



Winnebago County

The Wave of the Future

**UW EDUCATION, EXTENSION & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025**

A. Call to Order

Members Present: Steve Binder, Amber Lyn Gilbertson, Tim Macho, Walt Ulbricht, and Doug Zellmer. No members absent.

Extension Winnebago County Staff Present: Chris Viau, Dana Berger, Sarah Thompson, Kevin Jarek, Stephanie Bowers (via Zoom), and Amy Hendrickson.

Others Present: Ethan Hollenberger (via Zoom)

Meeting called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Binder.

B. Comments from the Public Related to Items on the Agenda/Requests to Add Items to the Next Agenda

None.

C. Approval of Minutes

1. February 19, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Zellmer, seconded by Macho to approve the February 19, 2025 meeting minutes. Passed. Yes 5, No 0, Abstained 0.

D. Committee Chair's Report

Binder attended the NACo Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. He discussed federal budget issues, cuts, and impacts.

E. Reports and Updates

1. Safety Share

Zellmer reported on bicycle safety and accident statistics. Zellmer reviewed safety recommendations and education available for bicyclists and drivers.

2. UW Division of Extension Program or Educator Reports and Updates

- February 2025 Extension Winnebago County Review

Committee members expressed appreciation for the monthly report with updates from staff.

- 4-H Youth Development - Dana Berger

Berger reviewed the 4-H Thriving Model - Program Quality Scores model and document. On a scale of 1-7, scores of 5 and above are considered high-quality programming. Winnebago County 4-H consistently performs at or above the state average. Berger distributed the February and March 2025 Program Report & Updates handouts. Recently completed programming includes AgBadging, Officer Training, Fire Escape pottery event, Horseless

Horse workshop, and 4-H Fun Day. 4-H Summer Camp planning and Camp Counselor Training are underway. Berger submitted a request to the 4-H Finance Committee to use some of their excess funds for purchasing equipment for a Maker Space: Cricut machine and tools/accessories, knitting machine, and 3D printer. A Maker Space will be available at the 2025 Winnebago County Fair for kids to explore. The 4-H Growers Club will grow produce and flowers in the Outdoor Classroom again this year. Temporary staff will join the office for the summer: Arianna Buehring will focus on existing membership and program enrichment; Megan Numrich will focus on 4-H recruitment and promotion. Sarah Thompson reaches kids who may not be able to join a 4-H club/project by providing 4-H after-school programming.

- Agriculture: Crops & Soils - Kevin Jarek

Jarek shared a presentation reviewing historical, current, and predicted trends in the agriculture industry. The majority of farmers are planning to avoid large purchases and capital improvements for equipment and buildings to mitigate decreased profits. Jarek encourages farmers to have a multifaceted plan and a backup plan for their fields due to predicted low yields. The agriculture industry is in dire economic straits right now. Current trade policy fluctuations will continue to impact the industry. Jarek and Bowers have been distributing materials to help farmers with planning and mitigating. Crop Insurance, Agriculture Risk Coverage, and Price Loss Coverage programs are available to farmers to help mitigate losses. Funds for no-till, low-disturbance manure, and equipment may also be available through NRCS programs. Jarek distributed and reviewed the Extension Education Committee Report Winnebago County 3-19-25 handout. He sees high participant engagement at budget planning workshops. Upcoming projects include the Nitrogen Optimization Project, Leguminous Nitrogen Cover Crops, Focus on Forage, Badger Crop Connect, Spring Field Day, and Farm Technology Days. Customer and peer inquiries continue.

- Agriculture: Dairy - Stephanie Bowers

Bowers reviewed the Dairy Feeder Workshop and Beef Management Workshop. She is currently working on Dairy Heifer Grazing and implementing virtual fencing for more managed grazing practices to improve farm profitability, environmental sustainability, and water quality. Bowers is also working with vegetation density monitoring technologies to simplify grazing plans and techniques. Bowers presented at the National Grazing Lands Coalition Conference regarding virtual fencing. She will be presenting at various upcoming local conferences. Bowers has been doing work with COMET, a mental health program for farmers. Macho inquired about the Farm Show at the EAA grounds. Extension does not have a booth at the event, but Bowers plans to attend to network with partners and local farmers. Bowers plans to attend Farm Technology Days this summer to provide demonstrations.

3. UW Division of Extension Department Administrative Report

- James P. Coughlin Center Facility Updates

Staff and users have been experiencing challenges with the new meeting room reservation software. They are reporting issues and working to meet needs as best as possible.

- Extension Winnebago County Staff & Department Updates

Today is Hannah Phillips' last day as the FoodWise Healthy Communities Coordinator; she has taken a position with NWTC. The Universities of Wisconsin system is transitioning to a different administrative software platform. Open positions cannot be posted until July after it launches. Viau is working with Berger to finalize hiring two temporary summer 4-H positions. Keith Phelps, Working Lands Forestry Educator, and Chad Cook, Land & Water Outreach Program Associate Director, are regional Extension staff flexing use of a shared office.

- UW-Madison Division of Extension Area/Region/State Updates

Updates will be shared as they become available.

4. Announcing Upcoming Extension Events at County Board Meeting Discussion

Macho expressed appreciation for presentation Viau and Robin Franitza gave at the last county board meeting on WI Idea Week (April 7 - 11th). Viau encouraged everyone to register to attend various events. Viau will check with the team to make a recommendation to share.

F. Business Items

Action may be taken on any business items.

1. UWO Fox Cities Closure Updates/Discussion

Outagamie County and the Menasha Joint School District have withdrawn from the proposed agreement. Negotiations will continue. Discussions will include the estimated costs to fund the University Children's Center, Barlow Planetarium, and Weis Earth Science Museum through the end of 2025. Discussion ensued.

G. Communications Shared by Committee Members

None.

H. Next Meeting Date

1. April 16, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.
Confirmed.

I. Adjourn

Binder entertained a motion to adjourn at 10:59 a.m. Motion by Zellmer, seconded by Gilbertson. Passed. Yes 5, No 0, Abstained 0.