

Agriculture & Extension Education Committee
July 14, 2009
Minutes

Committee members present: Chair Paul Dean, Wilbur Petroskey, Tom Rudolph, Denny Thompson and Romelle Vandervest.

Others present: Dan Kuzlik, Kari Lazars, Jim Winkler, Kathy Miller, Jim Kumbera, Tina Werres, Jim Lillis and Kerri Ison.

Call to order: Chairman Paul Dean called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Approve agenda: Motion by Vandervest/Rudolph to approve the agenda as printed. All ayes; motion carried.

Approve minutes: Motion by Petroskey/Thompson to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2009 meeting as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

Date(s) of future meetings:

August 11, 2009	1:30 p.m.	Extension meeting room
September 8, 2009	1:30 p.m.	Extension meeting room

Family Living Agent position: The family living agent position has been vacant since April due to resignation of Patricia McGee, the county-imposed six-month mandatory vacancy period and the state hiring freeze. The six month vacancy period is nearing an end and it is expected that the freeze will be lifted upon the signing of the state budget. The position has been backfilled since the vacancy occurred.

Kuzlik introduced Kathy Miller, current Interim Northern District Director. Miller is the liaison for county offices and state administration as far as identifying funds for positions. Currently the state pays 60% of the agent salaries and the county is responsible for 40%. Past family living agents have focused on financial planning, strategic planning/facilitation. The current contract lists a full-time (100%) family living agent and Miller indicated the salary must be less than \$45,000.

Miller anticipates the hiring freeze to be lifted within the next month and it behooves the office to be prepared to post position. She would like to hold a visioning session with community partners to identify programmatic topic areas for recruiting purposes and stressed how important a family living agent is, especially in these tough economic times. Also, a family living agent is generally required to have WNEP program available in the county.

Rudolph also serves on Social Services Committee and noted the needs (material needs, food stamps, fuel assistance, etc) for these types of services escalate in economic downturns. He believes it is important to help families that are feeling the brunt of the situation and we need to make an impact on filling these needs.

Motion by Rudolph/Vandervest recommending to the LRES Committee that the Family Living position be filled as soon as possible. Discussion followed.

Thompson noted his constituents feel there should be no further expansion of government. The monies in the budget for this position could be returned to the general fund to cover other costs--do a little more with less.

Kathy Miller noted that Extension is a real deal to a county as the county only pays 40% for a full-time staff person. It's also cheaper to address an issue in the education/prevention stage than on the other end in social services. Rudolph felt we should invest in prevention efforts. Lengthy discussion followed.

Ayes-Dean, Rudolph, Petroskey, Vandervest. Nay-Thompson. Motion carried.

Discussion followed regarding salary figures for the position and percent of position. Rudolph noted his motion was to fill it at 100%.

AIS Coordinator position: Kuzlik noted the merger for the LWCC and UW-Extension Departments cannot officially take place until the resolution is approved at the August county board. He has met with Nancy Hollands and Jean Hansen from LWCC; our summer horticulture agent has been trained in Clean Boats/Clean Waters; and two youth workers, who are funded through stimulus dollars, started boat landing monitoring today. We're moving forward as if the merger is going to take place but keeping it low key until it is officially passed. Discussion followed.

Petroskey attended the Mid Lake Annual meeting whose members voiced their support to fill the AIS position. Rudolph noted OCLRA is very anxious and supportive as well.

Thompson noted the Town of Woodboro has asked the WI DOT to spray noxious weeds along Hwy. 8 but noted funding is unavailable although those services are mandated. Dean noted we should be contacting our legislators regarding these issues—perhaps they don't understand how the counties are being affected with the mandates and no funding.

Kuzlik again introduced Ashley Wentz, summer horticulture agent, who is supervising youth boat landing monitors. Wentz noted boaters seen today were friendly and appreciative of the monitoring services. Dean suggested these services be publicized. Petroskey reminded Committee members Wentz is only working for the summer and will return to school at the end of August.

Extension budget reduction presentation to Finance Committee: Kuzlik attended the Finance Committee budget reduction hearing and laid out various ways Extension could and plans to save funds. The salary savings from the Family Living position vacancy will be returned to the general fund, agents will not receive their anticipated raise effective 6/1/09 and support staff will have three furlough days. Agents will have eight furlough days over the next fiscal year with no salary increases. Kuzlik also mentioned the possibility of moving the department to the Courthouse. This is a savings of \$49,000 in rent; however other issues come into play with this scenario (i.e. equipment hookups, County's share of supporting the airport, etc). Kuzlik thanked Ison for her assistance in developing the spreadsheets presented to the Finance Committee.

OCEDC update: Kumbera met with Finance and received approval of the lease agreement for SonicNet to use county-owned towers to expand broadband service throughout the county. Other tower owners have also offered space on their towers since the issue was publicized. These agreements will reduce the number of towers to be constructed for the broadband project, which in turn will reduce the amount of funds needed for the project.

Kumbera believes there will be significant changes in Oneida County's economy forthcoming. Both the Ford and Chrysler dealerships have already closed or will be closing due to financing issues for floor plan inventory. A "floor plan" is the interim financing for inventory from the factory while products sit on the sales lot and traditional banks typically do not finance floor plans. He also believes other dealerships (boats, ATVs, snowmobiles, etc.) will also have floor plan issues, in turn, having a negative effect on the tourism industry and sales tax income in this county. OCEDC is trying to assist when possible.

Thompson noted Rhinelander is also in a fuel zone-- prices are higher here than in neighboring areas.

Monthly budget update: Motion by Petroskey/Vandervest to approve the monthly budget update for the period ending 6/30/09. All ayes; motion carried.

Monthly invoices: Motion by Rudolph/Thompson to approve the monthly department invoices for July 2009. All ayes; motion carried.

Invoices for Oneida County Fair: Motion by Rudolph/Thompson to approve the monthly invoices for the Oneida County Fair for July 2009. All ayes; motion carried.

Oneida County Fair (OCF) planning update: Kuzlik introduced Tina Werres, chair of the OCF Planning Committee. She is a Rhinelander native and it is a pleasure to have her on board. She and Vice Chair Pat Dineen have been working steadily to make the event happen.

Werres thanked the Committee for their support of the fair over the years. She noted they are trying to stay within budget and on task and are very excited about the move into the City this year. Citizen comments are very positive and are getting good community participation. An opening ceremony is planned for Friday, August 14th at 11:30 a.m. and she urged Committee members to attend to welcome the Fair back to the City.

Petroskey noted the City has really stepped up. Werres indicated the staff at the Parks Department has been very cooperative and the City will provide the first aid through the Fire Department--it is a great joint effort. It is being stressed that it is a county fair but there is not a lot of participation from outlying areas--there is some but it could be better. Committee members have visited area chambers and made a presentation to the Oneida County Tourism Council. Dineen has recruited some funds from outside of Rhinelander. Dean noted there has been great news coverage in the area papers as well. Werres asked Committee members to help put up posters around the county.

Approve ordinance amendment: A copy of the ordinance amendment altering the Fair Committee structure was provided in committee packets. Kuzlik noted he and the Fair

Committee worked with Corporation Counsel requesting a change from 9 to 14 members. Rudolph questioned the name change for the department (*Agriculture and Extension Education Committee to Agriculture and Extension Committee*) and it was noted that this change was made by Corporation Counsel.

Motion by Vandervest/Thompson to accept the ordinance amendment as presented unless it is found by Corporation Counsel that "Education" should remain in the Committee title. All ayes; motion carried.

Approve contracts for Oneida County Fair: Motion by Vandervest/Rudolph to approve the judges' contracts for the 2009 Oneida County Fair. All ayes; motion carried.

Smithsonian Exhibit: Kuzlik referenced a copy of the newspaper article which was included in the committee packets. Extension partnered with several agencies to bring a Smithsonian Institute exhibit, *Key Ingredients: America by Food*, to Rhinelander in December 2010. The Institute will provide a set exhibit and community partners will add activities to highlight the exhibit. Kuzlik noted this is a great opportunity to bring additional cultural arts to the area, a voiced interest from previous community forums.

Teen Court: Winkler is handling the onsite Minocqua Teen Court and continues to advise the Rhinelander Teen Court which is organized by the YMCA. Both courts meet once per month. Since court began in May over a dozen cases have been heard. The youth panel is pleased to offer this opportunity to first time offenders and Winkler noted the real value is the interaction of the panel with the offenders and their parent/guardian. Parents are appreciative that youth are held accountable for their actions instead of the parents paying a fine.

Monthly agent reports: Kuzlik recently attended two hearings regarding the rural transit project and exhibited his frustration at the pace of what's happening. Cooperation is not working out with those who have "rolling stock" (buses, cabs, etc.). The City of Rhinelander, who receives subsidies for Rapid Cab, could be a fiscal agent for a regional transit group. There are still many partners who are still very interested in a rural transit program if stimulus funding can be procured.

Winkler noted his family will host a Japanese student through the 4-H exchange program again this year. He noted Oneida County currently has one youth in Australia and one in Japan through 4-H exchange this summer.

Vandervest noted the Community Garden is very impressive this year and asked Lazars if there is a similar project in Langlade County. Lazars indicated there seems to be a swelling of interest in Langlade County which may take off next year.

Motion by Vandervest/Petroskey to approve the monthly agent reports as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

Out of county travel requests:

Kuzlik:

7/18-22/09 New Orleans Cultural Immersion Seminar New Orleans, LA**

Winkler:

7/26/09 Pick up Japanese International Student Madison*
8/21/09 Return Japanese International Student Madison*
8/23/09 International Re-entry Workshop
for 2 Oneida County Youth Wausau*

Ison:

8/11-13/09 Master Food Preserver Training Mosinee*

*county expense
**district/state expense
***other expense

Motion by Petroskey/Thompson to approve the out-of-county travel requests as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

Public comment: Paul Dean noted Kerri Ison was interviewed for an article promoting the Master Gardener Volunteer program in the *Living on the Lake* magazine.

Rudolph believes Jim Winkler's *Power of Youth* articles are having a lot of positive impact and urged him to keep writing articles.

Items for future agenda: Fair update.

Adjournment: Motion by Rudolph/Petroskey to adjourn at 2:58 p.m. All ayes; motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerri Ison, Recording Secretary

Paul Dean, Chair