

Board of Directors Meeting
24 Martin Road, Voorheesville, NY 12186
January 29, 2025 - 6:00pm

PRESENT: Theresa Rodriguez, Wendy Daignault, Kevin Millington, Ellen Doolin, Allyson Whiting, Ann Potts, Christine Saplin, William Reinhardt
Staff: Lisa Godlewski, Lisa Buenau, Anthony Zumbolo, Barbara Stevens, Jessica Denno
Absent: Keshana Owens-Cody, Susan Black, Susan Dwyer, Danielle Hautaniemi, Carolyn Anderson

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** By Vice President Christine Saplin at 6:06pm. Thank you everyone for coming out on this fitful day!

II. **SLATE OF OFFICERS:**

Proposed Slate of Officers – 2025

President	Carolyn Anderson
Vice President	Christine Saplin
Treasurer	Kevin Millington
Secretary	Linda Susan Black

MOTION: Motion made by Ellen Doolin to accept slate of officers as presented, seconded by Ann Potts. Approved unanimously.

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- Nominating Meeting Minutes (October 30, 2024) presented.

MOTION: Motion made by Ellen Doolin to accept the Nominating Meeting Minutes from October 30, 2024 as presented, seconded by Kevin Millington. Approved unanimously.

- Executive Committee Meeting Minutes (October 30, 2024) presented.

MOTION: Motion made by Ann Potts to accept the Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from October 30, 2024 as presented, seconded by Kevin Millington. Approved unanimously.

- Annual Meeting Minutes (November 14, 2024) presented.

MOTION: Motion made by Ellen Doolin to accept Annual Meeting Minutes from November 14, 2024 as presented, seconded by Allyson Whiting. Approved unanimously.

IV. **REPORT FROM OFFICERS:**

President- President Anderson was unable to attend.

Vice President- Christine thinks it is amazing what can be accomplished by the organization during extreme challenges - thank you!

Treasurer- Financial health of the organization is excellent. Expenses in line with budget. Overall, the financial health of the association is very strong.

Secretary- Secretary Black was unable to attend.

V. **LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT:** Bill Reinhardt reports:

- Bill opened his report indicating how glad he is to be back. Albany County is involved in two environmental issues that may become significant and possibly affect how CCE deals with programming in homes and how we view health and safety issues as an organization: PFAS and landfill leachate. Operators collect leachate and take it to the local water treatment plants where there is a tipping fee for the disposal. However, these plants are designed for human waste, not chemical or industrial waste, or forever chemicals. There is more and more awareness right now in how this is affecting our drinking water. To date, PFAS have not been well regulated, and we are becoming more informed of the health issues associated with these and how prevalent they are in our bodies. The county burns PFAs, which causes smoke to enter the air and residue falls to the ground. The Albany County Legislature is learning more about all these issues and about the environmental issues associated. There may be regulatory rules forming around this. Extension may be positioned to educate consumers about the sources of PFAs, and how one can minimize when/where families are exposed. Good discussion followed around the risks, potential regulations, and extension's possible role in educating consumers.

VI. **FINANCIAL REPORT:** Anthony Zumbolo reports:

- Financials are closed through November and everything is going well. There is a slight change in Cash Savings and CD investments as the association's CD with Broadview matured and we moved it into the investment with NBT bank for now. Fixed assets and Right of Use line items have changed as we no longer lease vehicles; only one printer. Revenue and Expenditures- things moving well and balanced, notably the audit line is affected by timing of invoice. Bill Reinhardt noted that most earnings and dividends are going up, gain on investments, but noticed one area where the investment went down. Anthony explained that we met with the association's investment advisor this week and evaluated the 30/70 ratio as well as the current market. An adjustment rebalance was made given the current financial climate.

MOTION: Motion made by Ellen Doolin to approve the October and November financial statements pending audit, seconded by Kevin Millington. Approved unanimously.

- Associations independent audit for 2024 scheduled for end of April. Engagement letter available for reference. The auditor will spend approximately four days with us reviewing records and collecting information, then will follow up, finalizing later in the summer.

VII. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** No comments

VIII. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT:** Lisa Godlewski reports:

- The board approved COLA (Cost of Living Adjustments) for staff, which was wonderful. Albany County funding to CCE increased 5% so we were able to implement COLA (in line with county recommendations) and move towards hiring a climate resource educator.
- Continuing to consider details around moving the urban Green Street office- Housing Authority is undergoing a large renovation.
- New York State- Executive Directors from across the state met with approximately 90 NYS Senators and Assemblymembers throughout the day Monday, to highlight CCE's mission, why we are important to the state budget, and reviewed the types of work we do in their local communities. We would love for the Governor to put us in her executive budget for the full increase, but that has yet to happen. Our county collaborations and appropriation dictate the amount of formula-based funding we receive from the state. Extension is part of the higher education portion of the NYS budget, but the agriculture committee chair members have always been supportive and key to our budget requests.
- Federal news around executive orders, funding, cuts, etc. has been troubling. We are tracking potential impacts and evaluating DEI implications. Bill was wondering about where the funding responsibility will lie if the federal government takes back the money. Lisa shared we have state dollars that originate from federal dollars, and there are other complex relationships in federal funding.
- Risk Management- looking at all aspects of this more closely and working to coordinate an increased review of contracts.
- Records Retention- working to learn more about extensions records retention schedule.
- Hiring and Staffing- positions have stabilized but a few more still to advertise and fill. Lisa B. and Barb have assumed Program Director positions and will be helping many overarching operational, programmatic, and strategic work for the association.
- Increased Compliance- ever present and feeling pinched by the many requirements and changes.
- BR Agreement- Number of updates and changes this year. Notably, Extension Administration has decided not to approve position descriptions for the associations anymore. We are, however, still required to follow the prescribed classification system.
- CRD Issue Leader Position – prior searches did not receive candidates with management or supervisory experience. Aiming to post for the position again soon.

IX. **STANDING COMMITTEES:** No reports

X. **PROGRAM REPORTS:**

Human Ecology: Lisa Buenau reports:

- HEAP and Energy joined forces last week to put on a successful Home and Energy Expo. Affordable Home Partnership, National Grid, other organizations were here to table and share information. An energy workshop was also offered during the event. We had 75 people attend the event which we will aim to make a yearly event.
- Radon program helped 1,008 households last quarter distributing radon test kits. Our newest LEAD instructor just received approval by the EPA to be a principal instructor. The association now has a total of three instructors who can partner to deliver programs or conduct them separately.
- The parenting/strengthening family's educator has been helping local teachers with professional development. Most requests were on topics of mental health and emotional wellness, finding and cultivating a sense of purpose, etc.
- The Healthy Homes program received 564 referrals last year. With transitions in staff for part of the year, we still completed 308 home visits with an average visit lasting between 1-2 hours. Many agencies try to partner with us to use these visits to conduct broader household assessments and potentially refer them to other programs for remediation when possible.
- Numerous nutrition and financial management classes partner with MVP Health Care and NYS Agency programs for outreach.

4-H: Barb Stevens reports:

- 4H has been busy- Achievement Night was held in early December to recognize youth for all they have accomplished. Teen program is ramping up- they participated in an Adopt-A-Family through the Albany County Department for Children and Family Services. Utilized their Altamont Fair milkshake booth profits to shop for the family- the recipient families were thrilled.
- Through our partnership with Albany County DCYF, we are working with prevention programs to provide educational programs around STEM and environmental awareness. Some include: Arbor Hill, Giffen School, TOAST, and the Montessori Magnet school next month. Upcoming program in March with Cohoes Community Connection. Barb can't say enough about her educators.
- Finished up the Farm to School grant in December- reaching all elementary and middle schools of Bethlehem and Voorheesville schools. Educators talked about local cider, NY potato chips, corn, etc. Kids were excited to see them during their lunch program, spent time learning about and sampling NYS products.
- Successfully applied for the NYS Dairy Grant again- continuing to go into these schools with dairy education.
- February winter break program went from 8 to 23 enrollees in two days.
- Educators are working at Cohoes Library for Strengthening Families program tomorrow night.

- Energy team is working with HEAP staff and sending referrals to each other. Capital Region Clean Energy Hub has been doing well and NYSERDA is happy with the program benchmarks.

Master Gardeners (MG): Christine Saplin reports:

- 92 MG volunteers have put in 7,800 volunteer hours in the past year. Volunteers have spoken to 1800+ adults in 51 presentations through the Speaker's Bureau. Volunteer hotline fielded many calls. Horticulture Lab has done 311 soil tests. Incorporated more native plants in our gardens. Added Veterans gardening project with VA hospital in Albany. Vegetable project with Albany schools. Winter sowing project this Saturday. Zoom programs conducted by John Martin regarding backyard vegetable gardens and off and running developing new programs while running current!
- The MGV Garden Education Fair and Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, May 31, 2025.

For Agriculture/Horticulture: Lisa Godlewski reports:

- CAAHP has been very busy. January had five weeks of Winter Cut Flower series, propagation, cover crops, bugs, etc. This zoom series has reached almost 300 people. Greenhouse Growers School occurred last week in Rensselaer. Beef Quality Assurance meetings are ongoing, getting ready for the Cut Flower Conference, ENYCHP Vegetable School, leasing Farmland informational session, another Aspiring Farmers program in March etc. A local meeting was held about ag districts and letting farmers know about resources they have for farmland protection. Program coming up in March about small ruminants and specifically parasite diseases. Finally, educators are keeping a close tab on Avian Influenza how that is developing.
 - Bill shared that biosolids are also an ongoing issue. Farmers can get a tipping fee to take solids and use this instead of fertilizer. Farms around the country are having their land declared as toxic after using biosolids and Albany County has issued a moratorium on biosolids use while they evaluate and conduct research.

XI. OLD BUSINESS: Lisa Godlewski reports:

- SBN- HR Lead, IT Lead and Finance Lead. Finance lead was recruited and accepted a position with Extension Administration. Lisa collaborated with Cornell for overlap support to the region through the year-end close (3/31/25). CCE Warren Co. just lost their Finance Manager. CCE Albany has been asked to provide financial support services and have a contract ready for 2025. Exploring Anthony's ongoing role in all of this.
- With less direct involvement from Extension Administration and increased liability and compliance, we are applying for additional professional liability insurance for the GC-SBN work.
- Updating policies are one of the big initiatives of SBN - as they have not had updates from Extension Administration since 2007. Started with two new policies last fall and we have

four more to consider today. Our labor attorney knows Extension well and recognizes our role as a quasi-governmental agency, and our aim to keep policies compliant with laws and employee friendly wherever possible.

XII. **NEW BUSINESS:** Lisa Godlewski reports:

- **Operating Guidelines-** dates have changed, advisory committees would be updated here, list of board of directors, holiday schedule, etc. Several updates to the document were provided: Bill is with Albany County Legislature, Ellen is retired, Wendy is with the Department of Labor, Christine retired. We will make these updates.

MOTION: Motion by Kevin Millington to approve 2025 Operating Guidelines with noted changes, seconded by Christine Saplin. Approved unanimously.

- **Association Annual Budget-** Notable line items: county appropriation and salary lines increased, audit increased slightly, transfer from designated is also bit higher- due to regional teams, built in and plan to invest in staff.

MOTION: Motion by Ellen Doolin to approve Association 2025 Annual Budget, seconded by Ann Potts. Approved unanimously.

- **Fiscal Authorization-** outlines annual procedures around various fiscal items. Notable changes: list of charge accounts and mileage rate. Noted error to date January 1, 2025. Date to be updated in document.

MOTION: Motion by Kevin Millington to accept the Annual Fiscal Authorization with noted date change, seconded by Bill Reinhardt. Approved unanimously.

- Assistant to Treasurer- Teresa Tymchyn provides this valuable resource annually.

MOTION: Motion by Bill Reinhardt to appoint Teresa Tymchyn as Assistant to the Treasurer, seconded by Theresa Rodriguez. Approved unanimously.

- Assistant to Secretary- Jessica Denno, taking notes at meetings for the board secretary.

MOTION: Motion by Ellen Doolin to appoint Jessica Denno as Assistant to the Secretary, seconded by Bill Reinhardt. Approved unanimously.

- **AR Agreement-** formal agreement implemented by Extension Administration that sets forth our agreement with the county.

MOTION: Motion by Bill Reinhardt to approve the AR Agreement with Albany County, seconded by Kevin Millington. Approved unanimously.

- **BR Agreement-** Provided by Extension Administration annually which outlines our collective agreement. Removed outdated USDA language from the MOU. Extension Administration shifting to a more supportive role only. Still setting classification structure but not going to approve position descriptions.

MOTION: Motion by Christine Saplin to approve BR agreement, seconded by Bill Reinhardt. Approved unanimously.

- Policy HR402 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)- updated laws and context

MOTION: Motion by Bill Reinhardt to approve Policy HR402, seconded by Theresa Rodriguez. Approved unanimously.

- Updated HR1302 Whistleblower Policy released from Extension Administration. HR Lead, Lisa and the labor attorney all agreed changes were necessary. Once approved, policies will be sent to staff, stored electronically where accessible by staff, and posted if required.

MOTION: Motion by Bill Reinhardt to approve Policy HR1302, seconded by Wendy Daignault. Approved unanimously.

- HR606- Extended Medical Leave- (title is a bit misleading, as it is a benefit, not a leave policy). We are not required to offer this, but we do. There was a good deal of language about prorated benefit removed. Specific for full-time employees. Requiring one year of employment but still 1/3 coverage for a maximum of 26 weeks.

MOTION: Motion by Kevin Millington to approve by HR606, seconded by Ellen Doolin. Approved unanimously.

- HR314- Employer Initiated Separation from Employment.

MOTION: Motion by Kevin Millington to accept Policy HR314, seconded by Ann Potts. Approved unanimously.

XIII. **INFORMATIONAL REPORTS:** no reports

XIV. **ADJOURNMENT-** 7:45 pm

MOTION: Motion to adjourn by Ellen Doolin, seconded by Ann Potts. Approved unanimously.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 at 6:00 pm