

Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County
Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes
June 22, 2026 5:30PM
CCE Office, 18 Seward Ave. Middletown, NY 10940

In Attendance: Nancy Rider, Amy Minutolo, Tom Manza, Kathi Nywening, Rachel Carr, Paul Wiley, Paul Ruszkiewicz, Brooke Moore, Dave Goggins, Ed Estrada, Jacky Guan (5:54PM)

Staff In Attendance: Maire Ullrich, Nathaniel Larney, Elias Bloom, Shayna Russo, Cindy Blomquist, Suzy McCormack, Amanda Sostre

Absent: Tiffany Chapman, Diane Aboushi Saleh, Andrea Nilon, Patricia Claiborne

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 5:40 PM by board president, Amy Minutolo; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Kathi Nywening

Review and Approval of Minutes for May 26, 2026

Motion by Kathi Nywening, seconded by Ed Estrada to approve the minutes from May 26, 2026. Vote taken – unanimous. Motion approved.

Impact Statement Program Presentation: Nathaniel Larney – Food Safety in Mushroom Production

- ❖ Nathaniel focuses on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)
 - Provides support to farms in developing Farm Food Safety Plans, which are maintained as living documents and updated as practices evolve
 - Delivers employee training to strengthen implementation of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and on-farm food safety protocols.
- ❖ After visiting numerous mushroom farms throughout the county, it became clear there was a need for additional community education and support to help producers implement safe food handling practices.
 - Food Safety in Mushroom Production series was developed two years ago to provide growers with practical education and resources to help them implement safe food handling and production practices
 - Partnered with Flowering Sun Ecology Center

- Hybrid format – Participants begin the course through Zoom sessions before completing hands-on instruction and demonstrations during an on-farm training experience.
- The course provides education that enhances technical cultivation knowledge and strengthens business management skills for specialty crop operations.
- **Issues causing need:**
 - Limited availability of technical cultivation training for mushroom growers and specialty crop producers
 - Gaps in business development skills within the specialty crop industry
 - Need for expanded food safety education specific to mushroom production systems
- **Impacts on community:**
 - Increased practical cultivation skills for mushroom producers
 - Strengthened business planning and management capabilities for specialty crop operations
 - Improved adoption of food safety standards and best practices
 - Support for more sustainable and successful mushroom production systems

Program Report Review

- ❖ Agriculture – Elias Bloom, Ag Program Leader
 - Originally from Nebraska with a background in agriculture, horticulture and entomology.
 - Currently becoming familiar with Orange County programs and CCEOC staff.
 - Onion Field Meeting at the Pine Island American Legion 7/26/26 at 12PM
 - Vegetable Weed Management Meeting August 19th at 5:30PM
 - Master Gardener Picnic June 18th at the Arboretum at Thomas Bull Memorial Park
- ❖ SNAP-Ed – Shayna Russo, Regional Project Manager
 - Waiting for Creating Healthy Schools & Communities (CHCS) contract
 - July will start last quarter of SNAP-Ed program
 - Press releases will be coming out
- ❖ Family & Community Development & 4-H
 - Lots of end of year programming
 - RAPP Picnic at Thomas Bull Memorial Park on July 9th – would be great event to attend
 - Luau Theme

- Need volunteers → If interested reach out to Suzy
 - RAPP Movie Night at Warwick Drive-In this Thursday
 - Toy Story 5
- ❖ Camp Update – Suzy McCormack, Issue Leader
 - Finalizing with Department of Health
 - Waiting on site visit
 - 109 youth registered (Max= 72 kids/week)
 - Registration closed
 - Outdoor adventure week was the week with the most registered campers
 - Counselors hired
 - 5 senior and 4 junior counselors
 - Training next week
 - Camp starts July 6th
 - Will have a speaker each week

President's Report – Amy Minutolo, Board President

- ❖ Thank you to all staff/board members who assisted with the “Because of You” Donor Event
- ❖ Committee Assignments – short one member for each of the following committee:
 - Finance
 - Personnel
 - Reach out to Amy if interested

Report of Liaisons/Representatives

- ❖ Orange County Executive's Office – Paul Wiley
 - Freedom Fest at Thomas Bull Memorial Park on July 18th
 - 250th Anniversary
 - Open Space Applications are opening soon
- ❖ Orange County Legislators – Paul Ruskiewicz
 - Last month was Dairy month. CCEOC did nice presentation on Dairy industry
 - Budget season coming up
 - Local Caps Law recently passed – local jails and police are legally banned from holding immigrants on civil immigration detainees, effectively ending contracts that permit county jails to house ICE detainees

Committee Reports

- ❖ Finance Committee – Nancy Rider

- April Financials 2026 within budget
 - Accounts Payable high due to events and SNAP-Ed
 - Expenses higher due to three hourly payrolls totaling \$34K each

Motion by Ed Estrada, seconded by Tom Manza to accept the April 2026 Financials as presented.
Vote taken – unanimous. Motion accepted.

- 2027 Budget
 - Will request 4.5% budget increase for county appropriation

Motion by Nancy Rider, seconded by Ed Estrada to adopt the 2027 budget as presented. Vote taken – unanimous. Motion adopted.

- Investment Policy
 - Policy reviewed by legal counsel – recommendations were relatively minor
 - Recommended edits will be incorporated during the next annual policy review
- Gift Acceptance Policy – will need to create a committee
- Audit – delayed to August due to need for single audit
- Income Committee – need to track revenue allocation between the park and general fund, particularly regarding events held at the park.
 - Committee members will include: Cindy, Jill, Maire, Rachel, and looking to add one more member.
- ❖ Nominating Committee – Amy
 - Annual Meeting
 - December 14th at 5PM
- ❖ Fund Development Committee – Nancy
 - Duck Derby – tickets on sale now!
 - HV Gives – will not participate next year
 - Money raised this year will go to camp scholarships 2027
 - “Because of You” Donor recognition event – went well
 - Bountiful Harvest – sponsorship doing well
- ❖ Strategic Planning Committee – Rachel Carr
 - Will meet again in August
 - Committee is reviewing the measurables to make sure we are meeting goals
 - Will use Claude to develop a dashboard for easier review
 - Brooke has joined the committee
- ❖ Park & Facilities Committee – Tom Manza
 - Met June 18th → Will meet again in August
 - Wetlands are being re-delineated
 - Met with Town of Mt Hope Engineer

- Discussed site plan:
 - Lights
 - Storage Barn
- Need perk test for Little Red barn
 - Todd and Bobbi are working on this
- Erik is working on getting the logs removed
 - Pine logs were removed by two operators who will 20% for us for future use
 - A third sawmill operator is set to take the remaining logs
 - Erik will remove the cherry tree Monday so the property medallions can be finished by the surveyor
- High5 starts this week
- Gleaning Hub – will use cooler
 - Met with Rotolo to determine where to dig
- Septic Field Fence – will be installed July 1st
- Kosuga Barn – few change orders and last items that need to be completed
- Fei Tian – will use Demo Kitchen on Sundays
- Water – town working on funding for water for the town
 - May be good for education center
- Horse Event – Rain Water Harvester worked great
- ❖ 4-H Farm & Family Fair
 - Met June 10th
 - Scouts will do parking
 - Had work night had June 16th
 - Staining
 - Planter boxes
 - July 1st next work night
 - We need volunteers

Adjournment: Motion by Nancy Rider, seconded by Paul Ruszkiewicz to adjourn the meeting at 6:57PM. Vote taken – unanimous. Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathi Nywening, Board Secretary

Amanda Sostre, Recording Secretary

