

Dodge County Extension Board Meeting Minutes  
August 14, 2023

The regular meeting of the Dodge County Extension Board was brought to order by Kathy Kneifl, Extension Board Chair at 4:08 p.m. on Monday, August 14, 2023, at Nebraska Extension Office located at 1206 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Fremont, NE.

Board Members Present: Joel Kerkman, Kathy Kneifl and Bonnie Nebuda. No quorum was present.  
Staff members Shane Ahrens, Lisa Poppe, Ian Peterson, Beth Nacke and Mary Spath were in attendance along with Angie Heller, Extension Zone 8 Director.

The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available to review as it is posted in the meeting room.

Angie Heller asked that four additional items be added to the agenda.

- 3.4 Proposed 2023-24 county budget
- 5.1 Recruitment for new Extension Board members
- 5.2 NACEB Director position available
- 5.3 Reigniting connection

It was approved by those present to add these items to the agenda.

#### Financial Reports

Lisa Poppe presented the General Tax and Extension Program revolving account reports with no questions from those present. Discussion then turned to the proposed tax budget for the fiscal year 2023-2024. The budget increased because of the addition of the Extension Assistant position and the proposed rehiring of a 4-H Administrative Assistant. The Finance committee of the Board of Supervisors has asked that the original proposed budget of \$194,700 be reviewed and revised. After removing \$13,525.00 from the Personal Services line the total budget being asked for is \$181,175.00. The Financial Committee will review it again before approving. Advertising for the 4-H Administrative Assistant will start after the approval of our budget.

#### Unfinished Business

Angi Heller informed those present that the Water and Cropping Systems position for Dodge and Washington counties has been filled, with the final process of hiring being done by UNL. The tentative start date is September 1, 2023.

#### New Business

Recruitment of new Extension Board members was discussed as Kathy Kneifl will reach her term limit and will not be able to continue on the board in 2024. Joel Kerkman will reach the end of his first term and was asked to consider accepting to be on the board for a second term of 3 years. If board members have any suggestions, they were asked to reach out to them or pass on their information to Ian Peterson or Angi Heller by September 15, 2023.

There will be a NACEB Director position open, and Angie asked if Kathy might consider the State position.

Reigniting the Extension connection was discussed. Angie asked the group for ideas on how to build and keep interest in Extension and how to improve participation. Program Highlights and professional development or area tours. Bonnie remarked that handouts that covered our programs were helpful so they could be shared with others she met.

The Dodge County 4-H Extension Educator, Dean Castillo has left Extension. The 4-H Extension Educator position has been posted as of August 4, 2023. The position will be a dual track position, which means that an applicant can have either a bachelor's or master's degree. The position will have a strong focus on STEM and College Readiness. Interviews are targeted for September with hiring in October.

#### Updates from Council / Boards / Staff

Shane Ahrens reported on the 4-H Program in Dodge County. Cole Meader from Saunders County Extension will be available to help with any 4-H livestock questions during the absence of a 4-H Educator in our county. The enrollment numbers for this year were reported as 240 youth, 51 Clover Kids and fifty adult volunteers. Shane reported that the 4-H workshops were successful, and that fifty-three youth had attended them. The Fremont 4-H Expo was held in July with over eight hundred static entries and all the animal shows except sheep saw an increase in numbers. There were five 4-Her's that participated in the State Horse show. The PACE and the Premier Communication Event were held on campus and some Dodge County youth did participate. The Dodge County fair had 254 total exhibitors in the static and livestock exhibits and events.

Shane reported that the Build A Hut program had nine 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students participate. Intern Ashley Abrahams helped with the teaching of this program. Future programs will be the Conservation Day at Summit Lake and Health and Nutrition and Heart Health classes at schools. A flier will be developed to give teachers.

Beth Nacke talked about her partnership with the area food pantries. She reported that the Growing Together Nebraska sites are producing well and that the produce is well received by those in need. She is adjusting her schedule to be at the food pantry in Fremont some of the evenings to visit with clientele, do food demonstrations, and pass out recipes of ways to use the fresh produce.

This fall she will be working with 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders doing nutrition lessons with the PE classes. Irvin, EFNEP funded NEP assistant from Lancaster County, will be teaching a six-lesson series in the health 1 class at Fremont Middle School. Student employee is designing one-page handouts for nutrition education to be distributed with donated produce and a seasonal produce book. She is also working with a team on campus to create shelf tags to identify the fruit that is donated.

Lisa Poppe provided a handout to highlight the Kid Zone that she developed at the Dodge County Fair. An Early Childhood Focus and Adult Ag literacy was her primary focus while making the area attractive and fun for fair goers. Lisa said that a colleague, Ingrid at Saline County, is using some of her ideas at her own fair. Many childcare providers in the area took on-demand classes over the summer that were developed by Lisa and programming starts again online and face-to-face in September.

Ian Peterson presented a handout that highlighted his work during the months of June, July, and August. He is answering questions from the clientele in his 10-county region. Topics include best practices for beneficial insects around the home. Also, best practices to reduce water use and increase lawn vigor. Recently he participated in a program at Haskill Ag labs and had a table with materials to educate those that attended. He was a judge at the Washington County fair and is touring the different Master Gardener project sites. He is also learning more about the Certified Pollinator Gardens and how to recruit new Master Gardeners.

After some discussion of names for new Extension Board members the meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting:

October 16, 2023, 12:00 p.m.

Extension Board Appreciation Luncheon to be held at Dodge County Extension Office, 1206 W 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Fremont NE