



Minutes - September 13, 2023

Call to Order: Chair Bostwick called the hybrid Agriculture & Extension Education Committee to order at 7:15 pm.

Committee Members Present: Supervisors Bostwick, Crary, Stevens, and Towns.

Committee Members Absent: Supervisor Sweeney.

Staff Members Present: Chrissy Wen, Sara Ennocenti, Brent Southerland, Brad Meier, Ryan George.

Others Present: None.

Adopt Agenda: Supervisor Towns moved approval of the agenda as presented, second by Supervisor Crary. ADOPTED.

Approval of Minutes:

August 9 2023 Ag and Ext Minutes: Supervisor Stevens moved approval of the August 9, 2023 minutes, second by Supervisor Towns. ADOPTED.

Citizen Participation, Communications and Announcements: No public comment submitted prior to the meeting.

Division of Extension::

Review of August Payments: The committee reviewed the payments.

4-H Program Educator Resignation Announcement: Chrissy Wen announced that the 4-H Program Educator, Laura Vander Veen, resigned from her position and her last day will be Monday September 18. Chrissy is working with the State 4-H program office to get support for the 4-H program until the position is filled. Chrissy explained that the position would be posted and hired by UW Madison Extension and added that Laura took another position with a school. Chair Bostwick commented that he hopes the position gets filled relatively soon in order to maintain the robust 4-H program in Rock County.

Discussion and Possible Action to Rehire the 4-H Program Educator: Chrissy explained that she is looking for committee approval to rehire the 4-H Program Educator position. If approved tonight, the position will be posted by the end of next week. Chrissy added that if anyone from the Ag & Extension committee would like to be on the hiring & search and screening committee, she would

welcome their participation. Chrissy confirmed that the 4-H Program Educator position is part of the contract between Rock County and UW Extension and Chrissy clarified that the hiring of this 4-H position would not incur any additional contract costs to the county and, in answering Supervisor Towns question, should the county decide not to hire the position, there wouldn't be anyone to run the 4-H program and the contract costs to the county would be less the cost of that 4-H educator position. Chrissy also added, like in other vacant positions that are contracted with the county, the university would reimburse the county for when there isn't an educator in that contracted position. Supervisor Stevens asked if this was a high turn-over position and Chrissy responded that Laura had been in the position for 5 years and the person prior had been in the position for a longer period of time. Chrissy said she hopes to hire the right person quickly and plans to post the position for three weeks and extend it only if necessary. The goal is to get someone in the position that has volunteer management experience along with a bachelor's degree and a few years' of experience working with youth. Supervisor Town moved to approve the start of the recruitment process towards hiring a new 4-H Program Educator, seconded by Supervisor Crary. ADOPTED.

Program Report: Sara Ennocenti, Health & Well-Being Educator: Sara introduced herself and her two main areas of focus being the StrongBodies program and Mental Health programming. Sara provided a brief intro to the WeCope mental health curriculum, explaining that this program is offered for free and has been shown to reduce stress and symptoms of depression, increase positive effects, and improve health behaviors. She further explained some of the typical lesson content by sharing and discussing the value and role of the Feeling Wheel graphic and the Triangle of Awareness exercise. Sara went on to share about the upcoming WeCope classes, a series of 6-7 weekly lesson classes, one in Evansville and another in Beloit. She explained that WeCope is a new program and not offered anywhere else in Rock County and was excited to share that both classes have a good number of registered attendees already and she has already been contacted by other organizations about offering the WeCope program to their area/audience. She explained that she intentionally keeps the class attendance at no more than 10-12 to encourage more engagement and sharing. The WeCope program is tailored towards adults and the "Learning to Breathe" program is for youth audiences. The classes can be offered either in-person or virtually, but the interest thus far has been in the in-person classes.

Monthly Impact Report: Chrissy introduced the monthly impact report, noting the highlights for each educator.

Regional Crop Educator Introduction Josh Kamps: Josh Kamps introduced himself and shared some of his background, explaining that he was an Ag Farm Manager for 14 years prior to working his next 5 years as a regional educator for Extension in Southwest Wisconsin. He officially started 2 weeks ago and explained that he really enjoys building relationships and is looking forward to doing just that with the Rock County farmers, agronomists and conservation professionals. He enjoyed attending and meeting people at the Department of Ag farmer-lead water-shed field day last week. Josh explained that this type of group has proven to be a great opportunity for extension to connect and to work directly with the local farmers towards being able to bring some educational programming to the area. Josh invited the committee to please stop by the events or field days he'd be involved in, even if it's only to say hi.

County Partnership Guidance Document: Chrissy introduced the guidance document and provided an overview of the content and topics contained within the guide. Chrissy explained that this was not

intended to be an MOU but a document of guidelines. Some of the guidelines are a little out-dated and through on-going discussions at various steering committees and associations, some language within the guidance will be changed in the future. Chair Bostwick pointed out, primarily to the newer committee members, that the document is pretty black and white with regards to clearly spelling out the respective responsibility for the county and Extension. Chrissy went on to explain that the language or content about volunteers is inclusive of all Extension volunteers, whether it be 4-H, Master Gardeners, StrongBodies Instructors, etc. Also, any volunteer that has access to young or vulnerable populations goes through a background check and many hours of training courses prior to being approved as a volunteer. Chrissy also explained that she isn't aware of any significant loss of volunteers or significant drop-offs due to the more stringent training requirements.

Fairgrounds::

Review of August Payments: The payments were reviewed. Brent explained that there are more invoices than normal paid out to Werner Electric due to the electrical upgrade and gate operator work done by the Rock County Electrician out at the Fairgrounds.

Contracts:

Review of August Contracts: August contracts were reviewed.

Year to Date Contracts: Year-to-date contracts were reviewed. Brent highlighted that 2024 contracts have exceeded 2023 already.

Request to Amend the Rental Fees: Supervisor Stevens moved to Amend the Rental Fees, seconded by Supervisor Crary. Brent explained that he'd like to re-evaluate the rental agreement and rental fees. He is currently working on an action plan that will help clarify the rental rates when renting the entire fairgrounds, the associated costs to clean-up after the events and when there is more than one renter utilizing different fairground spaces at the same time. He'd also like to encourage larger rental opportunities, perhaps through discounted pricing, while keeping in mind the potential lost revenue when renting the entire grounds vs renting multiple spaces. Brent plans to bring the action plan to the next committee meeting for further discussion. Supervisor Towns pointed out larger events typically mean more people and more clean up. Supervisor Towns asked how many large events, on the scale of the rodeo, would likely utilize the fairgrounds. Brent acknowledged that he was aware of a few larger events, like LatinoFest, but they aren't on the same scale. Brent added that he had a request from the rodeo group to reserve the space for more than one year in advance and they also mentioned that it would be nice to have someone on the grounds during the event. Brent acknowledged that having someone on the grounds would be fairly expensive. Brent said the action plan would include criteria that would address these requests along with larger event trash and restroom considerations, additional parking and more. Brent reiterated that he was not expecting action on this from the committee today, but asked the committee to think about the topic and Brent will add this back to the next committee agenda for further discussions. Supervisor Stevens asked for clarification on what defines the daytime hours and the associated rental rates associated with them. Brent explained that the half day rental hours are 7am to 2pm and the full day rental hours mean they have to be off the fairgrounds by 10pm. Supervisor Stevens shared that in other local rental spaces, for non-profit organizations, the rental rates

are between \$1200 and \$3000 and she feels that renting the entire fairgrounds for a full day for \$1200 is already discounted and added that the fairgrounds is currently one of the least expensive spaces to rent in the area. Brent acknowledged the competitive rental rate differences and asked that the committee consider this along with the other additional costs associated with renting out portions or all of the Fairgrounds in the future conversations about amending the Fairgrounds rental fees. Supervisor Crary added that she suggests the committee defines who is allowed to rent the entire ground and what type of criteria should be used to determine rental fee discounting. Supervisor Crary agrees that there should be more conversation on this topic and appreciates that it doesn't need to happen at this meeting tonight. Supervisor Steven rescinded her motion to Amend the Rental Fees and Supervisor Crary rescinded her second. The agenda topic to Amend the Rental Fees will be tabled until the next meeting. Supervisor Towns added that larger events would likely mean more people, more use of the restrooms, more trash, and more liability. Brent said that he would bring more information to the next meeting. Chair Bostwick asked that this topic be included in the October committee meeting agenda.

Fair Board Report: Ryan George explained that despite the stormy weather and hot temperatures, the preliminary report is that this year's fair was another success with strong attendance and participation. Ryan acknowledged the county staff and RockHaven crew really stepped up to get the fairgrounds ready. Ryan added that Brent and Mike made sure that help was available, as needed, and it was all part of the fair's overall success. Supervisor Crary thanked Ryan and the Fair Association for the good job with the fair and added that she enjoyed her time at the fair, acknowledged the heat and appreciated the kids' extra effort in taking care of their animals.

Comments from the Committee: No comments from the Committee.

Adjournment: Supervisor Towns moved to adjourn at 8:20 pm, seconded by Supervisor Crary. ADOPTED by acclamation.

Name of person who took the Minutes: Brad Meier

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