Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County

Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes

September 28, 2026, 5:30 PM

CCE Office, 18 Seward Ave. Middletown, NY 10940

In Attendance: Tom Manza, Kathi Nywening, Rachel Carr, Nancy Proyect Rider, Ed Estrada, Andrea Nilon, Dave Goggins, Diane Aboushi Saleh, Via Zoom: Amy

Absent: Tiffany Chapman, Mingjia Guan, Paul Ruszkiewicz, Paul Wiley, Patricia Claiborne

Staff In Attendance: Jill Van Aken, Cindy Blomquist, Suzy McCormack, Shayna Russo, Eli Bloom, Sara Flores-Amper, Amanda Sostre, Via Zoom: Maire

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 5:42 PM by Board Vice President, Tom Manza; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Kathi Nywening, Board Secretary

Review and Approval of Minutes for August 24, 2026

Motion by Dave Goggins, seconded by Andrea Nilon to approve the minutes from August 24, 2026. Vote taken – unanimous. Motion approved.

Correspondence: Kathi Nywening

- Correspondence was received from Tiffany Chapman notifying the Board of their immediate resignation from the Board of Directors due to new job commitments.

Motion by Dave Goggins, seconded by Nancy Proyect Rider to accept the resignation of Tiffany Chapman from the board of directors effective immediately. Vote taken – unanimous. Motion accepted.

Impact Statement Program Presentation:

Sara Flores-Amper, SNAP-Ed Nutritionist – **Culinary Kids Camp**

- Camp program held at Maple Hill Elementary
- Offered two one-week sessions serving 27 children
    - Daily classes include hands-on cooking and food preparation

    - Activities are designed to build cooking skills and increase familiarity with healthy food and food production.
- ❖ Offers similar after-school cooking program.
- ❖ Collaborated with Community Foodworks.

Program Updates

- ❖ Agriculture – *Eli Bloom, Agriculture Program Leader*
    - Open House on the Farm
        - Last weekend with cold and windy weather, resulting in lower attendance (approximately 150+ attendees)
        - Dairy Barn Tours saw strong participation, with many attendees utilizing the tours to get out of the weather.
    - Small Engine Repair concluded this weekend
        - Approximately 30-40 participants attended the final in-person class; previous classes were held via zoom.
    - Climate Stewards – halfway through the series
    - Upcoming Programs:
        - Food Safety Facebook Live event with Nathaniel Lartey and Erica Dahl
        - No-till Squash Production with Eric Schellenberg and Leonard Buck
        - Beef Quality Assurance Training with Zoe Nafis 11/5
        - Bee Keeping Basics with Eli Bloom and speaker Randall Cass 11/21
        - BIG Glean – scheduled for November
        - Stormwater Series – planned for winter
    - Staff Update – Javier Acosta transitioned from New Farmer and Veteran Program Manager to the Glean Team through December.
    - Farmer support – Some discussion with farmers throughout Orange County, including troubleshooting fruit disease issues and assisting with plant disease research.
        - Some challenges farmers are facing related to weather conditions, including spring freezes, summer drought, and smoke from Canadian wildfires.
- ❖ SNAP-Ed – *Shayna Russo, Regional Project Manager*
    - SNAP-Ed officially ends September 30th due to changes in federal funding. Similar, smaller-scale programming will continue under the new name: Food, Nutrition, and Movement.
    - Due to the change, the team has made the following staffing changes:
        - Sara Flores-Amper – previously the Orange County educator, will now spend 60% of her time in Ulster County where she resides, and 40% in Orange County.

        - Erica Dahl will cover the Creating Healthy School and Communities grant in Middletown and Newburgh.
    - Dawn Maurizzio will transition to part-time in mid-October
    - New York State Pollution Prevention contract is in. Team will collaborate with the Glean team and SUNY Orange students to prepare cooked produce for local community food programs.
    - Team will be taking a tour of the Regional Food Bank in Montgomery.
    - Online presence will transition from SNAP-Ed NY to WellFed NY
        - Social Media – transitions 10/1
        - Website – transitions 10/19
- Family & Community Development & 4-H – *Suzy McCormack, Issue Leader*
    - Gathering for Community – held last week, focusing on how community members can prepare for and respond to weather-related events.
    - 4-H Achievement Night 10/17
    - Exceptional Volunteer Spring 2026 – Tom Manza
- Understory's Regional Resilience Grant Proposal – Suzy McCormack
    - The Understory's Regional Resilience Grant, a $4 million funding opportunity supporting projects that strengthen social and ecological resilience throughout the Hudson Valley.
    - Looking to apply for up to $200K to support a two-year project. To help fund the projects from Climate Stewards and Climate resilience programs.
    - Proposal would include a full-time coordinator and support for Javier's employment.
    - Board of directors agreed to wait for the contract details before making a decision on approval.

President's Report: Amy Minutolo, Board President

- Thanked all board members who attended and supported Bountiful harvest,
- Currently attending Extension Leadership Conference in Ithaca.

Executive Director's Report: Maire Ullrich, Executive Director

- Crisis Plan – Maire working on developing one for the association.
    - Crisis and Safety Committee will be established as an ad hoc committee to assist with the development of the plan.
        - Committee members will include community members with relevant knowledge and expertise.
        - Board members who are interested may also participate.
    - Formal policy will need to be developed as a part of the process.

- ❖ Cornell 7 Case – allegations against seven men following an incident at a Cornell fraternity house in 2024. Cornell conducted an internal disciplinary process, and a civil lawsuit involving the seven men and Cornell was filed in 2026. The criminal investigation has since been reopened.
    - Cornell has issued a statement regarding the matter, which Maire will forward to the Board of Directors.

Committee Reports

- ❖ Finance Committee – *Nancy Proyect Rider, Committee Chair*
    - Andrea and Kathi appointed to finance committee
    - July Financials

Motion by Nancy Proyect Rider, seconded by Ed Estrada to accept the July 2026 Financial Statements as presented. Vote taken – unanimous. Motion accepted.

    - Gift Acceptance Policy – draft policy provided to board members for review. Will vote at next board of director's meeting.
        - Reviewed by attorney already
    - Park Income Committee – met last week, will meet again to review park expenses
- ❖ Fund Development Committee – *Jill Van Aken, Community Development Officer*
    - Will meet in two weeks.
    - Legacy Giving Committee has been established
        - Will hold first meeting next week.
    - Bountiful Harvest was successful, many new faces in attendance.
- ❖ Nominating Committee – *Maire Ullrich*
    - Slate – has not been finalized
        - Danielle Diana-Smith's Board application has been received
        - Awaiting Michelle Taylor's application
        - Andrew Nunez has submitted his biography
        - Discussed challenges in recruiting new board members and the need to better articulate the benefits and time commitments of serving on the board
        - Board suggestions:
            - Nancy Rogowski – attorney and farmer
            - An individual affiliated with BOCES
    - Tiffany Chapman resigned from the board of directors – additional vacancy
    - The Board of Directors suggested that the Nominating Committee develop:
        - A list of desired areas of expertise and professional experience to consider when recruiting new Board members, such as legal, agricultural, financial, and other relevant areas.

        - A pathway for volunteers to become more involved with CCE, including opportunities to progress from program involvement (e.g., RAPP) to committees such as PAC and eventually the Board of Directors.
- ❖ Park & Facilities Committee – *Tom Manza, Board Vice President & Committee Chair*
    - Meeting 10/1
    - Maire, Bobbi, and Todd met with the Town of Mount Hope Planning Board at its monthly meeting on 9/16
        - Outlined several items that must be completed before they will approve.
        - Requesting to move forward with the lighting portion only of the requested site plan changes.
        - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan will be obtained afterward, if required.
        - Kosuga project is nearing completion.
- ❖ 4-H Farm & Family Fair update – Tom Manza & Jill Van Aken
    - Held recap, including discussion of ideas and improvements for fair next year
    - Committee will meet again in November to begin planning Fair 2027
        - Have received ride contract for next year.
    - 2026 Fair approximately broke even financially.

Adjournment

Motion by Kathi Nywening, seconded by Ed Estrada to adjourn the meeting at 7:17PM. Vote taken – unanimous. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathi Nywening, Board Secretary

Amanda Sostre, Recording Secretary