

Cornell Cooperative Extension Lewis County Board of Directors Meeting January 31, 2024

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order on 1/31/24, at 5:03 pm by President, Peter Ostrum, DVM at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Lewis County Office, Lowville, NY. The introduction of new members and staff were done.

Members & Staff Present:

Michele Ledoux	X	Barry Lyndaker	X	Paul O'Connor	X	Sarah Zeger, DVM	X
Jenna Lauraine	X	Harley Snyder	X	Penny Moser	X	Shellie Marks	X
Peter Ostrum, DVM	X	Roxaina Hurlburt	X	Kristin Thomas	X	Scott Sawyer	A
Michael Kraeger	X	Kelly Kunz	X	Charlie Berrus	X	Stefanie LaPier	X
Melissa Watkins	X	Caitlin Humphrey	X				

Absent:

Excused: Scott Sawyer

Guest(s) Present:

Correspondence:

Michele Ledoux highlighted that Melissa Watkins and the video: *4H and Lewis County Welcomes You* received a 4H Educators Award and that we received a thank you note back from the office of Senator Mark Walczyk for visiting his office in January.

Minutes:

Jenna Lauraine made a motion to approve the minutes of November 14, 2023, seconded by Roxaina Hurlburt, motion carried.

Reports of the Liaison Representatives:

Legislative Representative: No report

Extension Representative: Paul O'Connor discussed the Albany visit campaign for the Governor to set aside \$6.1 million in State 224 funding in her budget. The Governor set aside \$4.4 million which was expected. The Executive Directors asked the legislature to fill in the remainder 1.7 million and the decision should be made by April 1st.

Michele Ledoux handed out CCE booklets and impact statements that were handed out during the Albany visit.

Paul O'Connor explained Andy Turner's background and that he could attend meetings.

Michele Ledoux stated she did invite him to tour some maple facilities up here in March and suggested that it could be the same date as our next board meeting. Paul O'Connor explained it is a matter of his calendar. Peter Ostrum, DVM says we should try to get him to come in March to our BOD's meeting. Michele Ledoux suggested we could also invite him to our next annual meeting.

Standing Committee Reports:

Finance: Roxaina Hurlburt, Treasurer requested that Charlie Berrus, Finance Coordinator gave the October 2023 and November 2023 Financials to the Board.

- Charlie Berrus presented the October 2023 and November 2023 Financials, with a motion to receive them made by Michael Kraeger, seconded by Peter Ostrum, DVM motion carried.
- Peter Ostrum, DVM explained for new board members the new financial summaries are easier to understand. Stefanie LaPier shared how other counties like the reports as well.

- Charlie Berrus presented the transactional changes for the year. Michele Ledoux explained the purpose of the Annual Operating Resolution changes and what they covered. Charlie Berrus explained removing Robin Wendell-Zabelowicz and adding Mellissa Spence to the Annual Operating Resolutions in several lines, along with the addition of Community Bank for our two CD's. Motion made by Kristin Thomas, seconded by Jenna Lauraine to approve the CCE Lewis Annual Operating Resolutions for 2024, motion carried.
- Michele Ledoux presented the AR (Association Requirements-County)/BR (Business Requirements-Cornell) Agreements which we have with Lewis County and Cornell University. Peter Ostrum asks Michele Ledoux to explain any changes. Michele Ledoux explained there are currently no changes for 2024. Peter Ostrum asks if we needed a motion, which we did not as the Operating Resolution approves the Board President signing both.

Personnel: None

Strategic Planning: None

Program & Staff Reports-

4-H – handout. Melissa Watkins shared current and upcoming 4H programs and stated she is going to visit Lowville Academy for Career Day to work on enrollment and preparing for the county fair. Discussed the Pratt Northam internship program. Paul O'Connor asks for an explanation of the intern program. Melissa Watkins, Michele Ledoux, and Kelly Kuntz explain they are seniors in high school or college students who work 350 hours, help with the fair, and explore their interests at CCE.

Ag Report- handout. Michele Ledoux shares they just attended the Ag Society meeting; three farms were honored as Century Farms and are working to ensure all the Century Farms in Lewis County are highlighted in June at the Legislative Meeting.

Michele Ledoux discussed Maple for Fun, the “How to Get a Better Price for Your Beef or Dairy/Beef Cross Animal in the Ring” workshops, and the “Benefits of Biocontrol Nematodes & Maintain Forage Quality in Extreme Weather” workshop. Also discusses David Nisley’s upcoming projects with NY Thursdays and that he submitted his quarterly report for his grant.

Peter Ostrum, DVM asked if David Nisely can attend the next board meeting and give an update on the Farm to School Program in Lewis County.

Parenting – Kelly Kuntz explained her position and reported a success story about one of the families she has been working with.

Executive Director- Michele Ledoux reports employee annual training has started for this year, we have updated the required posters, personnel manual, recruitment, etc. as needed to support the Diversity requirements. Kelly Kuntz explains where everything is posted and where training manuals are.

Michele Ledoux handed out the Board of Director cards to update the 2024 Organizational Report and brought up that Federal mileage has increased.

Discussion followed on the advantages and disadvantages of using per diem with staff on their expense reports. Stefanie LaPier shares rates for meals, explained why per diem is more convenient than using tax exempt forms in restaurants. Michele Ledoux covered that if staff are at a meeting where dinner is served, they do not claim a dinner for that meeting. We do spend a fair amount of time tracking down receipts. Peter Ostrum, DVM asks how many other counties use per diem? Paul O'Connor shared he does not know how many, but he has been hearing this discussion in multiple counties. Jenna Lauraine stated that if the policy is written accordingly, and it is easier for staff, it is a promising idea. Stefanie LaPier states that receipts are a problem everywhere. Roxaina Hulbert and Peter Ostrum, DVM asked if we put per diem into place can it be undone if it does not work. Stefanie LaPier confirms it can. Motion made by Jenna Lauraine, seconded by Roxaina Hulbert to start the per diem policy effective February 1, 2024, for Lewis County CCE, motion carried.

Peter Ostrum, DVM asked if all Board members were receiving the monthly newsletter, and some members were not. Michele Ledoux asks everyone to write their preferred method of receiving the newsletter on their Board of Director organizational card.

Old Business –

Michele Ledoux announced that the Lewis County Open Farm Day will be on Saturday, August 10th. Peter Ostrum, DVM asks for an explanation of Open Farm Day for all BOD members. Michele Ledoux discussed the event: stating that it covers farms from the top of the county to the bottom, including every type of farm, consumers are invited to tour the farm for samples and/or educational information. CCE Lewis provides maps and check lists for farms. CCE Lewis was also open and had food samples and educational information. We hope to have more farmers involved in this and we are already getting

donations. Peter Ostrum, DVM asked who donated, Michele Ledoux and Stefanie LaPier share donation sources and discuss outreach strategy for donations.

New Business –

Michele Ledoux presented the Affirmative Action and Diversity plan; Paul O'Connor recommends everyone review it. It was included in the Board packet. Motion by Jenna Lauraine and seconded by Peter Ostrum, DVM to approve the plan and have the Board President sign it, motion carried.

Michele Ledoux discussed the slate of officers for the 2024 Board of Directors with Peter Ostrum, DVM as President, Penny Moser as Vice-President, Jenna Lauraine as Secretary and Roxaina Hurlburt as Treasurer, motion by Mike Kraeger, seconded by Sarah Zeger, DVM, motion carried.

Personnel Committee: Penny Moser, Sarah Zeger, DVM, Andrew Kramer and Molly Scoville.

Strategic Planning Committee: Jenna Lauraine, Kristin Thomas, Josh Fitzgerald, and Andrew Kramer.

Finance Committee: Roxaina Hurlburt, Shellie Marks, Mary Rumble and Ed Koss.

Motion by Peter Ostrum, DVM seconded by Shellie Marks to approve the above committees, motion carried.

Michele Ledoux proposed tentative 2024 Board meeting dates of January 31st, March 20th, May 22nd, August 21st and November 20th starting at 5pm. Motion by Roxaina Hulbert to approve the 2024 Board Meeting dates as presented, seconded by Jenna Lauraine, motion carried.

Paul O'Connor suggested if there is a county or state travel ban Board and/or Program Committee meetings can be held over zoom but otherwise it is not allowed. Peter Ostrum, DVM asked where the Board meetings were advertised. Michele Ledoux stated in the local paper and on our website. Paul O'Connor states these are free services. Michele Ledoux stated we can also advertise this in the newsletter.

Discussion was held about the Annual Meeting with a tentative date of October 16, 2024. Peter Ostrum, DVM proposed that we have another joint meeting with the Farm Bureau along with Soil and Water as it worked well last year. Michele Ledoux proposed we have a date set up well in advance so we can schedule a speaker and coordinate with the Farm Bureau along with Soil and Water. Michael Kraeger suggests we consider the Edge and look at the southern part of the county. Motion made by Penny Moser, seconded by Kristin Thomas to have the Annual Meeting on October 16, 2024, motion passed.

Michele Ledoux handed out position descriptions of the Regional Ag Dairy Position and Regional Farm Business Specialist Position. Michele Ledoux explained the functions of the North Country Regional Ag Team (NCRAT) and our withdrawal from it (effective May 2024) as well as our current intent to be part of a Tri County Regional Ag Team with Jefferson and St Lawrence counties. We looked at several other possibilities to staff agriculture in our county for our farmers, but this scenario looks to be the most promising. Michael Kraeger discussed the specialists and their salaries. Michele Ledoux explained that Cornell pays for all their technology and vehicles, and the counties contribute towards the salaries of the specialists. Roxaina Hulbert asks if there are two positions open. Michele Ledoux explained that two of the specialists have left for other positions within the Cornell system and one more has stated that they have a job offer with no timetable given on when he is leaving. Board members were given a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of the Tri County Regional Ag to review. Peter Ostrum, DVM did ask if this had been submitted to Cornell. Michele Ledoux confirmed that it had not. Roxaina Hulbert, Peter Ostrum, DVM and Stefanie LaPier discuss model of the Tri County MOU: each county will have one specialist, then when a participating county needs to use one of the other's specialists the other county will bill for the service. Jenna Lauraine asks if the salary is competitive and feasible in the budget. Michele Ledoux confirms yes. Kristin Thomas asks if they must have a master's degree? Paul O'Connor confirmed that it is a Cornell requirement if we want to hire at a Senior Resource level. Stefanie LaPier explained State 224 and how the funding requires a master's degree. Discussion was held on how the counties chose which specialist would be employed by which county. St Lawrence will have Farm Business Management Specialist; Lewis will have the Dairy Specialist and Jefferson would have the Field Crops Specialist. Mike Kraeger asks if the State 224 funding is from Cornell. Paul O'Connor explains that the current NCRAT is funded by Smith Lever. Mike Kraeger asks if Smith Lever would help fund the new MOU. Paul O'Connor spoke with Andy Turner and was told that CCE Administration does not have funding to apply to this MOU.

Roxaina Hurlburt asked if the Board needed to do anything with the proposed position description. Discussion ensued about wanting to submit the position early so it is approved by the time the other NCRAT specialists leave, and the new Tri County MOU is approved. Charlie Berrus and Roxaina Hulbert asked if we could list the position before the three counties formed an agreement. Paul O'Connor explained the position approval process to the Board. Peter Ostrum, DVM stated that we do not want to wait till after college graduation. Jenna Lauraine stated that the Tri County MOU should be a working document to ensure that having the agricultural specialist positions already assigned to the counties is not a barrier. Peter Ostrum, DVM

stated we should make a final decision in March. Jenna Lauraine proposes we authorize staff to finalize submitting the position while the Tri County MOU is being developed. Michele Ledoux discussed the position as presented to the Board. Paul O'Connor explained we can move the March meeting date to accommodate getting the position submitted. Jenna Lauraine made a motion to have Michele Ledoux finalize the Lewis County Regional Dairy Specialist Position Description and submit it to Cornell for approval, seconded by Roxaina Hulbert, motion carried.

Peter Ostrum, DVM advised everyone to look over the new Regional Dairy Specialist position description and suggests we meet again before March to facilitate this entire process. Roxaina Hulbert suggests we should get the three counties working together on the Tri County MOU and the other position descriptions beforehand, with Peter Ostrum, DVM agreeing. Michele Ledoux suggests a tentative meeting date be set for February. **The date of February 21, 2024, at 5pm was set, if everything can be finished and lined up for the Board to have a short meeting.** Jenna Lauraine requested an agenda be sent out beforehand. Kelly Kuntz asks if the Tri County MOU is not approved, do we still want to meet in February? This meeting will be for approval of the Tri County MOU and Paul O'Connor will follow through on the timing of the Regional Dairy Specialist position description. Peter Ostrum, DVM stated that the Board should contact Michele Ledoux if they have any necessary changes to the position description or the Tri County MOU.

Motion made by Roxaina Hurlburt to adjourn the meeting at 7:04 pm, seconded by Harley Snyder, motion carried.

Next meeting is March 20, 2024, at 5:00 pm at the Cooperative Extension Office Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted: Jenna Lauraine, Secretary

Prepared by: Caitlin Humphrey