

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Schoharie and Otsego Counties

Board of Directors Organizational Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 23, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

Cobleskill Extension Center, Cooperstown Education Center & Virtual Meeting

- I. Call to order** – President Tina Douglas called the Association Board of Directors to order at 6:37 PM. The president directed members to review the agenda and asked for additional agenda items. No additions were requested.
- II. Roll call** –Secretary Leslie Judd did roll call and the board members present were Tina Douglas, Lynn Dunn, Christine Edwards, Deborah Gansinger Hall, Betsy Jensen, Leslie Judd, Shelby MacLeish, Andrew Marietta (7:00 PM), Tom Pullyblank, Steve Sinniger and Alicia Terry (via Zoom). Staff in attendance were Liz Callahan, Mayra Richter and Nicole Thompson. Absent were James Bryant, Danielle Hautanami, Carol Phelps and Mahla Zare. A quorum was present.
- III. Secretary's Report** – Leslie Judd asked for any corrections or additions to the May 28 ,2024 meeting minutes. With no corrections voiced, Tom Pullyblank moved to approve the minutes as distributed, Shelby MacLeish seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
- IV. Nominating Committee Report** – The committee has not met. Liz requested names of those interested in joining the committee by August 23rd.
- V. Standing Committee Reports** (*Committee meeting minutes previously provided for review*):

- **Finance & HR Committee** – The committee met on July 12, 2024.

Tom Pullyblank noted the highlights of the meeting reporting that there was nothing unusual regarding finances, there were a few lines that are over budget due to money being recouped from past due balances and are now on the positive side for revenue.

Liz reported that there were a few personnel matters addressed, one being an employee's comment against another employee that has been addressed both verbally and in writing with a corrective action notice and an administrative referral for anger management through the Employee Assistance Program.

Liz also mentioned that the Finance & HR committee members all had great suggestions on books and ways to improve our structured staff meetings. Liz also reminded the board that she is always open to suggestions on how to reshape the cultural issues among the staff.

The CCESO staff attended a facilitated staff training in collaboration with CCE Herkimer County on July 11th on Respectful Communication and The Skills for Success provided by Cornell. CCESO and CCE Herkimer are planning to do another staff training together in the fall regarding diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. Other associations have also reached out to Liz to collaborate on staff training regarding emotional intelligence.

Liz said that with current CCESO staff, improving interpersonal skills seems to be the main need at this time. Shelby asked if this area of concern was in both offices or mainly in one or another. Liz noted that she has considered the professionalism of the staff; half are excellent, two are on the fence, and three often exhibit unprofessional behaviors and need improvement. This creates an uphill battle for all staff. Tina asked if the negative staff were

open minded to change and Liz explained that some are, and some aren't as receptive, but she will continue to try and bring it to all staff attention without pointing fingers.

With no further questions voiced, Alicia Terry moved to approve the Financial Reports through June 2024 subject to audit; Steve Sinniger seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Fund Development Committee** – The committee met on July 15, 2024.

Liz Callahan highlighted the discussion of doing board development activities and capacity building in the future. There will be two hospitality events coming up, one at each fair. The Otsego County event will be on July 31st in Martin Hall at Otsego County Fair and will be from 4:30PM - 6:30 PM, with a catered BBQ Buffet dinner. Liz is working on scheduling something similar for Schoharie County Fair and is hoping to do it on August 10 but that date is not finalized. There will be handouts of materials including general information about CCESO and what our programs offer and are currently doing.

An action item was brought to the board to “discuss the roll of board members at these events.” Liz’s estimation would be that the board members would be gladhanding and chatting with elected officials who attend as guests, they would talk about what CCESO has been doing and what is being represented at each fair. Tina mentioned that it is important that the board members network the room and engage about who you are and why you are involved with CCE at all hospitality events, including but not limited to fairs and our annual meeting.

Liz reported that we were not chosen to move forward with the congressionally directed spending process and she is writing a consolidated funding application for 123 Lake Street in Cooperstown for phase one of work that needs to be done. Other grants that are pending include SNAP ED and Farm to School with a start date of October 2024. The LEAPs grant for the Schoharie and Sharon Springs Afterschool Programs were not awarded. Schoharie ASP remains in tact as it is a fee for service, but we will not be doing a Sharon Springs program this year.

There was a USDA NIFA (National Institute for Food and Agriculture) grant transfer opportunity presented to us for improving rural food deserts, horticulture and nutrition education. We can and would be revising the grant to suit a grant that we submitted that was not funded, around lowering the barrier to access gardening through the seed to supper program, nutrition education serving families, adults and youth as well as our Farm to School program reaching out to youth in the school and our horticulture program.

There is an action item brought to the board to approve the acceptance of this USDA NIFA grant which is \$187,000 for a 3-year period. This grant would not be renewable, and the goal would be to get a seed to supper program rooted and then it would be continued by volunteers and our nutrition program.

Tom Pullyblank moved to approve accepting the grant transfer, Deborah Gansinger Hall seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Liz announced that we are participating in Mohawk Valley Gives Day again in September. This year they are trying to expand the compacity of participating organizations so Nicole is going to participate in “Mohawk Valley Gives University” where she is going to learn how to leverage the whole platform to support the work she is doing. There is also a workshop available for board members to leverage the momentum of the give day. The MVG

University is on August 8 in Utica, NY. Liz will send information to all board members regarding the program.

- **Buildings & Grounds Committee** – The committee met on July 12, 2024.

Top Pullyblank reported that all is well in the Cooperstown office. In the Cobleskill office, the committee is looking into what to do with the side road/driveway that is adjacent to the ball field, one suggestion was to expand the garden into that area. The Cobleskill office had a hot water heater leak but that has been repaired. The committee also is discussing access to the restrooms in the Cobleskill office and is recommending that both bathrooms change to unisex bathrooms with locks on the doors.

- **Annual Meeting Committee** – The committee met on July 8, 2024.

Deb Gansinger Hall reported that board approval is needed to solidify the date, time and location of our annual meeting. The annual meeting will be held in the Craven Lounge, Morris Hall, SUNY Oneonta on Wednesday, October 16th with reservations from 5 PM-8:45 PM, reception to start at 6 PM.

Deb Gansinger Hall moved to approve accepting the date, time and location of the 2024 Annual Meeting, Tom Pullyblank seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Deb reported that the Annual Meeting Committee is also requesting approval to use up to \$1,000 for catering, promotional items and favors for the event. Deb Gansinger Hall moved to approve up to \$1,000 be allocated to the annual meeting, Betsy Jensen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Liz is asking each board member to collect a small “door prize.” Prizes will be used to encourage attendees to speak to program staff at each station and have their program passport stamped. Attendees can enter their stamped program passport into a drawing for the prizes.

VI. Program Advisory Committee Reports: *(Committee meeting notes previously provided for review)*

- **Agriculture/Horticulture** – The committee met on July 11, 2024.

Betsy reported that the committee talked again about the purpose of the Program Advisory Committee and the connection between the staff and committee members. The committee also discussed the USDA NIFA grant transfer opportunity.

Family Farm Day (FFD) is August 24th. CCESO Staff have created a children’s activity book which Mayra showed a preview of. This will be given out at both fairs to promote the event and given out at Family Farm Day at each farm. Liz asked for board members to volunteer to formally visit FFD Farms as a representative of CCESO to thank the farmers and show a presence. There will be T-shirts for each board member attending and board members will have first dibs at picking which farm(s) they want to visit, and staff and volunteers will visit the rest. Shelby, Tom and Deb all volunteered to visit farms.

- **FCS** – The committee met on June 25, 2024.

Deborah Gansinger-Hall reported that Michelle was out with a back injury but is working on getting classes back up. Kimberly Ferstler is no longer with the association and her position was posted today. The Farm to School program ended at the end of May and the new grant application is in process. Deb made a motion to reappoint Lindsey Garner to the FCS program advisory committee now that she is no longer a staff member, Tom Pullyblank seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- **4-H** – The committee met on June 15, 2024.

Steve Sinniger reported that Cindy Powers has resigned from the PAC and there are now two openings on the Otsego County committee. It was also reported that Teresa discussed the possibility of forming a new team group that would teach adolescents to be independent thinkers and let them help out with programs. Steve said that when the Hartwick Theater Group disbanded, they donated \$1,600 to the 4H programs and the PAC wants to use that money for the teen program. Mayra reminded Steve that the funds were already moved to general 4-H funds at the end of 2023 and now can be used but is not in a designated account.

The PAC also discussed an issue between two members in the same club that happened outside of 4H, both youth will be allowed to stay in the club.

VI. Executive Director's Report:

Liz Callahan reported again that she will email out a survey regarding board member compacity and about Mohawk Valley Gives University. She has not heard anything about the SNAP ED grant that we are partnering with CCE of Onondaga County for, which would bring 2 staff members to our association starting on October 1st. CCE Onondaga has stressed to Liz that the state reimbursement for the grant have been about 10 months behind and therefore we would be committed for up to 10 months of expenses. Schoharie County could front the program financially and be refunded in time. The board agreed to proceed with the SNAP ED grant as planned.

If funded, the Farm to School program will start in October 2024 and go through Sept 2026 and we expect notification by the fall.

Liz also reported that staff will be full fledge at both fairs from July 30th through August 11th. She will be attending an executive leadership conference for CCE executive directors. September 20th is Mohawk Valley Gives Day and encourages the board to get engaged in the giving day momentum. At the September board meeting, Liz hopes to kick off the association strategic planning process. Liz also plans on continuing to do Ag networking events with both Schoharie and Otsego County Farm Bureau in early winter.

- VII. Otsego Board of Representatives Report** – Andrew Marietta didn't have anything new to report on, the county board is about to start the budget process next week and is in the process of evaluation for the county administrator.

- VIII. Schoharie Board of Supervisors Report** – Alicia Terry reported that there are interviews happening for the County Ag position and ... ag economic development specialist interviews this week... County budget season, expect communications from county administrator regarding budget eminently ...

- IX. New Business:** Mayra mentioned that the board forgot to establish the association standing committees (Article 7, Section 1 in Constitution) at the organizational meeting this year. Andrew motioned to establish the association standing committees, Lynn Dunn seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- X. Old Business:** Andrew continued the discussion about the association constitution. He went on to say that he is concerned about the meeting structure for committees, the use of Zoom and open meetings law and doesn't see quorum requirements for the committees in the association

constitution. General discussion ensued. Tom then asked to postpone the discussion to another time. Liz stated that she will form an ad hoc committee to evaluate the different organizational documents and Cornell's requirements.

Adjournment: Meeting Adjourned at 8:28 PM on a motion by Shelby MacLeish, seconded by Deb Gansinger Hall. Our next meeting is on September 24, 2024.

Minutes submitted by: Mayra Richter

Reviewed by: Liz Callahan