

**U University of Wisconsin Education, Extension and Agriculture Committee**  
**Thursday, March 21st, 2019**  
**James P. Coughlin Center – Volunteer Room**

**Members Present:** Tom Snider, Mike Brunn, Steve Binder and Karen Powers.

**Members Absent:** Tom Borchart

**UW-Extension Staff:** Kimberly Miller, Dana Berger, Chris Viau, John Thompson, Jody Bezio

**Others Present:** None.

**Meeting called to order** at 9:01 a.m. by Tom Snider.

**Comments from the Public related to items on the agenda:** None.

**Approval of Minutes:** Powers moved to approve the 2/21/2019 minutes; seconded by Binder. Motion carried 4 -0.

**Program Reports:** None.

**Community Gardens:** Miller discussed the potential costs of the Netzger site including putting in lanes, tree pruning and/or removal (primarily for safety) and possible new vehicle entrance onto the property and parking. Binder shared ideas for additional bidding on these projects as well as potential use of the Highway Department for tree removal. The County Board discussed the relocation of the community gardens in their most recent meeting. Binder shared highlights from this discussion (primarily that the Board discussed pros and cons of new site).

Viau shared that Extension's interests in helping with a new garden location is due to the benefits of the community gardens to the community and educational opportunities they provide. Extension's expertise is in working with people, not property management. Additional support will be needed in this area long-term. Snider encouraged committee members to use a focus on education in their talking points about the community gardens.

**Committee Chair Report:** None.

**UW-Extension – Administration:**

**Staff Updates/Area Updates:**

**New Staff Introductions:**

Chris Viau began his role as Area Extension Director on February 1 for Area 10 (including Calumet, Outagamie, Waupaca, and Winnebago Counties). This is the first Committee meeting he has been able to attend. He had served as the Wood County 4-H Youth Development Educator since 2009 and a 4-H Program Liaison since 2012. In his liaison role, he had the opportunity to coach and mentor colleagues in various stages of their careers.

John Thompson began as the new Agriculture Educator on Monday, March 18. Thompson has a degree in Agronomy from Penn State and has done work in the Agronomy field for a number of years in Pennsylvania. Since his arrival in Wisconsin, Thompson has been doing a lot of driving to see the area and has noticed that many farms in the area could benefit from the use of cover crops and no-till farming. He is anxious to bring this expertise to the area.

Viau will begin performance reviews with state employees per the state Extension's procedure. Viau says this is a great opportunity to learn what staff have been doing over the past year and help them set goals for the upcoming year, while learning how to best support staff in his new role. With Extension's transition to UW-Madison, the performance review process is changing, most importantly will now include a mid-year check in with staff.

Viau and Berger have begun the screening process for the permanent Winnebago County Administrative Associate III position that primarily supports the 4-H program. Bezio currently fills this position as a temporary position. Interviews are on April 4. Viau hopes to have a decision/offer made by mid-April.

Viau and Dornfeld will begin the screening and interview process for a half-time Financial Educator soon (applications closed about a week ago). This position will work with Dornfeld to deliver a variety of Extension's financial programs in the community. Viau will keep committee updated on process and options for inclusion in the interview/selection process.

Viau reported that Extension's budget carryover request was approved at the Finance Meeting. This money will be used to install/update security measures in the building such as "panic buttons" at the front desk locations. Viau pointed out the low customer service window (meant to improve accessibility) was a safety concern pointed out by the safety consultant – that it is easy for someone to jump/slide over to get access to the office. Viau will be continuing to look at what options are available to meet all needs with this window.

**Department Activities:** Viau announced that our office is hosting Dean Karl Martin's monthly communication meeting on Monday, April 1 at 9am, here at James P. Coughlin Center in Room A. Following the 9-10am Communication meeting (which will broadcast across the state via ZOOM), the Dean will be available for a group discussion and question/answer session with the community from 10-11am. The committee is welcome to join and listen to the meeting at 9am and to participate in the community discussion to follow. Viau is inviting Mark Harris and any other administrative contacts. Snider plans to attend.

**State Activities:** Viau provided an update on the Extension transition to UW-Madison. Viau reports that he is continuing to work through potential software license. Past licenses with the state allowed county-based staff to access programs. UW-Madison's software licensing does not include this option. Viau is working to find out what software we will need and a price estimate for the county. Viau's main concern is keeping state staff and county staff on same software platforms so that they can access each other's work and continue to work jointly on documents, programming & marketing materials.

**Comments by Extension Staff:** Berger is looking for a committee member to assist with interviews of 4-H youth who have applied for the 4-H Key Award and/or Academic Scholarships. Interviews will be held in April (based on the availability of the interview committee). The committee currently includes an adult board member from the 4-H Leaders' Association and a youth from the Collegiate 4-H program at UW-Oshkosh. The interview committee will need to have time to review applications ahead of time and about 4-5 hours for interviews, most likely on a weekend. 8 youth have applied. Powers volunteered to assist. Binder volunteered to be a backup.

**Comments by Committee Members:** Binder asked for an update on 4-H in regards to diversity and outreach. Berger reported that plans are continuing to progress for a "Diversity Day" at the County Fair this year. Several area dance troupes and an African Drum Circle (representing a variety of cultures from the area) will be performing on Saturday, Aug 3. Berger is also working on new partnerships with the Boys & Girls Club in Menasha and YouthGo in Neenah to provide summer programming (8 week programs run by interns), with the ultimate plan to start 4-H clubs at these locations in the fall. Both of these locations have a high amount of diversity and are geographic locations that do not currently have many (or any) 4-H Clubs. Snider suggested looking into a partnership with the Neenah Brigade.

**Next Meeting:** Next regular committee meeting will be held Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**Adjourned:** Powers moved to adjourn; seconded by Brunn. Motion carried 4-0, 9:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jody Bezio

