

The August 25, 2011 meeting of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Board of Directors was called to order by President, Julee Acomb at 5:33 p.m. in the CCE Offices, Steuben County office building.

**Members Present:** John McCarthy, Ken Thomas, Bill Peoples, Julee Acomb, Pepi Leids, and Mark Schmiedeshoff

**Staff Present:** Tom Tomsa, Robert Shirley, and Carla Dawejko

**Approval of July 21, 2011 minutes:** John McCarthy made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 21, 2011 board meeting. Pepi Leids seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion was carried unanimously.

## **Reports:**

### **Program Area Reports:**

- **Ag & NR Program Advisory Committee:** Bill Peoples reported the following from the August meeting. They discussed how the weather has been terrible on the crops and that corn especially is not looking good. They discussed a Pasture Walk workshop that Kerri Bartlett coordinated which focused on grazing. Carl Albers held a workshop in Cameron on controlling invasive species of noxious plants. The ag staff is busy planning for Farm-City Day in September.
- **4-H Youth Development Committee:** Julee Acomb reported the following from the August meeting. The committee welcomed new members Sharon Bartoo and Donna Walker. Julee Acomb and Jennifer Hammond are going to represent CCE-Steuben on the regional 4-H program committee. A significant portion of the meeting was spent discussing the livestock sale at the Steuben County Fair. The committee is also working on making the deadlines for all of the 4-H entries uniform.
- **Human Ecology Committee:** There is no report. The committee has not met since the last board meeting.

**Executive Director Report:** Tom Tomsa reported the following to the board

- Tom is pleased that the 2011 Steuben County Fair went fairly well, with relatively minor complaints from a few 4-H parents.

- Tom has been working on getting the regional 4-H program going. He has volunteered to lead the energy sustainability program for this regional 4-H program
- Tom met with Denise Knowles from GST Boces and we are budgeted in this year of their 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant for \$6,000.00 to conduct various after school programs. She even mentioned that she would like Tom to develop additional programs, which would increase the amount of our grant.
- Tom felt like he made the strongest county appropriation request this year than in his previous 12 years he has been here. He had detailed numbers highlighting the economic impact CCE-Steuben makes in the county, which showed a high return on investment for the county. One legislator made it clear that he would not approve the request and that he expected a 10% across the board cut to all outside contract agencies. Some supporters of CCE said that it is much too early in the process to definitively say that it will 10%, but did recommend to Tom to have some contingency plans in place.
- Tom and Julee both received the annual financial review from Compliance Review Manager at CCE administration, Edward Dwyer. He only had one finding and that was from an internal review questionnaire that is filled out by Tom and Robert. He recommended that Robert not be as involved in the purchasing function as he pays the bills, which is an internal control weakness. He did say that he understands that smaller associations have limited resources and that many employees must wear several hats, but recommended a policy be put in place to strengthen this particular weakness. The board all agreed that Tom could sign off on all purchase requests. The board wanted to make notes in the minutes thanking Robert for such a job well done, as there were no actual accounting findings.
- Tom is happy to report that we were not one of the 10 sites who were requested an on-site visit from CCE administration for further review as a result of the system-wide compliance review that was conducted earlier this summer.
- Tom has finally received the Accreditation Certificate in a nice frame from CCE-Steuben. That makes CCE-Steuben officially accredited.
- CCE-Tompkins County Executive Director, Ken Schlather, contacted Tom about the possibility of Corning Natural Gas (CNG) wanting CCE-Steuben to conduct programming about the advantages of natural gas. Ken has a few contacts at CNG, which is how he learned of this possible partnership. Tom will be following up in the near future with both Ken and CNG.
- Tom attended the planning meeting for the Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority money that is being allocated to establishing farmer's market programming. Lead people were identified and the beginning of the planning and developing proposals was started. Tom has no idea how much money we are going to receive.

- Julee asked how everyone was doing after the horrific accident last month with the Amish van. Tom said it is tough but everyone is managing and doing much better.

### **Public Affairs Coordinator Report:**

- Carla has been busy the past month preparing for the fair booth, which was very interactive with different displays and quizzes. The booth also included a 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary timeline and a live radio remote on one of the days. The booth was received very well by the public.
- Carla unveiled the association's Facebook Page. She is excited about the opportunities social media presents.
- Carla is the lead for Finger Lakes Shared Business Network Communications committee and she is setting up a training for the region on social media.
- Pepi Leids inquired whether the classified ad in *The Courier* everyday advertising S.T.O.R.E. was free or if we were paying for it. Carla explained that it is part of the contribution *The Courier* makes for being a partner.

**CER Reports:** Tom passed out the most recent CER report to boards to read. He highlighted a few of the items:

- The new salary grids with required minimums have been released – CCE-Steuben is above the minimums for all positions.
- County budget season is upon us.
- System-wide compliance review – as discussed in his report we were not one of the 10 requested for an on-site audit
- CCE administration is requesting proposals for the Cornell Wide Area Network – we are currently charged \$500.00 per month and participation is mandatory.

### **Old Business:**

There was a lengthy discussion on how Tom should handle personnel decisions in the event that contractions to staff need to be made. The board all agreed that Tom needs to schedule an emergency meeting of the board either in person or via conference call, so that all alternatives and scenarios can be approved by the board. Tom agreed that he would contact each member by phone, cell phone or e-mail, to schedule such a meeting.

**New Business:**

Tom passed out a Personnel/Program Cost Analysis with two different options included, each of which reduced staff's hours for the rest of the year. This was presented to address the deficit that the association is faced with after two major sources of revenue were cut this year. The analysis also included a budget history since 1999 and it showed 7 years with a surplus and 5 years of deficit. Tom pointed this out that the history shows that we haven't made rash decisions of hiring and firing people, which is ultimately a very costly proposition with training and recruiting costs. This sparked a discussion of how much do we have in our designated funds. Robert printed out a summary of all the designated fund balances and pointed out that for planning purposes the board should use about \$76,000.00 as the amount available to use towards budget deficits. There was some more discussion and the board was very pleased with the information they received.

The next meeting of the board of directors will be on September 22, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.

**Adjourn:**

Motion by Bill Peoples to adjourn at 7:10 p.m. Second by Mark Schmiedeshoff. There was no further discussion and the motion was carried unanimously.