Minutes

Attendance: Tanesha Pittman, Cook; Ed Schuckert, McHenry; Tameka Wilson, Lake; Dave Klussendorf, Kane; Alex Panozzo, Kankakee; Wayne Mundsinger, Kendall; Doug Tweeten, Will; Pat Kosmach, DuPage; and Extension staff members Deanna Roby, Jim Oliver, and Cathie Condon

Absent: None

Introductions

Review/approval of minutes from previous meeting: It was moved (Kosmach) and seconded (Mundsinger) to accept the minutes of April 10, 2009, as presented.

Programming spotlight

Deanna Roby—Extension Unit Educator, 4-H Youth Development

Dr. James Oliver introduced Deanna Roby who explained the changes that are taking place in Illinois regarding 4-H Youth Development programming. Essentially, there will be three product lines – Positive Youth Development Experiences (community 4-H clubs and special interest groups), Youth Education, and Professional Services for other youth serving organizations. A significant change will be in the use and distribution of youth development educators in each region. Because of shrinking dollars, we have not been able to fill Youth Development Educator positions in each county as was the goal. Current state funded educators will be designated to the formation of special interest groups. The formation of those groups may center around three areas: current 4-H projects, special interest (other topics not related to 4-H projects), and military groups on and off bases in Illinois. The geographic responsibility for these staff members will become broader. Office staff such as community workers or program coordinators will be utilized at the county level to continue programming efforts for community 4-H clubs and other youth outreach.

Roby distributed flyers developed by Denise Legvold, Assistant Dean & Director, 4-H Youth Development, for offices to use when sharing information about Illinois’ 4-H Youth Development program. She also discussed the program fee that went into effect September 1, 2009. $20 is the minimum that can be charged per child involved in community 4-H clubs or special interest groups. A portion of the fee will go toward state efforts and management. The concern at the county level with having such a fee is that it will exclude those typically most at risk from taking advantage of 4-H programs. Various measures were discussed as to how to assist families with paying the fee.

Roby also talked about Shooting Sports, the newest entry in 4-H activities. She assured those present that written into the program is certified volunteer training, strict procedures, and risk management guidelines.
Also discussed was the issue of Extension professionals having access to schools to share what Extension has to offer. It was suggested that going to the district administrative office is a first step. Approval is usually needed before principals get any materials. Other paths include the state level and regional educational offices.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Administrative Update**

**Personnel:**
There were two internal transfers to Cook County. We had to close out the regional Public Information position. However, we had a vacancy in Cook County for which Margaret DeNard was highly qualified. She was hired to fill a Civic Engagement/Public Policy Educator position. Also, Susan Ask, who had previously worked for Extension as a liaison between campus and Chicago’s Department of Environment, has taken the position as Educator, Environmental Sciences/Natural Resources.

There are County Director vacancies in Kane and McHenry. Sandra Davis is Interim in Kane and doing a super job, as is Larry Wilson as Interim in McHenry. We are asking approval from campus to fill the McHenry position at this time. However, if there are going to be reductions in staff, current open positions may lend themselves first to those interested internally before advertising outside the organization.

**Budget**
It is well known that the state budget is pretty tight. We are preparing for reductions/reallocation of up to 14% of general revenue funds (GRF). This would affect our Center offices that operate on GRF. The Youth and Cook County Initiative lines were approved, and County Board Match is 84%. At this point, the difficulty is not getting it in the budget, but getting actual payments from the state.

**Environmental Leadership Conference**
The Environmental Leadership Conference was held in Oak Brook on September 30. Pat Kosmach worked the registration table, and heard positive comments. There were about 180 people in attendance. They represented a good cross-section of the Northeast Region. Andrew Winston was the keynote speaker, and he did an exceptional job. He related his talk to municipalities and townships.

**Civil Service Update**
There will be a secretary inservice November 6 at the Countryside Office that will consist of training support staff on the process for grants and other fiscal procedures.

**Sharing**
See attached.
**Staff Training**

Dr. Oliver talked about the regional efforts with Cost Recovery—instituting program fees and seeking grants. We had a retreat at the end of September with experts working with us on how to go after grants. All of our county offices did an excellent job last year by exceeding their goals in cost recovery, as did the region’s Center offices.

**State Advisory Council Report**—The state advisory Council will meet October 13 and 14 as a group in Washington, DC. They will work on building relationships with staffers of various districts and speak to them about the needs of their communities. Results will be shared at our next meeting. If you have any issues you would like the committee to address, send them to Tanesha Pittman.

Dr. Campion has stepped down as Associate Dean for Extension and has taken another position within the college. Bob Hoeft has assumed the position of Interim for a period of about two years. They will advertise to fill the vacancy in about a year.

**Other**

At the state level, Extension fared better financially than some agencies.

If volunteer mileage was tracked and translated into dollars, in addition to hours logged, it would further show how Extension’s in-kind support adds up. It benefits the county in the long term in so many ways.

It was suggested that the State Advisory group work on the making it easier for Extension to get into schools by first involving the state. To that end, Cook County has been working with the College of Education both at UIC and UIUC. Also, a joint grant could be written to apply for federal funds to demonstrate Extension programming that is outside of agriculture. Schools Online website gets a lot of hits; we distribute bookmarks to market the site. Try to gain support through teachers’ unions and by building relationships with teachers. The Mobile Science Lab reaches a lot of schools. Within two weeks it was completely booked for the year. Interest and demand is there. Another good entry point is if by presenting at Inservice Days. Look for ways to further raise awareness of Extension and to gain more exposure. Video conferencing is a tool to use to be able to meet more often. It can also be employed to reach schools. Discussion followed.

It was moved (Kosmach) and seconded (Schuckert) to adjourn the meeting.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be Friday, April 16, location to be determined.