



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

June 13, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Iowa Extension Council Association met via video conference on June 13, 2020. President Michael Ryan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Board members present include Michael Ryan, Jamie David, Lori Donahoe, Paul Gieselman, Joy Prothero, Kim Rinker, Charlie Ertzinger, Kelly Jared, Jayne Lupkes, Al Ralston, Mary Greiman, Pam Olerich, LeAnn Lawler, Michael Ryan, Bruce Clark, Connie Casson, Peggy Sparrgrove, Amy Eden, and Brian McNulty. Also present were Deb Sellers, Andrea Nelson, Bob Dodds, Cindy Gannon, Deb Sellers and Julie Baumler.

Jayne moved to approve the agenda. Le Ann seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Pam moved to approve the minutes from April 23, 2020. Mary seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Lori Donahoe gave the treasurer's report. We have a balance on hand of \$22,944.75. We have deposited \$13,400 in dues for 2020-21 to date.

Lori moved to approve the following bills: Whitfield & Eddy - \$3,142.00 for legal services and LMC - \$975 for Directors & Officers liability. Joy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Lori noted that billing from Whitfield & Eddy has normalized into a regular, predictable pattern.

Dr. Debra Sellers, Director, Human Sciences Extension and Outreach gave an ISU Extension & Outreach Update. There are three priorities for the summer: Reopen, Recovery, and Realize. We want to reopen our offices and resume programming, work on recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 on our communities, and realize the Structured for Success implementation beginning on July 1.

The Open for Iowa Committee is working to develop resources to help staff safely reopen offices and provide programming. Dan Lamgo, Adams County extension council member, and Julie Baumler represent councils and IECA on the committee. They are reviewing all of the guidance available to determine which pieces are relevant to helping extension councils and staff make decisions and put protocols in place to reduce risk and continue to serve the needs of Iowans. The 3 key messages of the committee:

- 1) health and safety for all
- 2) plans are necessary
- 3) though the ban to lift restrictions occurred on June 1, that is not a mandate. Take the summer to build up to full capacity.

Dr. Lawrence will send a message on Monday related to county fairs. We want to work around 4-H learning opportunities and those decisions are emotional for people. The decisions will look different

depending on where you live, but there is an expectation that will follow the governor's guidance for large group gatherings. Councils and staff are encouraged to follow the guidance that is available. Dr. Lawrence will also encourage councils and supervisors to be mindful of staff who may be uncomfortable in certain situations for various reasons. Andrea announced this week that LMC liability will cover liability for COVID-19 spread with the caveat of serving no prepared food.

The COVID-19 Recovery Task Force is working to identify 4-6 areas/programs that Extension and Outreach can be known for as we begin to recover as a state. The task force just released their report to the leadership team. The topics include mental health, business resilience, child care, and family financial resilience, among other topics. Eventually action plans will be developed to address these topics throughout the state.

A County Services update was given by Andrea Nelson, Asst. Vice President for County Services. She reported that we are 2 ½ weeks away from the Structured for Success implementation launch on July 1. There has been good comradery between county and state staff around this effort. Regional Directors attended training the first week on June to prepare them for their new roles.

In the initial open enrollment for county health insurance through ISU, 29 counties elected to participate. There are other counties who plan to join at the Nov. 1 open enrollment period.

The location of regional offices was announced on June 5. County transition plans were submitted by all county offices that outline responsibilities for June, July, and August for leadership roles in the county. This was an opportunity to think about ways to work differently moving forward.

Andrea reported that 97 counties have now turned in their signed MOUs and addendums. The remaining 3 will turn them in before June 30.

The County Services unit has been working with councils on carryover analysis this spring. They are estimating what the carryover amount will be and identifying ways that excess can be effectively invested to the benefit of the county. There was probably more work on that this year than usual, due to slowed spending during the quarantine this spring. Some counties have had delays in receiving tax revenues due to county auditor procedures, so there has also been discussion surrounding managing cash flows.

Andrea gave an update on liability insurance for COVID-19, should an outbreak occur related to Extension and Outreach activities and events. Originally, counties were informed that our liability did not cover COVID-19. However, after discussions, LMC removed the exclusion for communicable diseases in our policies with the requirement that no prepared food be served. This will be explored again on September 1 to allow food demonstrations with the ability to taste again, depending on the situation related to COVID-19.

Year-end bookkeeping to close out the fiscal year has begun. This year the published financial reports for counties will not be due until Sept. 1.

Nominating committees will be forming to identify candidates for extension council positions.

Andrea shared more about the Two-way Scorecard Communication Tool to help evaluate how our partnership (between ISU and county extension districts) is going. It provides an opportunity to see where there are deficiencies and areas to celebrate within the relationship each quarter. Andrea shared a draft version that includes all questions. Some of these questions will be asked at different quarters – not all will be asked every quarter. Amy Eden represented extension councils on this committee. It is our goal to be able to release the scorecard on July 1 so all can see what kinds of

questions will be asked at the end of the first quarter, allowing councils and staff to think about that throughout the 3 months.

Mike Ryan asked clarification on how Open for Iowa is determining their recommendations. Deb clarified that while we are following the governor's guidelines, we are also integrating other information including that from ISU, CDC, and Iowa Public Health. We are constrained by the relationship between ISU and counties. If you are an ISU employee, you must follow the ISU guidance regardless of where you are (campus or in a county office). Our recommendation to our county partners is that you follow that guidance, but we can't mandate that. There has been a lot of discussion between what is expected and what is required. The university has utilized a lot of research, so we feel good about following their lead, where appropriate.

Connie Casson, Charles Ertzinger, Joy Prothero, and Andrea Nelson shared the results of the IECA Executive Director search. Jennifer Vit has been named the Executive Director, starting on July 1. She currently works with Conference Planning and Management.

Julie Baumler gave an update on IECA Board of Directors elections. She reported that 12 of the 14 open positions have candidates. Ballots were sent out this past week and are due on June 24. They will start their terms on July 1.

Jayne Lupkes shared a review of the Legislative Day that was held in February. We had 135 total participants. Most of them were 4-H members and staff with only a few council members (10 council members, 71 4-H members, remainder were staff). It was an excellent day with good programming. We will think about future planning at the next meeting. Despite the low number of council members, the group believes this is still a good opportunity to provide public policy education to 4-H members.

The group discussed plans for the next Extension Council Conference set for March 13, 2021. It was noted that we should ensure that our cancellation insurance covers infectious disease in the future. We may wish to consider a way that others could participate remotely, potentially by adding a virtual option. We could potentially offer webinars for various sessions. There is still value in face-to-face meetings, but this might help accommodate those unable to travel or those with health considerations if we are still dealing with the pandemic. Jennifer has lots of ideas of ways we can extend reach or do hybrid events to reach more people. Paul suggested that board members have a personal responsibility to try to connect with the council members in their region to help encourage their participation in both the conference. Mike recommended that a committee be named after July 1 to start thinking about ideas prior to our next meeting.

IECA Board Officer Elections for 2020-21 were held. Mike Ryan nominated Jamie David for president. Al seconded the motion. The motion carried. Mike nominated Paul Gieselman for president-elect. Joy seconded the motion. The motion carried. Mike nominated Lori Donahoe for treasurer. Mary seconded the motion. The motion carried. Jamie nominated Connie Casson for secretary. Al seconded the motion. The motion carried. Jamie David opened the second part of the meeting as the new president.

An Executive Director report was given by Interim Executive Director Bob Dodds. He would like to recommend arranging a face-to-face meeting between Whitfield & Eddy and ISU legal. Bob thinks that we could reduce our legal costs if we can hammer out a way to differentiate which questions should go to W&E and which should go to ISU legal. There have been times when ISU legal has vetted a topic and then W&E was also asked for an opinion. This can cause confusion if there are differences.

Bob also recommends exploring a way that counties can help fund the legal fees that benefit all counties. This could be done rather than raising the dues to cover the legal services. Bob will type up a proposal before he ends his interim role. We would also make sure that councils receive this information via the association newsletter and website.

A time to discuss county concerns and issues was available. Board members reported that the county office reopening guidance has been helpful. They feel comfortable with having a plan and being able to move forward.

Advice/comments from outgoing board members was shared:

- Amy got engaged over the last weekend and will be moving, so will be moving and resigning her position.
- Jayne remarked that we have come a long way since the early years in the 1990's. We have done a good job communicating during the pandemic. She urged members to continue working with their councils to make sure they are heard.
- Charlie commented that the culture of the university isn't to change fast. The council members governing the councils are good people, but they haven't necessarily had the experience of governing so often fail to make timely decisions. We need to have more awareness and training on the function of governing. Some of that comes in budgeting, overseeing administration, programming, etc. Somehow, we need to get a little more emphasis on decision-making and think about the process of gathering information in order to make decisions. We need to get beyond recruiting council members that only want to show up once/month and recruit those who want to be invested. The IECA board should be more forward looking and develop an action plan/strategic plan. We need to think about where we want to go and how we can get there. Think beyond doing what we have always done in the way we have always done it.
- Pam shared that this has been a growing experience for her and the board. We have changed our name and our focus. We created a conference. Those are all such positive steps. The board will continue to look forward and make meaningful change.

Michael moved to set the next meeting on October 3 from 10-3. Al seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Paul moved to adjourn the meeting. Brian seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Connie Casson". The signature is written in dark ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Connie Casson, IECA Secretary