

**SENECA COUNTY CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CCE Office Conference Room, 369 East Main St. Waterloo
MINUTES
January 12, 2026 6 PM**

1. Call to order *The meeting was called to order at 6:08pm by President Jolene Steele. Present: President Jolene Steele, VP Brad Ellis, Mark James, Frank Catalano, Phil Plummer, Doug Haith, Marty Rotz (arrived 6:45pm), SES Tim Davis, ED Ave Bauder. Excused: Karen Wilson, Secretary Kathy Chase, Jeff Trout. Absent: Mike Ruiz.*
2. Introduction of Board Members. Welcome back Mark James and Dr. Frank Catalano. *Everyone introduced themselves.*
3. Approve agenda (with any additions or deletions). *Ave noted two changes on the Yearly Approvals agenda that differed from what had been sent out. Motion to approve the agenda by Mark James and second by Doug Haith. Approved.*
4. Approve November 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes *Frank Catalano asked for clarification concerning the \$30 million that Cornell had to pay the federal government to have grant funding restored. Motion by Mark and second by Brad Ellis to approve the minutes. Approved.*
5. Election of Officers for 2026 *Jolene reviewed the slate. Motion by Phil Plummer and second by Mark to elect the slate of officers. Carried.*

Proposed slate: President: Jolene Steele
 Vice-President: Brad Ellis
 Secretary: Kathy Chase
 Treasurer: Marty Rotz

6. Finance Report:
 - Approve September and October Designated Funds transfers. *Ave Reviewed the September and October Fund Transfers, pointing out the funds transferred for the renovation of the kitchen and to cover additional sick time the Board approved for a particular staff member. Motion by Brad and seconded by Mark. Approved*
 - Accept October Financials. Full year end report is not due until March *Ave reviewed the October Financials. Question on where the transfer noted above would appear on the Balance Sheet and it was noted that it does not appear as a transaction there. In looking at the cash balances, Jolene noted that we should be sure that the Generations Money Market does not begin to collect fees. This exists as we have the CDs with CEDARS and as they mature, we will need it to put the funds into until we can transfer them to another institution, since Generations new owners, ESL Credit Union does not support CEDARS CDs. Also, at this point we should be able to close the Community Bank Debit card account. The current amount of revenue over expenses after transfers is \$57,884. Ave explained that much of this is due to Candace's medical leave and Judy going to part-time. Tim Davis pointed out how lucky we are to have Nancy Lamberson as our Finance Manager. Motion by Phil and second by Brad to accept the October 2025 financials. Passed.*
 - Approve Revised 2026 Budget *Ave reviewed the revised budget in light of level funding from the County. The \$13,000 increase we asked for was for COLAs and Ave is proposing to cover this from the Staff Compensation designated fund. This increased the*

amount budgeted to come from reserves from \$29,582 to \$43,582. Motion by Brad and second by Mark to approve the Revised 2026 budget. Carried.

- *Approve bank card for 4-H Educator Karen Burcroff Motion by Frank Catalano and second by Phil Plummer to approve a bank card for our new 4-H Educator Karen Burcroff. Approved.*
- *Finance Committee to be appointed during annual approvals Noted we need one more person on the Finance Committee and to think about volunteering when we get to yearly approvals.*

7. **Liaison Reports:**

- *Cornell Tim reported that campus is no longer having Associations complete and approve the Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan (AADIP). There is a link to new Civil Rights training from campus. At a system level, HR Policies are being reviewed by a lawyer and HR One. Seneca is one of the Associations that is having its local policies reviewed by HR One as well. CCE admin is organizing Zoom trainings for Board Presidents, Treasurers, and Nominating committees later this winter/spring. Frank asked if there is training provided for new EDs and Tim noted the 2 year ED academy program and ELCs.*
- *Board of Supervisors Jeff was not present, but Ave reported that Mike Enslow was re-elected Chair and Beth Parte as Chair of Ways and Means. Both are Supervisors who attend our events and support us. There are also two Democrats who were elected, after several years with none. Mark suggested we organize an Ag tour along with Farm Bureau and Soil and Water for the new Supervisors.*

8. **President's Remarks** *Jolene noted that the ED Hiring Committee has receive 14 applications and there was no need to extend the search. The Committee is evaluating cover letters and resumes.*

9. **Executive Director Report**

Questions on written report Mark asked about the bottled water inquiry that was noted in Judy's report and Ave said he would check.

10. **Old Business**

- *Feedback on Annual Meeting Jolene noted that she loves to hear the reports from staff and that Knapp's is a wonderful setting. She thanked Karen for continuing to host us after she and Cole became owners. Comment that the Cookie mix jars were appreciated. Brad noted that he would like to do some events at Fall Street Brewing, like "Brewing 101 with Brad" or Pizza making that could be fund raisers for the Association. They would tie in with Association mission areas and align with staff or others' interests. Members felt this was a great opportunity and asked im to pursue it with staff.*
- *FL Shared Business Network Ave noted that our expense may go up next year due to the number of searches we have and will be conducting.*
- *Grants update Ave noted that the Farmers Market Resiliency grant which we applied for last year fir Ovid and would have been awarded except funding ran out before the deadline, changed into a regional grant and we will be part of an application being proposed by Wayne CCE.*
- *Willard Task Force/County LDC Discussion of both Willard, and the lack of progress because the State will not hand it over to the County, and the County LDC which has chosen a firm to work on the County Economic Development Plan. As Vice-Chair of the LDC, Ave will be contacting the firm. Ave is also an Ex-Officio Member of the Ovid LDC and will be submitting an application to Design Connect for design work for downtown Ovid following the fire. At this time, there was also a discussion of Ave's desire to stay on at Seneca CCE as the Community and Economic Development Educator at 20 hours a month. This would allow the continued use of CCE resources to support the Willard Task Force, Seneca County LDC, Ovid LDC, and other*

relevant community vitality missions such as STEPS. He would not be in the office on a regular basis and so not a competing force as the new ED gets settled in. Jolene noted that an advantage would be that Ave would still be on the payroll and available to help answer questions/mentor the new ED and not feeling like the Association was imposing on his time. Seemed to be generally favorable response to the idea. Ave will develop the position description and bring to the Board.

- Horticulture Educator Search *Tricia Carvalho, our current temporary Horticulture Educator was the successful candidate and has been appointed to the regular position. She was clearly the best choice following interviews.*
- Lab/Kitchen Renovation & Sign installation. *Both are complete. There is now a large red sign that is visible when one turns into the driveway so people should be able to at least get to the correct area of the building.*
- Still one opening on Board. *There is still one seat open. Jolene asked if we might actually have two, as one member has not attended a number of meetings. Ave will get the member's number to Jolene and she will call to see what is up. Brad suggested Judy Wentzel from Seneca Falls and the Bonafiglia Foundation. This was positively met and Brad will reach out to her.*

11. New Business-

We moved to the Annual Approvals before several things that need to be discussed in Executive Session.

- Staffing updates *Ave briefly outlined that Farm to School Coordinator Candace Reigel is out due to medical reasons and Ryan Staychock is taking a statewide position working with underserved forest and woodlot owners.*
- Approve Sick Day Bank Policy. *Policy is not yet set.*
- Annual Approvals including 2026 meeting dates: (See sheet) *Ave reviewed the annual approvals. Motions are recorded on those minutes.*

12. Executive Session to discuss the prospective employment of one or more individuals. *Motion by Phil and second by Brad to enter into executive session. Carried.*

Brad Ellis excused himself from the Executive Session at 7:58 pm.

Motion by Mark and Second by Doug Haith to come out of Executive Session at 8:08pm Carried.

Motion by Mark and second by Phil to empower the Executive Committee to make a determination on how to proceed with a medical leave for Candace Reigel. Carried.

13. Adjournment *Motion by Mark and second by Phil to adjourn. Carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 pm.*

Next meeting on March 9, 2026