

**University of Wisconsin Education, Extension and Agriculture Committee**  
**Thursday, December 19th, 2019**  
**James P. Coughlin Center – Volunteer Room**

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

**Members Absent:** Tom Borchart and Karen D. Powers.

**UW-Extension Staff:** Chris Viau, Kim Miller, Dana Berger, and Amy Hendrickson.

**Others Present:** Mike Domke, Winnebago County Fair Association President, and Matt Neuman, Vice President.

**Meeting called to order** at 9:00 a.m. by Tom Snider.

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

**Approval of Minutes:** Brunn moved to approve the 11/21/2019 minutes; seconded by Binder. Motion carried 3-0. Brunn requested clarifying in the November minutes which Mayor Todd Wenzel met with. Hendrickson will update.

**Safety:** Snider highlighted an article noting that our phones are listening to our conversations. Watch for ice and melting ice/snow.

**Program Reports:**

**Fair Association:** Domke distributed a financial overview of the 2019 Winnebago County Fair. By reducing expenses, the Fair Association was able to pay off their debts and gain revenue for this upcoming year. Elections for the board were last week. The fair board is full this year. A new website was created for 2019 and received positive reviews. Focus for 2020 will likely be smaller bands again with some other events to ensure there are enough activities for fairgoers. Binder and Domke discussed options for utilizing the grandstands while being wise regarding costs for performers. Domke commended the fair board members for their resourcefulness in finding vendors and reducing expenses for 2019. For 2020, Domke hopes to advertise advance-sale-discount tickets and information regarding expenses to help fairgoers understand ticket prices. Berger and Domke expressed their appreciation for the countless hours dedicated to the fair by the fair board members and volunteers. Binder and Domke discussed future plans for upgrading the electrical system and extending space for camping and parking.

**Horticulture:** Miller shared that the Highway Dept. was delayed in starting work on the new Community Garden site due to the wet weather and late freeze of the ground. Gardeners who wish to move to the new location will be required to attend a mandatory meeting in the-spring that will cover the guidelines for the new Community Garden. Binder encouraged Miller to keep the committee apprised of any additional expenses so that the committee can request additional funding from the county board, if needed. Drainage issues are expected in some areas, which may affect plots. It is expected that there will be enough space for all current gardeners to move over to the new site, but the number of plots they can rent will be limited. The current gardens also need to finish being closed. This requires having a farmer till up the lanes and get the entire space suitable for farming.

Miller distributed marketing materials for the 2020 Landscape Professionals Conference. Miller stepped in to lead the conference planning for 2020. They are expecting to break even with expenses with the possibility for slight surplus. The conference will not be available as a recording due to accessibility (close-caption) costs. Miller distributed a review of the Master Gardener hours, up through October 2019. Volunteers gave 369 hours to answer 234 requests for plant health related questions in the Extension Office. 2019 saw an increase in tree-related inquiries. Plant identification was the next largest category of inquiries. The Master Gardeners would like to develop a resource book and photo identification system. Miller distributed the 2019 Master Gardener Annual Report for Winnebago County. Winnebago County Master Gardener Volunteers reported 7,293 hours of service at an estimated value of \$175,026 for the county. Miller highlighted an inaccurate number of people reached due to lack of guidance for how to report. Due to a number of changes to the Master Gardener program, one change is that volunteers must enroll before any of their volunteer hours can be counted. A new youth protection policy is also being implemented that may affect opportunities for volunteers, as part of the risk management requirements coming from UW-Madison. MOUs are other changes. Miller expressed that these changes will be helpful and beneficial in the long run, but there is concern regarding how much change volunteers will tolerate at one time. So far, Winnebago County Master Gardeners have done well for retaining volunteers, but there may be some changes with the new guidance and policies.

**Committee Chair Report:** Snider had no report to share.

**UW-Extension – Administration:**

**Staff Updates/Area Updates:** The Winnebago office is at full staff. Interns are also frequently brought in to assist with programming. Meeting Room C is currently being used by the Solid Waste Department during construction for their department. Space constraints will be managed.

**Department Activities:** Viau highlighted some financial aspects for the committee to be aware of. Budget carry-overs are expected for Sources of Strength programming and Community Gardens. Purchase orders for replacement office chairs and upgrades to Room B to install a large TV are underway. Viau explained Room B cabling upgrades expected. The office is also exploring options for a better-quality conference camera/microphone system to use in the larger conference rooms. Extension is anticipating greater need for teleconferences in the coming years.

**State Activities:** Viau agreed that the short timeframe for completing the risk management trainings and implementing the new policies has been difficult, but will be beneficial in the long run.

**Comments by Extension Staff:** Viau wished everyone a happy holiday season.

**Comments by Committee Members:** Snider wished everyone a wonderful holiday season as well. Binder announced he will not be available for the January meeting.

**Next Meeting:** Next regular committee meeting will be held Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

**Adjourned:** Binder moved to adjourn; seconded by Brunn. Motion carried 3-0, 10:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amy Hendrickson