

Bayfield County
Agriculture and Extension Education Committee Meeting
May 14, 2025 – 4:00 PM
In-Person at the County Annex- EOC
And Remotely via Microsoft Teams meeting
Minutes

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Steve Sandstrom, at 4:01 pm.

Committee members present: Steve Sandstrom, Fred Strand, Larry Fickbohm, Jeff Holte, and Jeff Olsen

Others present: Mary Pardee, Theresa LaChappelle, Ian Meeker, Kellie Pederson, Kelly Westlund, and Jason Fischbach.

2. Introduction of Guest

- a. Jamie O'Donnell, UW-Madison Extension Human Resources Director

3. Approval of Minutes of March 12, 2025 Meeting (Action item)

(Fred Strand, Jeff Holte) Motion to approve March 12, 2025 minutes. Motion approved.

4. Public Comment

Steve Sandstrom mentioned that he was asked to attend the Washburn Senior Class trip to Lakewood's Lodge. He was also chosen as the Washburn High School commencement speaker for this year's graduation ceremony.

5. 2025 UW-Extension Budget Update

The 2025 budget update report is included in the packet. There will be significant savings in the contractual savings line item this year due to retirement and resignations.

6. Area Extension Director Update

a. Extension Office Configuration Update

Kelly Westlund was moved into the office near the County Administrator's Office. Ryan Van Landuyt, Energy specialist, had been stationed there. After some reconfiguration of equipment and supplies, Mr. VanLanduyt has now been moved into the Extension Office's copy & supply room. The copy machine and supplies are now located in the main Extension Office.

b. Personnel Updates

- i. **Housing Educator-** Kelly Westlund has accepted the full-time position as the Bayfield County Deputy Administrator. She will continue in her UW-Madison Extension Bayfield County Housing Educator pilot position role at 25% until July 11th, as she transitions into her new role as the Deputy Admin. The Housing Educator pilot position will not be refilled. Westlund will hand off her statewide duties to other extension colleagues. Westlund will continue to focus on housing issues in Bayfield County in her new position.
- ii. **4-H & Youth Development Educator** - Ian Meeker has tendered his retirement request. His last physical day at the office is tentatively set for June 30th. His official last day with UW-Madison Extension is July 7, 2025.

Pardee mentioned that there will be a community visioning session on May 22nd in the County Board room and via Zoom to look at the 4-H & Youth Development position

- iii. **Summer Superior Adventures Leaders** - Katherine Jenkins & Clair Emmons have been hired as the part-time Bayfield County employees to run this program. Jenkins was the Director of the Sig Olson Environmental Institute (SOEI) at Northland College and Emmons was the Coordinator of the SOEI Youth Programs at Northland College. They will be bringing lots of experience to the program.
- iv. **Housing Navigator** - Claire Sunsten has been working as a Bayfield County part-time LTE in the role as a Housing Navigator and has turned in her resignation. Sunsten graduates from Northland at the end of May, and has found other full-time employment in Duluth, MN. Her resignation will be effective on June 6, 2025. There are ongoing discussions on whether this position will be filled.
- v. **Federal updates** –
 - 1. **Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FERTEP) Grant**, Joy Schelbe, Ashland County UW-Madison Extension is working in Bad River through this grant. This grant has been paused. The grant will end in September, if Congress does not renew it.
 - 2. **SNAP Education** - House Ag Committee is looking at eliminating Snap Education from the budget. If this is done, then the Food Wise program would be eliminated. Area 1 would have 5 people affected by this cut.
 - 3. **Sea Grants** – The Lake Superior Estuary system, Sea Grants, research on the Great Lakes and Natural Resources grants are being looked at being cut. Kelly Westlund will draft a resolution for the county board meeting to express support in keeping these important fundings in place.

7. **Bayfield County 4-H Youth Development Visioning Session – May 22, 2025, 4:30-6:00 ~ In Person- County Board Room or via Zoom – Discussed**

8. **Children's Savings Accounts Update**

The Children's Savings Account proposal will be on the May County Board Agenda. Fred Strand, Larry Fickbohm and Heidi Ungrodt will meet prior to the County Board meeting to go over the presentation. They will ask for authorization of the program and also ask for the funding for the first two years of this pilot program. Discussions.

9. **Staff Reports**

a. **Emerging Crops - Jason Fischbach:**

Typically, this is the time of year that Fischbach is out in the field.

- i. **Honeyberry & Table Grapes:** Locally, the honeyberry trial is in year 2. The Table grape trials in Bayfield and Mason came through the winter and are doing well.
- ii. **Hazelnuts** The biggest concern right now is for the Hazelnut Processing Center located in the Hulings Rice Center at Northland College. Employees are finished at the Hulings Rice Center May 31, 2025; and the Hazelnut Processing Center equipment must be out by June 30, 2025.
The Hulings Rice Center was built as a community engagement commercial kitchen that people could rent to use. A blast freezer was bought so that local foods could be served in their cafeteria.

Fischbach noted that about five years ago the Hazelnut Processing Center was being housed in the Hulings Rice Center. Approximately 50 hazelnut growers have participated in using the Hazelnut Processing Center. There is a proposal being worked on for keeping the Hulings Rice Center open. A meeting, including the ACDC, UW-Extension, and Tribal members will take place tomorrow to work on details, for 3 a year proposal. If the proposal is denied by Northland College, Fischbach is not sure what the plan will be for the Hazelnut Processing Center, it may end up leaving the area.

- iii. **Federal grants** – Many agricultural Federal grants were shut down; some are slowly being made available again. The Climate Smart Grant was shut down. This grant supported many of the woody crops in the area. However, commodity and specialty crops growers have received checks due to them through Federal Grants.

b. Office Manager - Theresa LaChappelle:

- i. **Office reconfiguration** – Assist with office reconfiguration.
- ii. **Annual Report** – A few reports still need to be turned into LaChappelle. She is aiming for presentation at the June County Board
- iii. **Clean Sweep** – LaChappelle has been working on putting together the Clean Sweep – Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event. The event will be held on Thursday, July 31, 2025 from 2 pm to 6 pm at the Bayfield County Garage in Washburn. There has been very minimal information passed on to her by the Emergency Management Department. Kelly Pederson will share some of her old event files with LaChappelle.
- iv. **UW-Madison Extension Administrative Professionals Meeting** – This meeting was held in Wausau on May 13th. The University Madison Extension Division covered costs for this event.
- v. **4-H Summer Camp** – Create the credit card payment form and link for 4-H Summer Camp.

c. 4-H & Youth Development - Ian Meeker:

- i. **4-H Projects Showcase** – Kaylie Lukas had included photos of the 4-H Project showcase (formerly the Cultural Arts Festival). Approximately 125 people from all parts of the county attended. About 50 members participated in the event.
- ii. **4-H Archery** – Archery instructors were recently certified.
- iii. **4-H Summer Camp** – Meeker will be around to assist Lukas, Jenkins and Emmons with Camp. Seventeen youth applied to be counselors. All the counselors from last year will be returning, including four youth who were CITs last year.

d. Community Development - Kellie Pederson:

- i. **Senior Care Cooperative** – Pederson will be holding meetings at libraries around the county to discuss this concept.

e. Housing - Kelly Westlund: 25% Extension

- i. **CheqBUILT**- A revolving loan fund for getting 2 – 5 homes into the trust this year, will go before WHEDA in June.
- ii. **Housing Summit** – The Hillsboro Extension office is willing to work with other communities with their broker license

- iii. **Building Opportunities** – Westlund has worked on a resolution that will be made before the Bayfield County Board that would support proposals for certain parcels of county land for housing development, within certain parameters.
- iv. **Aurora Place** - A groundbreaking ceremony will take place on the afternoon of May 29th, at the Aurora Place site.
- v. **Iron River Housing Meeting** – Westlund has met with the Iron River housing committee, they checked out some potential sites.
- vi. **Cornucopia** – The Design WI report is finished. This was covered under a WHEDA grant for pre-planning work. Bayfield County Housing Authority will be in charge of this housing project.
- vii. **Washburn Housing Authority Report** – Westlund is finishing her report from the strategic planning meeting that was held.

10. **Next Meeting Date** - Tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, July 16, 2025 at 4 pm in the EOC.

11. **Adjourn** – Meeting was adjourned at **5:32 pm**

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