

MEETING MINUTES
Ashland County Agriculture & Extension Education Committee Meeting
March 2, 2015 1:00pm
Ashland County Extension Office

Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Charlie Ortman at 1:00 pm

Members Present: Charlie Ortman, Kathy Schutte, George Mika, Norm Couture, and Ken Lundquist

Others Present: Tom Wojciechowski, Pete Russo, Amy Tromberg, Kathy Beeksma, and Jason Fischbach

Approval of Minutes

Ken moved to approve the minutes from the January 15, 2015 meeting. George seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Handed out Letter from the City of Ashland regarding CAFO.

Agent Reports

- **Written reports submitted and agents in attendance gave a highlight of their work:**

<u>CNRED</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership program off and running, 2 meetings & retreat, Charlie and Kathy S. are taking this program • Small Business Development Director position open, out of Superior, Tom is on committee for interviews next week
<u>4-H & Youth</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bad River FRTEP position job description is posted, deadline is March 10th
<u>Family Living / WNEP</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On subcommittee for children of incarcerated parents, working on preparedness check-list for people going to jail/ to figure out how to handle a parent going into jail • Direct education, 4 series of parenting classes at LSI, mandated and non-mandated sections, asked for ongoing parenting education
<u>Horticulture</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Composter class coming up • Matt is at a Dairy Cows training session today
<u>Agriculture</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed CAFO is taking up a lot of Jason's time, current regulations and committee to study the issue, asked to gather information for this committee • Lake Superior conference with 90 people, greatly appreciated by attendees • Starting a farm succession training program, with financial specialist and attorney, get legal documents in place to transition farms to the next generation

Handouts included: Matt's agent report, Master Composter class brochure, Dairy Cows brochure; Kathy B.'s agent report, Letter from the City of Ashland regarding CAFO, and Jason's Agent report.

1. Comprehensive Planning Review

- Tom W. & Tom Fratt will meet soon to go over funding, plan and process, should have draft for next meeting.
- Tom W. asked - What are we looking for as a finished project? Update data, review, and mark-up of existing documents. Then the final update will depend on the changes/ amount of updates needed.

- Who assigns people to the ad hoc committee for the comp plan review? Pete will have to appoint it, on Tom's/ our advice.
- George and Kathy S. think we should have a person attend town meetings, especially if a memo isn't enough.

Jason arrived 1:19pm

2. Report / update on CAFO issue

- Lengthy discussion about CAFO issue, Jason stated that UW-Extension is an educational resource.
- Jason is planning on holding an informational session on Nutrient management plans, which are public documents/ public records, educate on what they mean, farm terminology, and walking people through the Nutrient Management plan.
- Kathy S. said that the more knowledge we have the better, educational outreach to the public is ideal.
- Jason or Tom Fratt could help the County Board to better understand the rules & regulations at a County Board meeting or training/ alternative meeting. Land Conservation looking at possible policy issues.
- George suggested getting the Marengo Valley farmers together and having a discussion, then have an Ashland County listening session and /or Land Conservation policy public speaking event.

Pete and Jason left 2:13pm

3. Superior Days

- Tom reported on Superior Days in Madison last week. Ashland County attendees included Matt McKenzie, Peppy Kabasa from Ashland City & County, Mayor Deb Lewis, Tom W. & Doug with 4 students, and Dale Kupczyk.
- Agency hearings; mantra seemed to be "we love it, we don't have any money."
- The proposed budget cuts to the University of Wisconsin look like 6.9 Million dollars within Cooperative Extension, which is equivalent to 60 employees cut statewide.

Kathy B. arrived 2:23pm

4. Energy Independence updates, next steps

- Since last meeting, Tom W. has been looking into the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) – federal funding, for small businesses, renewable energy systems.
- Bayfield Electric is talking about putting up a solar farm, 250 thousand kilowatts, max 1 MG; Bayfield Electric is doing a survey of their members (in magazine) so not sure on results yet. Idea is you could pre-buy panels for this solar farm and then it would go against your electric bill. Two solar farms in WI so far, a few in MN too.

Charlie left 2:27pm and Kathy S. stepped in to chair the remainder of the meeting

5. Ashland County Fair

- Kathy S. reported that Gina emailed, the DNR said that the County Fairground has a non-compliant well, they have to fix it by May 15th. Ken said, none of those issues are major, just an issue of it not being taken care of.
- Changed the date for the county fair, no longer Labor Day weekend, now Aug 20-23rd, 2015, 4 day fair instead of 5 day fair. Fair Board is working well to try to get everything scheduled.
- Gina has been going through personal issues, so we have not met regarding development of a business plan for the County fair.

- Possible Fair tie-in ideas included the high tunnels and the Farm to School program. Kathy B. can check with the Ashland school, about kids doing something for the fair in connection with the high tunnels for the summer.

6. Broadband updated

- Tom reported that the local group met and the next thing is to meet with local providers, try to get them to work together and share where they plan to expand, and where they don't. Dale & Scottie are talking with them.
- WI Economic Development Cooperative (WEDC) contact made at Superior Days, Dani Jones, she wants to come up and try to work with local providers on their plans, some other providers might be interested in coming up if our needs weren't being met.
- Superior Days topic, warm welcome, but no money.
- A recent nationwide FCC Broadband ruling designating broadband as a public utility has directly affected two states. This is a precedence setting direction and could make companies more customer friendly and possibly more competitive.

7. Capital Connections. April 30th

- This is a lobbying effort in Madison through UW-Extension and WACEC.
- Get people from every county, Kathy B. could go from Appleton JCEP that week to Madison if a committee member plans to attend.
- George could go if Charlie or Kathy S. didn't go as a County Board Member.

8. Public Issues Leadership Development Conference (PILD) – April 12-15

- Charlie is going to PILD, meetings and lobbying effort on the Hill, through WACEC in Washington DC, a two year program so he will attend next year too.
- Before he goes, talk about what issues we want him to raise. Put PILD issues on next agenda.

9. Approve Vouchers

The list of paid vouchers was reviewed and signed. George moved to approve the vouchers for payment. Ken seconded the motion. Motion carried.

10. Other Business - None

11. Next meeting date – Thursday, April 9th at 9:30am

Meeting adjourned at 2:57pm

Respectfully submitted by Amy Tromberg