Annual Report to the committee at the February AEEC meeting for review. If approved at that meeting, copies will be distributed to the County Board with a live presentation at the March County Board meeting.

Clean Sweep Final Disposal Bills – Butts discussed the final Clean Sweep collection bills noting the total cost as \$7,900.26. This amount is down from last year's total of \$9,941.37. The continuation of the program has allowed for a decline in products needing to be collected. The household portion continues to be much higher than the ag chemicals collected, this year being 2/3 of the collected cost. McCarville noted the final year end report has been filed with DATCP.

Other Business Topics

Butts noted the February meeting will include Support Staff reviews. Butts asked the committee for permission to use the forms like last year and stated HR had agreed they are acceptable. Committee members agreed and Roth will meet with Butts for some final updates.

The next meeting will be February 2, 2022, at 12:30pm.

Motion by Sass, second by Olson to adjourn at 2:22 pm. Motion carried.