



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

June 21, 2025

The Board of Directors of the Iowa Extension Council Association met at the Boone County Extension Office on June 21, 2025. Board members present include Bruce Clark, Sara Kuboushek, Ann Leonard, Roger Helmrichs, Cheryl Beaver, Christy Sayler, Jenny Lichty, Kasey Peters, Hayley Moss, Joan Wiskus, Ruth Wilcox, Paige Grandgeorge, Kristy Knutson, Kirk Phelps, Roberta Hersom, Julie McVay, Marisue Hartung, LeAnn Lawler, Tom Monroe, Matt Rohrig. Paul Gieselmann and Mary Greiman attended via Zoom. Also present were Dr. Jason Henderson, Andrea Welchans, Cindy Gannon, Jennifer Vit, and Julie Baumler.

President Bruce Clark called the meeting to order. A bill from CauseTeam was added to the agenda.

Kasey Peters moved to approve the minutes from the March 31, 2025 board meeting. Ann Leonard seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The treasurer's report was provided by Le Ann Lawler. There is a checking balance on hand of \$46,620.20. Lawler moved to approve the treasurer's report and the following bills:

Payee	Item/Service	Total Amt
Assured Partners	Directors & Officers Insurance	\$ 1,090.00
Delaware County Extension	2024 Extension Council Conference Door Prize	100.00
Julie Baumler	Quicken subscription (\$76.91); copies (\$188.10)	265.01
Whitfield & Eddy Law	Legal Services	2,890.00
CauseTeam	Board member shirts	175.91
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 4,520.92</b>

Roberta Hersom seconded the motion. The motion carried

Julie Baumler reported that 70 counties have paid dues to date. One county has paid the optional special dues assessment at this point in time with 19 counties indicating a commitment totaling \$20,100. It is anticipated that more counties will opt in to the special assessment.

Jennifer Vit reported that the following new board members were elected/re-elected this spring:

- Region 1: Hayley Moss, Sioux County
- Region 3: Paige Grandgeorge, Wright County
- Region 12: Roger Helmrichs, Delaware County
- Region 13: Julie McVay, Audubon County
- Regions 15-16-17: Marisue Hartung, Story County
- Region 20: Tom Monroe, Scott County

- Region 25: Kristy Knutson, Wayne County
- Region 27: Paul Gieselman, Louisa County

An ISU Extension and Outreach Update was provided by Dr. Jason Henderson, Vice President for Extension and Outreach including the following items:

- Extension is focusing on management and governance structures, including clarity in roles and expectations for all program staff – both in quantity of programming and measuring quality of programs. There are three focuses going forward:
  - Clarity
  - Accountability
  - Responsiveness
- Evaluation of programs is also being prioritized. We will seek to identify knowledge gain, behavioral change, and conditions change as a result of extension education.
- 4-H Youth Development program staff have had a change in their roles. They will be spending more time in direct delivery of educational programming to expand their reach. After that, the focus will be on improving the administrative systems to reduce that as a barrier to participation.
- County staff are working on identifying cost of delivering our programs. They are also talking about how revenue will be shared between program areas and counties
- Extension funding:
  - Federal funding is likely to be impacted by what the “Big Beautiful Bill” contains. SNAP-Ed funding is at risk for counties. For FY26 (Oct. 2025 – September 2026), the president’s budget has a 46% reduction in budget for extension. The House bill had a cut, but not as high as a cut. The Senate is just starting to work on their bill. Cooperative Extension is not necessarily a target, but funding of universities is being targeted.
  - Iowa Property Tax reform is likely to impact county extension funding. The proposed property tax bills in the 2025 legislative session would have significantly decreased the majority of county agricultural extension district tax levies. This remains an unknown for the 2026 legislative session.
  - There will be another state funding request from ISU in 2026. ISU has indicated that they will include extension in their request. The Iowa Board of Regents will finalize the requests for all three universities. Extension appropriations from the State of Iowa budget have been flat-funded at since 2009.
- There are currently 56 faculty members on campus with extension appointments (meaning that they have a percentage of their job responsibilities allocated to extension work – and paid for by extension funds). Dr. Henderson is working to identify what the expectations are for those with extension appointments. There have been requests to get more extension faculty members engaged off campus throughout the state.
- Dr. Henderson asked for feedback from councils so he knows where the concerns and challenges are so they can be addressed.
- ISU President Wendy Wintersteen will retire in December. They have announced a search committee and are working with a consulting firm. This timing may be interesting as it coincides with the start of the legislative session, so the university request will be shepherded by a new president.

A County Services update was shared by Andrea Welchans, Asst. Vice President for County Services including the following items:

- County property tax reform will continue to be relevant in 2026
- Revenue generation worksheets are being completed by county staff as coordinators and co-facilitators. If the county has direct expenses for programs, they will also share in revenues from those programs.

- Regional spring workshops for county staff were held in 10 locations across the state. They completed a budget activity looking at opportunities for revenue and also for reducing expenses. They also did an activity to help identify the various aspects of value (functional, emotional, and social) that are provided to our customers through programming.
- 2 regional director positions in Region 23 and Region 21 are now open and they are working at filling them.

Jennifer Vit and members of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Committee shared an update. The current MOU runs through June 2026. The committee is working creating a draft document for July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2029. The committee consists of extension council members (1/3 of the committee), county extension staff, state extension staff, and program area representatives. Andrea Welchans, Dr. Henderson, and Jennifer Vit are leading the group. They have begun working on the document, focusing on challenges and opportunities in extension. They are not currently discussing anything to do with changing structures. There will be an MOU resource page on the County Services website and also the IECA website.

The committee will meet now through November. Feedback will be solicited from councils and staff before the end of November. Whitfield & Eddy Law and ISU Legal will review the document in December and January. It will be available to councils by the end of January or early February to review and sign by May 1.

IECA's Legislative strategy for 2026 was discussed. An optional dues assessment to support an education plan to keep councils informed and to communicate with legislators was approved at the last executive committee meeting. To date 20 counties have indicated a commitment to support this effort. There is a lot of uncertainty with the property tax legislation coming up given the current political climate and it being an election year. However, there is also a longer-term game being prepared for whatever challenge comes. Questions should be sent to Jennifer to add to the FAQ. Jennifer is also available to meet with councils via Zoom. Tom Monroe and Ann Leonard will work with Jennifer Vit to define what we want from a consultant and help identify that person.

Extension Council Day on Campus is set for Friday, Sept. 12. A video has been developed to promote the event. There will be three tour tracks with three tours each, including the following:

- Campus greenhouses
- Kids in the Kitchen
- Farmhouse Museum
- Wine Institute Tour
- Digital Ag Facilities
- Vet Diagnostic Lab
- Clover Kids
- Feed Mill
- Meat Lab

Roger Helmrichs moved to approve supporting the Extension Council Day on Campus in the amount of \$3,000. Ann Leonard seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Advice and observations from outgoing board members Mary Greiman and Kasey Peters were shared.

Following lunch, Bruce Clark called to order the meeting of the 2025-2026 board of directors and facilitated the election of officers.

Ann Leonard nominated Sara Kuboushek for president. Joan Wiskus seconded the motion. Leonard moved nominations cease. Roger Helmrichs seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Sara Kuboushek nominated Ann Leonard for president-elect. Marisue Hartung moved to close nominations. Cheryl Beaver seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Ann Leonard nominated Jenny Lichty for secretary. Sara Kuboushek seconded the motion. Ruth Wilcox moved to close nominations. Cheryl Beaver seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Ann Leonard nominated LeAnn Lawler for treasurer. Hayley Moss seconded the motion. Marisue Hartung moved to close nominations. Joan Wiskus seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Tom Monroe moved to approve the board process issues as they stand (attached). Matt Rohrig seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Roger moved to name Veridian Credit Union as the financial institution for IECA accounts. Tom Monroe seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The board discussed the 2025 Extension Council Conference noting the evaluation results. It was determined to offer an in-person "on the road" conference in multiple locations in the spring of 2026. Conference committee members include Roberta Hersom, Ann Leonard, Christy Sayler, and Tom Monroe.

Standing committees met and reported:

Finance, Policy, & Legislation

- Chair: Tom Monroe
- Members: Marisue Hartung, Kristy Knutson, Christy Sayler, Roger Helmrichs, Matt Rohrig, Ann Leonard, Paul Gieselman, and Jenny Lichty

The committee recommended the following budget for FY26:

**INCOME**

Membership Dues	\$	30,720.00
Special Dues Assessment		30,000.00
EAP Payments		9,500.00
Calm Payments		4,500.00
Extension Council Conf.		1,200.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>75,920.00</b>

**EXPENSES**

**General**

Bank Charges	\$	35.00
Copies		800.00
Misc.		500.00
Office Supplies		300.00
Postage		750.00
Travel		6,000.00
Insurance		1,090.00

Meeting Supplies		500.00
<b>TOTAL General</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>9,975.00</b>
<b>Comm. &amp; Networking</b>		
Communications	\$	1,500.00
Marketing/Promotions		900.00
<b>TOTAL Comm &amp; Networking</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,400.00</b>
<b>Human Resources &amp; Member Services</b>		
Council Conference	\$	5,000.00
Extension Council Day on Campus		3,000.00
EAP		9,500.00
Calm		4,500.00
Member Support		-
Council Training		250.00
Legal Services		20,000.00
<b>TOTAL Human Resources &amp; Member Services</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>42,250.00</b>
<b>Finance, Policy, &amp; Legislation</b>		
Legislative Consultant	\$	30,000.00
Legislative Contacts		5,000.00
<b>TOTAL Finance, Policy, &amp; Legislation</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>35,000.00</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>89,625.00</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>(13,705.00)</b>

Ann Leonard moved to approve the recommended budget with a deficit of \$13,705. Roger Helmrichs seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Tuesday, January 20 was set as the date for the 2026 legislative breakfast at the Iowa Capitol.

#### Human Resources & Member Services

- Chair: Julie McVay
- Members: Roberta Hersom, Kirk Phelps, Paige Grandgeorge, Cheryl Beaver, Ruth Wilcox, LeAnn Lawler

Council training priorities were discussed. They recommend that the legislative consultant host at least one virtual training and feedback session for those counties who have invested in the work as well as a recorded session for all counties that is less than 15 minutes in length. Additional topics include a simplified explanation of county extension funding and how various funds are permitted to be used.

The Human Resources and Member Services Committee also recommended that a new member benefit survey be sent to councils in the fall.

## Communication & Networking

- Chair: Sara Kuboushek
- Members: Bruce Clark, Joan Wiskus, Hayley Moss

They discussed strategies for council members to meet with legislators outside of the legislative session, including inviting them to summer programming and the county fair. General talking points will be developed and shared with council members. Additionally they recommended exploring the “5 Calls” app for engagement on the congressional level.

The Communication and Networking Committee also recommended that board members should connect with their regional directors to provide IECA updates that can be shared at council members in their region.

The 2022-2025 IECA action plan was reviewed. We have made great progress on our strategies to achieve the outcome of more engaged extension council members with 17 out of 21 strategies accomplished. The board decided to devote time at the fall meeting to update the action plan for the next three years. They also recommended documenting a baseline of council participation in areas where there are goals to increase numbers.

Jennifer Vit provided an executive director report with the following items:

- 100 counties enrolled in EAP benefits this year with a total of 379 staff members covered.
- 126 staff members enrolled in Calm
- Background Screening Transition update
  - 95 counties have accounts set up with C4 Operations to date. The average price of screening is slightly higher than with First Advantage (around \$50 now)
- Jennifer and Julie will work to set up a review of the FY2025 books. Because of our increased income in the coming year, we may have an audit or filing requirement because we will be over \$50,000 in income.

Ann Leonard moved to approve the following bills:

- Board member travel expenses, \$3,007.20
- Cyclone Awards & Engraving, \$135.20 for nametags and outgoing president’s gift
- Schonert's Corporate Catering for noon meal, \$444.91
- Jennifer Vit for meeting refreshments: \$106.71

Julie McVay seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Julie Baumler will send out a poll to determine the next meeting date.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jenny Lichy, Secretary