

Cornell Cooperative Extension Lewis County Board of Directors Meeting

March 25, 2026

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order on March 25, 2026, at 5:04 pm by Chairperson, Sarah Zeger, DVM at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Lewis County Office, Lowville, NY.

Members & Staff Present:

Michele Ledoux	X	Sarah Zeger, DVM	X	Jenna Lauraine	X	Roxaina Hurlburt	X
David Nisley	X	Shellie Marks	X	Harley Snyder	X	Martha Horahan	X
Andrew Kramer	X	Matthew Swiernik	Ex	Mike Hanno	X	Kevin Jordan	X
Kelly Kunz	X	Frans Vokey	X	Denise DeVoe	X	Laura Perry	X
Charlene Berrus	X	Caitlin Humphrey	X				

Absent:

Excused: MS

Guest(s) Present:

Correspondence: None

Approve Minutes:

Motion made by Jenna Lauraine to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2026 and seconded by Sarah Zeger, DVM, motion carried.

Reports of the Liaison Representatives:

Legislative Representative:

Mike Hanno reported on his attendance at several recent workshops and meetings of organizational interest. Pointing out the prevalence of solar farms in the area. He raised concerns regarding ORES's authority to designate large tracts of land for development regardless of existing local zoning and ordinances. Mike Hanno also highlighted the development of the Chobani plant in Rome and queried the availability of enough local milk to support the new facility.

Extension Representative:

Kevin Jordan announced an upcoming statewide Acumatica training via Zoom, encouraging attendance from finance staff and Board members, particularly those involved in financial oversight. Additionally, he noted that National Volunteer Week is scheduled for April 19-25 and encouraged the Association to highlight the contributions of local volunteers during that time.

Standing Committee Reports:

Finance:

Charlene Berrus read the 2025 year-end journal entries for Board Approval. She explained they are required for approval due to being designated funds. Andrew Kramer motioned to approve year-end journal entries, Mike Hanno seconded, motion passed. Shellie Marks motioned to receive the December 2025 financial report and the 2025 year-end financial report, Jenna Laraine seconded, motion carried. Charlene Berrus commented that with the approval of the designated fund journal entries the December financials are whole; they were then read as presented, by Charlene. Charlene Berrus read the 2025 year-end financial report as presented. Andrew Kramer motioned to approve the December 2025 financials, seconded by Sara Zeger, DVM, motion passed. Andrew Kramer motioned to approve the 2025 year-end financial report, seconded by Mike Hanno, motion passed. Charlene Berrus read the Notes to the 2025 year-end financial statements. She explained the reason for the change in section 3, topic 326 - financial instruments - was because of the adoption of the new credit loss standard. This did not materially impact net earnings or cash flows for this report. Mike Hanno asked the reason behind emptying the CD. Charlene explained the Association closed the CD and opened a sweep savings account with a higher interest rate, it meets the FDIC standards. Andrew Kramer motioned to accept the 2025 Notes to the year-end financials, seconded by Jenna Laraine,

motion passed. A motion was made by Andrew Kramer to close 2025 financials and open 2026 in Acumatica, seconded by Shellie Marks, motion passed.

Personnel:

Sarah Zeger, DVM inquired regarding personnel updates. Michele Ledoux announced that Laura Perry has joined the Association as the 4-H Support Specialist, working 20 hours per week and that the office is pleased to have her on Board. Michele Ledoux further shared that the Association is opening the Pratt-Northam intern positions with the intent of hiring two interns for the summer season. Additionally, Michele Ledoux reported on the upcoming retirement of Charlene Berrus. She noted that the Finance Coordinator position is currently open at 20 hours per week, with an application deadline of April 15. In response to an inquiry from Sarah Zeger, DVM regarding the interview timeline, Michele Ledoux clarified that the process would commence after the application period has closed. Mike Hanno inquired if promotional flyers for the internships are distributed to local school districts; Michele Ledoux and Denise DeVoe confirmed that these materials are slated for distribution.

Strategic Planning:

No updates.

Program & Staff Reports-

4-H – Denise DeVoe presented the 4-H report as submitted. Denise DeVoe reported the success of recent programming including the Farm Show, Dairy Discovery, the 4-H hoodie sale, and the Horse and Dairy Bowl competitions. She provided an overview of upcoming programming, highlighting preparations for Tractor Safety, Conservation Field Days, and the 4-H Day Camp at Aldersgate. Denise DeVoe expressed appreciation for Laura Perry’s efforts to organize upcoming programming. To conclude the report, Denise DeVoe noted that a digital wish list has been established via Amazon to support the supply needs for the 4-H Day Camp.

Ag Report- Michele Ledoux presented the Ag report as submitted. Michele Ledoux read a letter addressed to Ice Cream Trail participants from Mellissa Spence, detailing 2026 season modifications. Shellie Marks recommended the inclusion of Squishy’s Ice Cream to the trail. Michele Ledoux reported on the success of Maple Weekend.

Frans Vokey announced that the Tri-County Ag Team will collaborate with Countryside Veterinary Clinic to conduct training for Agri Service professionals regarding the identification of mental health stress in farmers. The Board recommended distributing the training flyer to Community Services in Lowville, Anna Platz, and the Farmers Co-op.

Frans Vokey reported that a funding request submitted to Farm Credit remains pending. Frans Vokey presented the flyer for the Dairy Tour, after which Jenna Lauraine and Frans Vokey discussed the availability of funding to support the transition from tiestall to freestall barns. Frans Vokey noted that a meeting is scheduled for the Tri-County Ag Team to address future challenges facing farmers.

Regarding Mike Hanno’s inquiry concerning local milk supply capacity for Chobani, Frans Vokey advised that operations will continue as usual. He noted that provided the current trend in milk production continues, local resources will be adequate to meet demand.

Parenting – Kelly Kunz provided an update on current referrals, noting that they are received through DSS and preventative cases. She outlined the referral process and discussed the increase in caseload volume resulting from direct referrals by judges and attorneys. Kelly Kunz highlighted the efficacy of mediation in facilitating out-of-court settlements between parents and provided an overview of the distinctions between parallel parenting and co-parenting models. Additionally, Kelly Kunz reported that rising fuel costs have necessitated increased attention to service availability and travel time between families.

Executive Director- See Old Business.

Old Business – Michele Ledoux reported on a recent site visit to the farmhouse and ongoing discussions with BOCES. The lease agreement is pending receipt from Michelle Carpenter; PW Wood and the lawyer will need to review the document upon arrival. Michele Ledoux outlined the proposed structure, in which CCE Lewis will sublease the facility from BOCES, who will hold the primary lease with Maple Ridge Center Incorporated. A public vote regarding BOCES’ potential purchase of the property is scheduled for December; however, the lease remains binding regardless of the vote outcome.

Although the option to remain until September exists, the team determined that a July move would be more efficient given the upcoming changes to classroom configurations. The current three tenants maintain occupancy through the end of June. Consequently, CCE Lewis’ access is restricted until July 1; however, items that will not need to be used before or through

Lewis County Fair may be relocated to the garage prior to this date, provided handicap access is maintained. Kelly Kunz explained that this early transfer is necessary to accommodate BOCES's use of the FabLab and will allow for a phased transition as office space becomes available. BOCES has provided assurances that the current building remains available for CCE use, notwithstanding potential schedule conflicts. Kelly Kunz confirmed that IT and county telecommunications are prepared for the transition, and Michele Ledoux confirmed county support for the physical relocation. Kelly Kunz, Michele Ledoux, Jenna Lauraine, and Sarah Zeger, DVM expressed a positive consensus regarding the move and the proposed timeline.

Michele Ledoux identified minor facility adjustments required regarding storage, security, and IT infrastructure. Kelly Kunz reported that following recent software updates for the LENS DMV system, IT (Eric Peck) recommended accelerating the planned computer hardware upgrades due to rising costs. In response to an inquiry from Jenna Lauraine, Michele Ledoux and Kelly Kunz confirmed that these upgrades are already included in the approved budget.

New Business – Michele Ledoux announced that local product vendors will be invited to Open Farm Day Lewis County 2026 in addition to the local producers.

Sarah Zeger, DVM made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:24 pm, Andrew Kramer seconded, motion carried.

Next meeting is May 27, 2026 at the Cooperative Extension Office Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted: David Nisley

Prepared by: Caitlin Humphrey

