



Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Iowa Extension Council Association

November 11, 2023

The Board of Directors of the Iowa Extension Council Association met at the Story County Extension office on November 11, 2023. Board members present include Kelly Jared, Bruce Clark, Jamie Thompson, Kasey Peters, Jenny Lichty, Megan Fagle, Phillip Masters, Al Ralston, Mollie Scott, Sara Neuzil, Ruth Wilcox, Paul Gieselman, Gwen Hanson, LeAnn Lawler, Roberta Hersom, Kirk Phelps, Tom Monroe. Also present were Dr. Jason Henderson, Andrea Welchans, Donovan Olson, Jennifer Vit, and Julie Baumler.

President Kelly Jared called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Lichty moved to approve the agenda. Gieselman seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Peters moved to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2023 meeting. Wilcox seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Donovan Olson, Story County Regional Director, shared a little information about the Story County Extension office and program, including how they utilize the local talent pool to staff both permanent positions as well as internships for college students.

The treasurer's report was given by Jamie Thompson. We have a balance on hand of \$53,437.14 in checking. Executive Director Vit noted that our balance is higher than we typically have seen in the past. Reasons include less money was spent for a conference in 2023 and our Whitfield & Eddy expenses have been slightly less this year. Additionally, we have had a balanced budget the past several years, so carryover has accrued. This balance may allow opportunities for the association to invest in emergent council needs as the year progresses.

The following bills were presented:

- Whitfield & Eddy - \$1,225 for October legal services
- CauseTeam - \$548.60 for IECA polo shirts
- MailChimp - \$42.27 for November subscription (via EFT)
- Julie Baumler – \$151.28 for website business cards, copies
- Jennifer Vit - \$152.36 for Board Meeting Refreshments

Gieselman moved to approve the treasurer's report and bills. Monroe seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Dr. Jason Henderson, Vice President for Extension and Outreach, gave an ISU Extension and Outreach update. The ISU Extension and Outreach Strategic Planning Committee received a lot of feedback, and they will be factoring that into the final version of the Extension and Outreach Strategic Plan. The plan will be released in January and there will be a Request for Proposals (RFP) released

then as well. Dr. Henderson also shared that we need to continue to work on telling our stories to legislators. We should talk about the return on investment (ROI) of our tax dollars. Extension needs to be flexible in identifying how our research and education can help solve pieces of the problems in conjunction with others in the community.

A County Services update was shared by Andrea Welchans, Asst. Vice-President for County Services. She presented a fiscal overview of FY23 for County Agricultural Extension Districts. The board discussed late addition of state holidays and how it impacts county staffing and communication with the public. Welchans reported that the search for a new State 4-H Program Leader continues. The position has been reposted with a guaranteed consideration deadline of Dec. 14. There is a large search committee which includes Jasper County extension council member Ann Leonard.

The board committees met and reported back.

The Finance, Policy, and Legislation Committee recommended we host a legislative breakfast again in 2024. We will share the county stakeholder reports with each legislator. Local council members will be asked to make contact with their legislators to invite them to the breakfast. We will also be reaching out to legislative leadership.

The Human Resources & Member Services Committee recommended that IECA further explore offering the *Calm* app as a potential employee benefit that councils can offer along with EAP. The board asked Vit and Baumler to survey county interest in the program and tabled a final decision until the January meeting. The committee also is interested in continuing to explore developing a supplemental employee benefits package (other than health insurance) that counties can buy into to package with the EAP benefit.

Andrea Welchans shared that the County Services unit is exploring adding a \$25,000 life insurance policy option for counties to purchase through the ISU benefits options.

Suggestions for helping counties with employee recruitment were discussed.

The Communications and Networking Committee recommended plans for six area conferences for council members as a substitute for a statewide extension council conference this year. This will be planned for late March and early April on weekday evenings in the 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. timeframe. Topics will be customized to each area's needs/interests. They also recommended a presentation on five important things for county finances and for the secretary role. Dr. Henderson will be invited to attend each meeting. There will be a scavenger hunt of newly updated IECA website to promote it as a resource. A \$10 registration charge was recommended to help cover the cost of a meal.

Jennifer Vit shared that Dr. Henderson would like to invite all council members to ISU's campus to see the research taking place that are the foundation for our Extension and Outreach educational programs and materials. Several tours will allow an insider look at things most people don't have access to when visiting campus. Ideally the tour stops would align with priority areas of the new strategic plan. This is being planned for early fall (late August, early September). An IECA board planning team is working with the Vice President's office to ensure that it will be engaging for council members.

An Executive Director report was given by Jennifer Vit. She reported that an online training for secretaries and chairs on agendas, minutes, and simplified parliamentary procedure is being planned

for February, similar to fiscal trainings for treasurers and chairs that were held last year. Sessions will be held on the following dates:

- Thurs., Feb. 22, noon – 1:30
- Mon., Feb. 26 – 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.
- Wed., Feb. 28 – 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

The 2022-2023 IECA Year in Review report has been printed and shared with regional directors who will share with county extension council members.

County concerns and issues were discussed. Topics included developing community partnerships and compromises counties have made to recruit and retain staff.

The next meeting will be in January. Baumler will send out a poll to select the best date option.

Monroe moved to adjourn. Lichty seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kasey Peters, IECA Secretary