

BAYFIELD COUNTY
Agriculture and Extension Education Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 12, 2021 4:00 p.m.
Microsoft Teams meeting

Minutes

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Jeff Silbert, called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

Members present via Teams: Jim Crandall, Jeff Silbert, Steve Sandstrom and Fred Strand,
Members not present: Tom Snilsberg

Others present via Teams: Mark Abeles-Allison, Heidi Johnson, Extension Ag Institute Director, Mary Pardee, Stephanie Bakker, Sarah DeGraff, Jason Fischbach, Evelyn Flesvig, Tracy Henegar, Theresa LaChappelle, Kaylie Lukas, Ian Meeker, and Kellie Pederson.

2. Approval of Minutes of March 10, 2021 meeting (action item)

Motion (Sandstrom, Strand) approve the minutes of March 10, 2021 meeting. Minutes approved.

3. Public Comment –

No public comments

4. 2021 UW-Extension Budget Update Report

Expenditures are on track for the first 4 months.

5. Discussion with Heidi Johnson, Extension Agriculture Institute Director, regarding Agriculture staffing

Heidi Johnson, Extension Ag Institute Director has been holding discussions with Mark AA, Mary Pardee, Jason Fischbach and Jeff Silbert about the change in the way that the Agriculture Institute will be funding, creating, and filling ag positions throughout the State in the future.

Ms. Johnson explained that Extension Agriculture positions have been staffed in the same way for the last 100 years, with approximately one Ag Agent per county. Since the needs of our clientele have changed, as well as the way information is accessed, Extension Agriculture needs to change to meet those demands. The new model is to eliminate the traditional one Ag Educator per county and move to Ag Specialists located throughout the State, not just in Madison.

There will be approximately 42 positions located in various areas around the State. The Institute will be implementing this new state-wide model in the upcoming years. Extension will not co-fund county-specific Ag Educators through the Extension budget. However, counties would be able to pay the entire fee for a county-specific Ag Educator if they choose to. Dane County has gone this route, and has a person working with small scale-direct marketing farms that they have procured funding for.

The proposal for Bayfield County is to invest in Jason Fischbach as an Emerging Crops Specialist. Jason would retain his office in Bayfield County. Bayfield County would continue to co-fund this position through the flat fee agreement with Extension.

By providing the funding for Jason's specialist position, this will bring in additional economic resources as Jason will be doing applied research in his specialty area. Since most research is conducted in the specialist's local area (Bayfield County), employees are hired through grants to

work on the research, as well as local farmers, landowners, etc., being paid - The Bull's Eye Effect. Bayfield County residents will also have access to other state-wide specialist (beef, grazing, etc.) throughout the State. Although, the specialists will most likely not be able to drive to a farm in Bayfield County, they will be using more technology to connect with local farmers and growers.

Some of current projects that Jason has been working on may or may not be continued. It will depend on if the projects fall under the prevue of "Emerging Crops" or if any other specialist will want to take them over, such as the nitrogen corn trials and marketing the forage brand. The vegetable trials will continue even after Sarah leaves her Extension position at the end of June. Sarah will continue on with the vegetable trials as part of her master's degree work through UW-Madison, which she will attend in the fall.

However, since there will not be an agriculture/horticulture agent in the county, Jason noted that there will need to be a response plan created to work with Master Gardener's and the public's questions. Mark noted that while the transition to the new agriculture model is going on, there is an option to have an LTE position from May - September to assist with making the transition smoother. The part-time Ag Educators in Iron & Douglas Counties are not currently interested in becoming full-time Ag Educators by adding Bayfield County to their workload.

The committee generally supports Jason in this new model, with the possibility of some additional Ag Educator assistance being offered during the transition and will work with Heidi Johnson and the Ag Institute on the new model.

Heidi Johnson, Ag Institute Director asked that the Committee reach out to her with any questions.

6. Area Extension Director Report

A. Extension State and Area Updates

- a. Extension is updating their policies on Covid
- b. Face-to-Face programs will be able to restart in June
- c. Extension telecommuting ends on July 1, 2021.

B. Staffing Updates

- a. Ag Institute position changes
- b. FoodWise Educator - Ashland & Bayfield County educator position closed today
- c. Literacy Link Assistant position will be closing soon.
- d. Superior Adventures - Ian will discuss later

7. Annual Report

The "Highlights" 2020 Annual Report (in the meeting packet) was reviewed and approved by the committee. The report will be presented to the County Board at the June meeting.

8. Issues and Program Ideas Discussion

Stephanie Bakker, FoodWise Coordinator

- She will continue to use techniques and technology that was adapted for use during Covid, as there were many positives.
- Strong Bodies 12 week class is being given again in collaboration with Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, & Iron Counties' FoodWise educators.
 - All participants from the first session wanted another session. This new session will go through June.
- Jiibaakwedaa (Let's Cook) - The Red Cliff Food Distribution Center offers monthly free food ingredients and recipes. Bakker has been involved with this program by providing nutritional education handouts.

- Grant writing and action plan – Bakker has turned in the yearly grant to her superiors for review, she has also been working on the 3-year Needs and Action plan.
- Garden Day Celebration - On May 19th FoodWise held a Virtual Garden Day event with the Bayfield School Farm to School Coordinator & the Bayfield School 4K Coordinator along with the students at the Red Cliff Early Childhood Center and the Bayfield Head Start.

Kellie Pederson – Community Development

- Anniversary – Pederson is reaching her 3 year working anniversary with Extension Bayfield County.
- Programming – She has been involved with multi-year programs (Housing, Mt. Ashwabay, Red Cliff Economic Development Corp., etc.) plus some short-time projects (Bayfield Harbor Commission, Washburn Branding, etc.)
- Clean Sweep - Pederson is working on transferring the Clean Sweep Hazardous Waste Collection project to Meagan Quaderer, the new Emergency Management Director.

Tracy Henegar – Human Development & Relationships

- Aging Mastery Program – There has been good participation, it is a program worth continuing. There are three additional classes planned.
- Mental Health - May is mental health awareness month. The Mental Health First Aid programs are up and running. Henegar is getting great feedback from participants, even though there have been a few virtual hiccups.
- Evelyn Flesvig - Evelyn has been Henegar's intern this past semester. Evelyn is a UW-Superior Social Work major and is in her final week at UW-Superior. A huge thank you! Evelyn noted that working with Extension has been a great experience, especially working with Literacy Link program.

Theresa LaChappelle, Office Manager

- Highlights, the 2020 Annual Report – LaChappelle has completed putting the annual report together. The Committee commented positively on the report.
- Marketing: LaChappelle has been promoting upcoming programs through multiple social media accounts, adding programs to the county calendar, and including a list of upcoming programs on the weekly report.
- 2022 Budget Survey – Along with Kellie Pederson, and Mary Pardee, LaChappelle has assisted with getting the budget survey ready.

Kaylie Lukas, 4H Operations & Communications Associate

- Cultural Arts Festival, Foods & Clothing Revue – There are 26 youth who have entered items. On average each person has entered five items. The venue has been switched from the Fair Grounds to the Iron River Community Center. This will be the largest in-person 4-H event since Covid restrictions were instituted.

Ian Meeker, 4-H & Youth Development

- Schools – Meeker has been working with the 6th grade classes in Washburn & Bayfield. He has received good feedback from the teachers.
- Superior Adventures Coordinator - One more interview is scheduled for Friday. Meeker has been contacted by the South Shore School District, they would like some programming during summer school. Red Cliff Boys & Girls Club contacted Ian and
- 4-H Camp Summer Camp – Camp will be held at Camp Crosswoods in Delta during the 2nd week of July. Following UW-Madison Extension Covid protocols, camp will be at 50% capacity. Potential 4-H Youth Counselors are showing interest in becoming Camp Counselors.

- 4-H Club Meetings – The 4-H Clubs are moving away from Zoom meetings and are starting to meet in person again.
- VFW Building - The VFW building worked well for CANSKI gear check out. The gear is still stored in the building. The threshold on the East side is rotting and needs to be worked on. The Administrator has received a “no investment” recommendation for the building but will work with Meeker on seeing what can be done.

Sarah DeGraff, Agriculture/Horticulture

- High Tunnel Program – There will be three High Tunnel programs held over three weeks on Zoom.
- Master Gardeners – DeGraff is hosting the next MG program over Zoom, “Unusual Hardy Plants for our Area”. MG Appreciation Week was held in mid-April.
- Edible Start Up Summit - This program was held online last year. The online format worked well and will be online again this year.

Jason Fischbach, Agriculture

- The Cutting Edge Podcast – There are currently 23 episodes. Fischbach pointed out that Episode 20: Carbon Farming is a very worthwhile podcast to listen to. Discussed are some of the regulatory issues that need to be looked at, the changing rates, 3rd party ownership, pipelines for biogas, carbon accounting, etc.

9. Next Meeting Date and Time

Wednesday, July 14th, at 4 pm in the County Board Room in person.

Silbert expressed his Thanks to Mary Pardee for working with Mark AA & Heidi Johnson on the Agriculture position changes.

10. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 5:36 pm.