

CCE Schoharie & Otsego Counties
Finance and Human Resources Committee Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2024

Present: Betsy Jensen, Carol Phelps, Tom Pullyblank, Alicia Terry, Mahla Zare; staff Liz Callahan and Mayra Richter.

Tom Pullyblank called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

Finance topics reviewed and discussed:

- Mayra reported that everything is generally status quo. ASP has ended for the season and the staff is helping with FFD and fair preparations; costs being covered by the OCFS grant reserve. Fair prep is underway, and costs seem to be lower this year. FFD is in full prep, costs are under budget. Nicole has created an FFD agricultural activity book that we will also be distributing at the fairs.
- The past due accounts receivable amount for the annual Nancy Widin Swart Memorial Fund Endowment has finally been received and should be awarded to us more expeditiously in the future. Along with CCE Erie, we annually receive proceeds in the hundreds from the investment returns. The past due Farm to School payment for the first quarter of 2024 has also been paid, and the final payment for the second quarter has just been received in July.
- We have submitted the new Farm to School grant proposal and are awaiting notification (Sept.)
- In reviewing the Association's Financial Report through June, the balances are within budgeted expectations (or divergence occurred in the past and has been previously explained.) We had to split the Ag contract from Appropriations, so the budgeted two rows don't reflect how revenue will be received, but the combined revenue will equal the original appropriations budgeted amount.
- Schoharie had some unexpected plumbing issues requiring remediation, repairs and replacements so there is an increase over the anticipated budget for Maintenance/Repairs. We're also getting quotes for carpet cleaning.
- A motion was made by Carol, seconded by Tom to present to the board and recommend the approval of the Schoharie financial reports. A motion was made by Alicia, seconded by Carol to present to the board and recommend the approval of the Otsego financial reports. Both motions passed unanimously.
- The USDA-NIFA grant transfer is almost complete; just awaiting new contract number. We will be able to redefine the project; Liz is working with Marcie to bring the Hort program into it with the Seed to Supper program, also encompasses food gardening, nutrition/Health Connections, Farm to School/ag education.
- We should know the status of our SNAP-ED grants early next week; this will bring on a full-time staff from CCE Delaware and a new hire. We have a possible candidate for the NYSERDA position.
- No new news on the Congressionally Directed Spending award yet; Julie Suarez of CALS says the process will go very slowly through the fall, especially due to the election year.
- The grants coming to CCESO from CCE Delaware have 3 to 5 year terms. CCESO will make every effort to continue working collaboratively on these programs with CCE Delaware whenever it is appropriate and feasible.

HR topics reviewed and discussed:

- The Association accepted the resignation letter from Kimberly Ferstler. Her last day of work was June 28. She was dissatisfied with her favorable performance evaluation so decided to focus on her home life.

- In the coming months we will be hiring up to six new staff: replacements for Ag and HC positions; new hire for NYSERDA position; and probable new hires for FTS (part time), NIFA (part time) and SNAP-ED. The committee discussed exploring the potential of melding two part time positions into one staff.
- Liz reported that about one-third of our current staff are not interacting professionally with coworkers. These negative interactions by the few are causing a negative domino effect amongst the staff at large. The behaviors are being addressed and need to be improved with the new staff that are coming on board.
- On July 11 the staff participated in a facilitated staff retreat with the staff from CCE Herkimer to help improve our *Skills for Success* by improving our teamwork, communications and respect of each other. One staff member fell asleep during discussions, and another was overheard constantly making disparaging remarks about the day's activities and Cornell's "Skills for Success" as a whole, stating the day a complete waste of time. (The Skills for Success are a foundational part of every staff person's signed employment contract; attached below.)
- Liz reported that on July 10th one staff member threatened physical violence towards another. When brought in to discuss the matter, she first attacked the character of the person who correctly reported her calling her a "tattletale" then she attempted to deflect her actions by referring to feelings of neglect over a personal issue that occurred over a year ago that was never brought to ED's attention nor involved the victim coworker. She would not accept responsibility for her actions and her eventual apology was made by yelling at the victim. In addition to the serious concern regarding the threat of violence, this is one of the recent examples of staff not being accountable for their disrespectful actions toward other staff.
- The negative behaviors are specific to a few staff but are negatively affecting the rest of the staff. The behaviors have the potential of hindering the onboarding and retention of new staff coming on board. Staff need to be held accountable for their actions and not blame their actions and attitudes on other staff.
- Liz and Mayra are going to review sections of our Policy Manual that cover these issues with all staff, explaining that unprofessional behaviors such as gossiping, talking negatively about any staff, disrespectful actions and words, withholding information, leaving persons out of relevant communications, etc will no longer be tolerated by anyone effective immediately. As an official warning, everyone will be asked to sign that they read and understand that any further incidents will lead to disciplinary action, including the possibility of termination.
- We will continue to work with all staff by having additional staff development retreats, reinstitute birthday celebrations rather than just announcements, and ask for staff for make suggestion improvements.
- Betsy suggested Liz hold additional regularly scheduled one-on-one check-ins with staff so issues don't fester. Tom recommended several books.
- Alicia thinks that the Board will support our efforts, and that these personnel issues are widespread and not isolated to CCESO.
- Liz brought up the investigation into the complaint made by EJK, and asked how the staff who were the subjects of the complaint can learn from the complaint and the findings of the investigation.
 - Is there anything in the findings that we need to understand/be aware of so that we can improve?
 - What lessons/messages should the staff members named in the complaint take away. How would the Board like us to move forward as we do our jobs?

Meeting Adjourned at 2:30 PM.

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

(The following skills are essential for individual and organizational success.)

As a member of Cornell Cooperative Extension I...

Health and Safety

- Support the Association to maintain a safe working environment.
- Be familiar and strive to follow any applicable federal, state, local regulations, Association health and safety policies, procedures, requirements or standards.
- Act proactively to prevent accidents/injuries and communicate hazards to supervisors when identified.

Interact with integrity...So people are respected and engaged.

- Be honest and trustworthy, demonstrate high standards of personal conduct.
- Have a positive attitude.
- Involve others as appropriate when outcomes impact their work.
- Be diplomatic in your interactions with customers and stakeholders.
- Admit your mistakes and learn from them.
- Acknowledge the support and contributions of others.

Contribute positively to an inclusive environment...So people feel like they belong.

- Communicate across difference to create a collaborative, collegial, and caring community.
- Be cooperative, open and welcoming to all.
- Show respect, compassion and empathy for others, even in difficult situations.
- Engage and support others regardless of background or perspective.
- Speak up when others are being excluded or treated inappropriately.
- Actively support work-life integration.

Support the organization's shared vision and mission...I am trusted to move the Association and team goals forward.

- Show commitment to the Association's goals in delivering results.
- Anticipate, embrace, promote and implement change.
- Balance short-term gains with long-term vision.
- Be open and receptive to new information, ideas and approaches.
- Be adaptable, modify your preferred way of doing things when it benefits the whole.
- Support ideas, solutions and changes to processes to ensure high quality outcomes.

Communicate clearly and consistently...So people are informed and heard.

- Seek to understand and then to be understood.
- Demonstrate active listening skills.
- Express thoughts clearly, both verbally and in writing.
- Share knowledge and information.
- Give, receive and act upon helpful and timely feedback.

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

(The following skills are essential for individual and organizational success.)

Act and take initiative...I take ownership of my work and results.

- Adopt a culture of sustainability and efficiency.
- Strive to develop and implement best practices
- Take responsible risks to innovate seeking advancements in products, processes, services, technologies or ideas.
- Identify opportunities in challenges and show initiative.
- Reach out in a timely and responsive manner to resolve problems and conflicts.
- Anticipate and adapt to changing priorities and additional demands.

Display sound judgment in problem solving...People seek me out to find solutions to deliver results.

- Exercise sound judgment to make decisions and meet deliverables.
- Assess environment, economic, compliance and social impacts in decision-making.
- Demonstrate innovative, creative and informed risk taking.
- Apply analytic thinking, data and metrics to synthesize complex information.
- Anticipate obstacles and generate alternatives.
- Negotiate to find and orchestrate win-win solutions.

Proactively seek self-development and coaching opportunities...People see my commitment and passion to continuously develop.

- Be self-aware.
- Work to continuously learn and improve.
- Take measures to ensure personal well-being and balance.
- Seek and act upon performance feedback.
- Apply learning to evolving assignments.
- Actively manage your career.
- Encourage others to develop themselves.

Job Skills

- Demonstrates competence in tools, equipment, software and technologies to effectively complete assignments and job tasks.
- Maintains professional certifications, licensing and education in functional expertise and effectively applies knowledge.
- Understands, interprets and applies regulations, policies and contracts to deliver effective results.
- Uses good judgment, information and observations to evaluate and recommend actions to support decisions and deliverables.