



Winnebago County

The Wave of the Future

**UW EDUCATION, EXTENSION & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2025**

A. Call to Order

Members present: Steve Binder, Amber Lyn Gilbertson, Walt Ulbricht, Tim Macho, and Doug Zellmer.

Extension Winnebago County staff present: Jayna Hintz, and Robin Franitza.

Winnefox Library staff present: Clairellyn Sommersmith, Anna Dinkel, Darryl Eschete, Nicole Hardina-Wilhelm, Amanda O'Neal, and Brian Kopetsky.

Others present: Gordon Hintz, and "JW" (via Zoom).

Meeting called to order at 9:00am 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. September 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Zellmer, seconded by Macho to approve the September 17, 2025 meeting minutes. Passed. Yes 5, No 0, Abstained 0.

D. Committee Chair's Report

Binder thanked the library directors for attending this meeting.

E. Reports and Updates

1. Safety Share

Zellmer spoke about fall clean-up safety. He urged residents to practice safety when climbing trees, and to take breaks and go slow.

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

None discussed.

- September 2025 Extension Winnebago County Review

None Discussed

- Winnefox Library System Annual Reports

Sommersmith thanked the committee for hearing the update. No current comments regarding the budget.

Kopetsky, Menasha library director: The renovation was a success. The team is very happy with how the work turned out. There has been a change from just circulating materials, to also

including hands-on learning opportunities. Door count is up 66%, and this year is the most for program attendance. Discussion continued.

O'Neal, Winneconne library director: Circulation increases every year. Children's programming is very successful. They are breaking into adult programming, which is filling up fast. CPR/AED certified staff. Discussion continued.

Wilhelm, Neenah library director: The library has funded an ASL interpreter, which helps more families attend the programs. Science-based programs throughout the year, with a focus on the "tween" age group (not kids or teens). Create clubs have become popular as an opportunity to make connections. Proud of their customer service and repair cafés. Discussion continued.

Eschete, Oshkosh library director: Program attendance has significantly increased. Programming directed toward adults is being reworked to help draw people into the space. Working to create a maker-space for patrons to utilize. Continuing partnerships with local organizations. The strategic plan aims to deepen the connection between the library and the City of Oshkosh. In the process of reincorporating the Friends of the Library group. Discussion continued.

Dinkel, Omro library director: Instituted a quarterly newsletter and a strategic plan. Installed new children's book shelving. Working on literacy-based initiatives — story walks to encourage folks to get outside and read. New collections for children — primarily screen-free devices. Expanded the experience pass collection — passes to various Wisconsin sites. Discussion continued.

Binder asked if the county supervisors and committees could do anything for the libraries. Response: Come visit, continue with financial support, be a library ambassador. Executive Hintz added that the existing dialogue is important; the partnership is unique and valued.

The Winnefox Team left.

3. UW Division of Extension Department Administrative Report

- James P. Coughlin Center Facilities Updates

No further updates at this time. The Executive's Office is reviewing the updated meeting room policies.

- Extension Winnebago County Staff & Department Updates

Educators are continuing their work. Hintz explained some specific examples.

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

Binder announced that Waupaca County has private funding for a part-time nutrition educator, and Waupaca county is willing to partner with Winnebago County.

4. Announcing Upcoming Extension Events at County Board Meeting Discussion

Hintz requested that upcoming programs like the Introduction to Plain Language, WeCOPE, and others be promoted to the Board.

F. Business Items

Action may be taken on any business items.

1. UWO Fox Cities Closure Updates/Discussion

A public session for community members to review the Master Plan was held. Most would like to see the campus redeveloped into housing or a hotel. The arts center and planetarium will remain. Executive Hintz is searching for a team to help with the Master Plan, and for a company to manage the arts center scheduling.

2. Discussion and Possible Action on Amendments to the Budget the Committee may recommend to the County Board

The part-time nutrition educator is on the agenda for the upcoming Supervisors Meeting. Binder is optimistic that it will pass.

G. Communications Shared by Committee Members

None shared.

H. Next Meeting Date

1. November 19, 2025 at 9:00am
Confirmed.

I. Adjourn

Binder entertained a motion to adjourn at 10:38am; Zellmer moved and Gilbertson seconded. Passed. Yes 5, No 0, Abstained 0.

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