



Minutes - October 8, 2025

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

Committee Members Present: Supervisors Bostwick, Ringhand, Schneider and Whitledge.

Committee Members Absent: Supervisor Towns

Staff Members Present: Chrissy Wen, Brad Meier, Brent Sutherland, John Light, Randy Terronez, Kristin Vander Kooi

Others Present: Ryan George

Adopt Agenda: Supervisor Schneider moved approval of the October 8, 2025 agenda, seconded by Supervisor Whitledge. ADOPTED

Approval of Minutes:

September 10, 2025 Minutes: Supervisor Ringhand moved approval of the September 10, 2025 Agriculture & Extension minutes, seconded by Supervisor Schneider. ADOPTED.

Citizen Participation, Communications and Announcements: None.

Division of Extension:

Review of September Payments: September payments were reviewed.

Program Report: Josh Firgens, 4-H Educator: Josh introduced himself as the Annual report handout was being distributed to the committee. Josh started by providing a brief statistical overview of the county membership and volunteer enrollment; the demographics and the geographical distribution of the 4-H members throughout the county. Rock County 4-H is the largest 4-H youth program in the state. Josh explained that the next generation of 4-H-ers are the K-2nd graders (Cloverbuds), and they are high on his list of goals. Rock County 4-H offers a wide variety of educational events, activities and projects (many of which are not animal focused, like food and nutrition, photography, mechanical sciences and several art-related projects), plus all the state and nationwide opportunities like the Washington (DC) Citizen Focus trip. Josh then walked through several of the notable activity highlights of the year, with mentions of the Awards ceremony, Cloverbuds Day Camp and Day Trip educational activities, Summer Camp at Upham Woods, and the Middle School Trip to Milwaukee this year. Josh also mentioned that he's looking forward to the

Leader's Planning Retreat coming up. Josh's goals for the 2025-26 4-H year include developing the officer training night; club management action plans; developing county-wide projects and Cloverbuds programming; take-home kit development and club meeting project kits. He also mentioned some of the 4-H program's challenges, like finding an insurance solution for the clubs and independent projects, and finding meeting spaces and trying to match capacity with program demands.

Monthly Impact Report: Chrissy Wen introduced the monthly report and highlighted the events being held at the Rock County Farm by Josh Kamps, Extension Crops & Soils Educator; Horticulture event in Whitewater and the ongoing efforts of the FoodWise team. Chrissy also pointed out that Rock County 4-H had one of our members, awarded one of the five national youth participant spots to attend the Washington DC National Conference.

2026 Extension Budget: Chrissy Wen introduced the 2026 Rock County Extension Budget. Chrissy provided an overview of the budget documents. Chrissy highlighted the reduction in staff by 2 FTE due to the removal of the federal SNAP funding, which she explained later, simply means that much of the Rock County SNAP funded programming that was being done by the department will not be until those positions can be replaced. The budget does include making the sundry account funds available this year and Chrissy also pointed out the state aid that will be used to cover the courier service and postal increases, and outside the 4.8% budget increase for personnel and contracted service costs, the Extension budget remains the same. Chrissy also mentioned that she split the same Office Supplies budget into Office Supplies and Program Expenses budgets. Chrissy also pointed out that the 4-H account will now show larger numbers, but it is a net-zero account. We're going to manage the county club membership dues and camp participation fees through the department to better manage the financials. Camp and camper fees will now be managed by the department, where it was previously managed by the 4-H Leaders Council. Chrissy also mentioned that the UW Extension Educators contract will be shared at the next committee meeting.

Position Vacancy Updates: Chrissy Wen reiterated that the department lost the 2 FTE FoodWise staff positions as of October 1. Shana Leith will now be responsible for leading both Rock County and Dane County FoodWise programs. Chrissy said that she'd like to continue to utilize the vacant PYD Educator role, to reach the underserved youth population and find ways to intentionally reach and encourage those kids to join 4-H by bringing the 4-H opportunity to schools, so time and transportation can no longer be a barrier. Other options that the county can consider based upon inquiries would include bringing a Financial Educator, Community Development Educator or a Parenting Educator to Rock County. Josh Figgins also provided an overview of the new 4-H structure. The committee discussed the significance of making the right decision as soon as reasonably possible, and what position would make the most impact on the community, and the committee asked if Chrissy could find out what other counties are doing. Chrissy said she'd look around Rock County and see what other financial resources might be out there and also send links to the committee about Extensions Human Development and Relationships programs and Community Development programs for review as well.

Fairgrounds::

Review of September Bills: September payments were reviewed.

Approval of September Contracts: Supervisor Schneider moved approval of the September Contracts, seconded by Supervisor Whitledge. APPROVED

Brent shared that he had received noise complaint calls one weekend. It turned out that the garage door was opened and once shut there were no more noise complaints. Brent said he intends to put the lock on the garage door for when the air conditioning is running. The committee also discussed private armed security at some event.

Review of Yearly Totals: Brent introduced the year-to-date contracts, contracts were reviewed.

2026 Recommended Capital Budget: Brent shared the Fairgrounds portion of the General Services 2026 Capital Budget with this committee. The two main projects on the budget are the \$150,000 bathroom renovation to the bathrooms near the Swine barn, and a \$75,000 update/replacement to some of the out-dated plumbing. The Fair Board Association is willing to talk about a partnership on sharing some of the project costs. Ryan George pointed out that this bathroom is in a very busy area during the fair, and also pointed out that this bathroom is also used by other renters of the fairgrounds spaces.

Fair Board Report: Ryan George, shared that the Fair Board is busy reviewing, and signing entertainment and vendor contracts for the upcoming year's fair. They are also getting bills coming in from the recent fair, and trying to get the budget approved. The annual elections meeting will be November 19th. The state fair association meeting is in January, and then into the crunch time of fair planning.

Comments from the Committee: Brent Sutherland shared that the Grandstand project is currently being worked on.

Set Next Meeting Date : Due to a time conflict in November, when the Ag & Extension Education Committee typically meets, the committee discussed alternative meeting dates and times for the November committee meeting. Committee discussion ensued and Chair Bostwick announced that the committee will tentatively meet Monday, November 10, at the UW Extension office, and the meeting time is to be determined. He would informally discuss the meetings times with the committee members and confirm with the county and committee.

Adjournment: Supervisor Schneider moved to adjourn at 8:37 pm, seconded by Supervisor Whitledge. ADOPTED by acclamation.

Name of person who took the Minutes: Brad Meier

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