

Unit 27 Council Meeting
December 8, 2022
11:00a.m. – 1:00 pm

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Ruby Lingle at 11:15 a.m. Verbal introductions were made around the table and name cards were placed before each attendee. Civil rights information slips and meeting sign-in sheet were circulated around the room.

Council members present:

Alexander/Pulaski	Johnson	Massac	Union
Derek Eurales Ethyn Bradley	Amy Johnson Emily Myrick Chesley Williams	James Walton	Kristen Cameron Ruby Lingle Chuck Weilmuenster

Staff present: County Director Johnson, Tami Crest, Erin Garrett, Anne Townsend, Kristi Stout, John Shadowens.

Meeting minutes from September 22, 2022, were reviewed. Motion made by Chuck Weilmuenster and seconded by Derek Eurales to approve prior minutes. Motion carried.

Council Business

- Illinois Open Meetings Act electronic training
County Director Johnson advised that is a state law that if you serve on any public board, you must complete the Illinois Open Meetings Act training. This is a one-time training and Monica Meyer will send an email to Council members with a link to the training.
- Unit Holiday Schedule from campus is very generous and offices will be closed from December 23 thru January 2.
- County Extension Director Report
 - Plan of Work / New issues or concerns in community – County Director Johnson updated Council Members on the five Grand Challenges that are the focus of programs and work done by Extension, *i.e.*, Community, Health, Environment, Economy and Food. The Plan of Work is moving from a yearly focus to a three-year plan which will allow more time to reach the goals set in the Plan of Work. “Backpack” people or possible homeless individuals is a suggested focus that may need to be addressed by Extension in future plans. Arise Veteran Foundation is working to bring the Job Corps program to Golconda and plans to aid up to 150 homeless veterans with housing and life improvements. Two Native American colleges in Indiana and Nebraska are working with Arise on this endeavor.
 - Budget – Harry Clore, Associate Director of Budget and Finance has indicated that Extension is in the best financial position since he has been in his position and no money is currently owed by the State of Illinois. Smith Lever funds continue to be received from campus allocations. Updated account balances were provided and discussed with no worries or concerns

offered. County Director Johnson advised that campus has gifted each Unit \$500 for “staff health and wellness”. Unit 27 will use this toward a staff retreat/lunch/meeting on December 16.

- COVID-19 – Staff are either vaccinated or given an exemption that requires weekly testing with results given to campus.

- Civil Rights and efforts to reach underserved audiences continue daily. Monica Meyer has a monthly reminder system to encourage staff of their reporting obligations. Unit 27 will have a civil rights audit in Spring 2023, and we will be evaluated on our activities and reporting of same.

- General updates (Facilities, vacancies, and other)

Union Co. has received new shelving and storage cabinets. Pulaski/Alexander County has new flooring, windows, lighting, etc., this was roughly at \$30,000 upgrade in the facility. Massac Co. has recently had tree trimming onsite. Johnson Co. is working on getting a new print/copy/fax machine, the older model currently being used will be moved to Union Co.

There are no current vacancies. Erin Garrett advised Council that Kim Rohling had left Unit 27 to accept an educator position in Unit 26, but programming will continue. Anne Townsend was introduced as the new EPC replacement in Kim’s vacancy. Anne provided a brief background on herself and familiarized Council members with her history and hopes for the position she is now fulfilling.

MY PI program just graduated 10 students at Massac High School and is currently in training at Vienna High School. Treca McConnell is the coordinator and Cairo, Meridian, Joppa and Pope County high schools are ready to begin in the spring. Summer camps are currently being considered.

AMERICORPS Vista is ongoing with two Vistas working at Vienna and Egyptian High schools. Extension is trying to add two more Vistas, hopefully a Massac County and Alexander County school.

R3 grant (marijuana sales tax dollars) is being led by John Shadowens and the team has met four times in their work to address violence in at risk youth in Harrisburg, Cairo and Mounds. Surveys of youth at Mounds and Cairo are complete and the team is waiting on results.

Campus promotes professional development opportunities and County Director Johnson will be attending the Good Food & Urban Ag Resource Forum in Chicago for complementary training to the USDA AMS grant that Extension is submitting to receive toward achieving a DELTA Regional Food Business Center. County Director Johnson is also continuing to work on his promotion papers for advancement to County Director III status.

Staff will take part in a professional development lunch at Thai-D by meeting the owner, Thanet Natisri, who played a vital role in the rescue of 13 members of a soccer team trapped in a flooded cave in Thailand. Two movies, Thirteen Lives and The Rescue, are based on this event. Staff will continue to a team building activity at Backwoods Axe Throwing. Thanet has worked with

Treca McConnell and spoke to MyPI students about rescue efforts and the events he experienced.

President Killeen and Chancellor Jones visited Southern Illinois in August 2022 and will return on January 16, 2023, for a MLK Breakfast at Pulaski and take part in a ribbon cutting at the Cairo RISE Market grocery store. They will continue the day at Dixon Springs Ag Center for conversations around the potential for a Southern Illinois Initiative line item in the state budget.

- Unit Reports

- Natural Resources Energy and Environment

Erin Garrett provided program updates on 2022 programs. Recently the “All About Caterpillars” program reach 77 youth and 51 adults through programs offered at 9 local libraries. “Magnificent Moths” reached 55 participants at the Wetland Center and had volunteer participation from Master Naturalist. This program engaged older volunteers from the local assisted living facility by offering indoor hands-on activities to assist in preparing for this event. The “Pumpkin Extravaganza” resulted in 202 participants with the help of volunteers, SNAP staff, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalist and 4-H staff to celebrate all things pumpkin. A Halloween-themed event, “Boo at the Slough” engaged 65 participants and helped families learn about the misunderstood creates of the swamp. For 2022 the Master Gardener program had 7 volunteers that reported 261.75 hours valued at \$7,840 and Master Naturalist program had 13 volunteers reporting 916 hours valued at \$27,435.

Before Kim Rohling’s departure she, in coordination with the US Forest Service, Friends of the Shawnee National Forest and Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, hosted multiple “trash blasts” across five locations that removed 4,045 pounds of trash. Invasive species pulls also removed 163 pounds of garlic mustard, 3,312 bush honeysuckle saplings, and numerous truck and trailer loads of autumn olive during the year. Kim worked with SIU Herbarium to again offer indoor volunteer opportunities to individuals with mobility issues that are unable to volunteer outdoors. The herbarium specimen mounting program gave volunteers the environment to work while seated and indoors to prepare herbarium specimens of rare plants to be mounted and cataloged.

Cairo Pilot Food Garden produced 1,250 pounds of food and had 390 hours of volunteer work. This garden also hosted a monthly program for Cairo students titled “Garden Tales” and brought pre-K through 6th grade students to the garden to learn about a different nature-themed topic, listen to a story, complete an activity and allow work in the garden.

Plant a Row, Watch COPE Grow Garden in Metropolis produced 650 pounds of food and had 235 hours of volunteer work. This garden has moved to a new location in Metropolis and there are high hopes of more engagement and food production in 2023. There is a significant need for more volunteers at this location.

- 4-H Youth Development staff

Kristi Stout provides updates on the last 90 days for 4-H by sharing a written Team Impact Report. Program highlights focused on 4-H collecting “birthday bags” for local food pantries which would offer families the opportunity to provide a small party. These bags include cake

mix, icing, candles and other small birthday items. This is community service project the youth are engaged in. Holiday greeting contest just finished, and winners are being announced on Facebook, call cards collected will go to local veterans. Can Construction is planned for February 2023 and cans or non-perishable food items and collected and clubs will use them to assemble into creative presentations. All items are then donated to local food pantries. The public speaking event will also be held on the same evening so both events can be attended with ease. International Night will be held in April 2023 and will return to 100% normality as it was pre-COVID.

- Community and Economic Development

John Shadowens updated the status of helping bring a grocery store to Cairo. The Rise Community Market continues to move forward, John shared a logo that was created from a contest. The winner described the logo as the sun rising over a new Cairo and the two rivers coming together. The store will be located at the old Piggly Wiggly, then Blue Fish Liquors and then Subway, 3010 Sycamore Street. The Steering Committee is made up of 18 members with help from Extension and Sean Park of Western Illinois University. The program has partnered with John A. Logan and Shawnee College to help all three entities in construction skill training with the two colleges providing training on site and Rise receiving free labor. The colleges plan to sublease extra space in the building to continue onsite training. Kroger has donated shelves, carts, bins and other supplies with Tri-State Food Bank helping with transport and unloading of supplies. Cairo Public Utilities has managed all signage removal and replacement. Construction is underway with IDOT Highway Construction Careers Training Program's teachers, contractors and volunteers leading the remodel work. John shows a diagram of the what the store layout will look like and plans for the grand opening are scheduled for Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 16, 2023. Amy Johnson inquired about bringing students to aid in volunteer projects.

- SNAP/INEP – written reports and updates were provided in the packets. SNAP/INEP staff will be highlighted and presenting at the next meeting and will give in-person updates.

Dates and Times of future council meetings

- February 23, 2023 @ Vienna – 11am-1pm
- May 25, 2023 @ Vienna - 11am-1pm

Motion to adjourn made by Derek Eurales and seconded by Kristin Cameron. No objections, meeting adjourned at 12:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Monica Meyer

Unit 27 - Office Support Specialist

For Unit 27 Unit Council secretary, Chesley Williams