

Dodge County Extension Board Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2023

The regular meeting of the Dodge County Extension Board was brought to order by Kathy Kniefl, Extension Board Chair at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, October 16, 2023, at Nebraska Extension Office located at 1206 West 23rd Street, Fremont, NE.

Board Members Present: Kathy Kneifl, Mary Lou Pycha, Rossana Jaeger and Bonnie Nebuda. No quorum was present. Staff members Shane Ahrens, Lisa Poppe, Ian Peterson, Beth Nacke, Mailson Oliveira 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.

No additional items were added to the agenda.

Minutes from the past two meetings (Aug 14 and June 12, 2023) were reviewed.

Financial Reports

Lisa Poppe presented the General Tax and Extension Program revolving account financial reports with no questions from those present.

Unfinished Business

Two individuals were identified as possible new Extension Board members. Contact information will be passed on to Ian Peterson and Angie Heller.

Discussion was had on how to keep Board members informed about the programs that Educators and Assistants provide throughout the county. Board members suggested that engaging demonstrations or illustrations on how Extension brings information to the public would help them understand and be able to tell others about how subject matter and its delivery is happening in Extension in our area.

Pat Tawney, Dodge County Board of Supervisors reported about the importance of keeping Extension and the programs we do in front of the general public, and the County Supervisors' eyes. This information helps support Extension, when conversations about the cost and viability of Extension programs in the county are held.

The Dodge County 4-H Educator position has been reopened and the University will accept applications until October 31, 2023. This position will be to focus on STEM and Career Readiness.

There will be an annual appreciation meeting for the County Supervisors and the "retiring" and new Extension Board members. The tentative date is January 24, 25 at 12:00 noon, to be held here at the Extension office.

New Business

4-H Administrative Assistant applications have been reviewed and an interview will be scheduled.

Updates from Council / Boards / Staff

Shane Ahrens reported that the 4-H Council met in September and reviewed the 4-H events that took place at the Dodge County fair. The Council will meet again in December to update rules and go over schedule changes for the 2024 Dodge County fair. The 4-H program enrollment reports showed that approximately 2600 youth were reached through the Educators efforts here in Dodge County. This points out that about 40 percent of the youth in Dodge County are taught through an Extension program. Shane helped at Conservation Days at Summit Lake in Burt County. He also taught at the Ag Literacy event in Wahoo that approximately 450 youth attended over a 4-day period. The Dodge County 4-H Achievement Celebration will be held November 5 at the North Bend Auditorium with a "Tailgate Theme" this year.

Ian Peterson – Reported to the group that he helped with the 6th Grade Conservation Day held at Summit Lake. He helped with the ID and background information for the prairie walk. Highlighting the importance of the existence of the prairie, the biodiversity, and the importance of invasive species to prairie management and farmers alike. He will be presenting at Career Day with Nebraska Extension in Wayne on October 17th. Ian reported that he is enjoying meeting with the clientele in his 10-county accountability region and looking at different avenues of collaborating with them.

Mialson Oliveira the Water and Cropping Systems Educator introduced himself to the group. He reported that he has been busy doing on-boarding training necessary to be an Educator. Mialson has also been getting to know the area. He helped with Husker Harvest days along with field trips with his mentor Bruno Lena, Extension Educator from Platte County.

Lisa Poppe talked about one of the programs that she helped develop called "Learning in the Heartland". This program has virtual field trips for Early Childhood. This program provides all caregivers, preschool teachers, and parents with books, virtual tours, art, and physical activities along with music. In the past 12 months 207 users downloaded 457 lesson plans which indirectly reached 6,493 children.

Beth Nacke talked about her partnership with the area food pantries. She reported that "The Growing Together Nebraska" garden sites donated over 1500 pounds of fresh produce to those in need. Beth also told the group that along with the produce nutritional information and recipes were handed out to the public. There are 210 enrolled in the "Monthly Meal Kit" program which is active in Fremont, Lexington, and Madison. "The Little Free Pantry" program is working with ARFA funding from Dodge County and the State of Nebraska to set up pantries in communities in Dodge County and across the State. "Take what you need. Give what you can." is the motto of the pantries. There will be a QR code on each pantry to get feedback from those using it. 4-H clubs will be joining in the "The Little Free Pantry" project by supporting pantry locations.

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: **December 11, 2023, 4:00 p.m.**

Extension Board Appreciation Luncheon to be held at Dodge County Extension Office

Tentative Date: **January 24, 2024, at 12:00, Noon**