

Minutes – CEC Meeting – Via Zoom and Cotton Town Hall January 28, 2022

Present: Jim Takala, Mark Baumann, Jay Juten, Frank Jewell, Keith Nelson, Nancy Nilsen (virtual), Karen Brodeen (virtual), Doug Hoffbauer (virtual), Rick Pierce (virtual)

Others: Mary Tennis, Jim Gottschald, Keri Cavitt (virtual), Jan Derdowski, Shirley Lantz

Chair Jim Takala called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. Roll call was taken. Agenda was approved. Minutes from October 20, 2021, and December 3, 2021, meetings were approved as printed.

County Commissioner Update: Frank Jewell & Keith Nelson

- The legislative session starts next week. St. Louis County has some bonding requests. The county is in a good position. Frank commented it is an election year. That could add some conflicts.
- Jim T asked about the status of the kill plant at NERC. Frank commented that they were not able to get the septic in before winter. It should be put in sometime in the spring and then the facility will be ready to go. The new facility is so much better than the old one – more freezers and coolers – no comparison. They are on budget. Staff from U of M Extension have been giving feedback.

Administrative Update: Jim Gottschald / Mary Tennis

- Mary and Jan will talk more about the new position and MOA. The 2022 budget was adopted. It looks good but is still early in the year. All things related to COVID – youth programs - some transition to distance learning – must be ready to do what is needed – be very cautious in meeting with youth – transmission levels are off the charts – Jan commented 4-H anticipated this and has been ready. They are delivering virtual programming probably 4 days/week. They have used the Depot – everyone masks – it is working – need to be innovative. Continue with Steve P at Camp E for ideas – making facility available. He will be on the YIA huddle meeting next week.
- At the December 14 County Board meeting new terms were approved for Jim Takala and Rick Pierce. Their terms now go through December 2024. Frank and Keri have been in conversations about the struggle to get people to attend meetings. Frank had a similar experience with a different group. They had much success in Zoom. It can add interest and a lot of variety.
- Jim G talked about Camp E. The camp is open all year – not just summer months – ideas for training or retreats are welcome. Camp fee structure? – if an Extension program – no fee – need to recoup cost for food or heat – no other staff provided. Steve wants the beautiful camp to get used. Keith said CEC should meet there in late summer or early Fall – or the SLC Livestock Association could also meet there. The camp is the best kept secret in the county. Last year they ran about 6-8 weeks – visas were not honored for counselors, so the season had to be shortened. Everyone was rapid tested for COVID. Keith said the camp needs to be the Gold Standard. Some CEC members are not familiar with Camp E. Keith wants Steve P to put together a brief history and information to be shared with CEC members.
- Frank mentioned Dean Durgan has tried to attend one of our meetings. Frank is on the statewide Extension committee – has learned what incredible and varied work Extension is doing.
- Mary told the group the YIA Conference will be virtual this year. They hope to reschedule late fall 2022 for in person at ITMEC (Iron Trail Motors Event Center) in Virginia. They are having much success with sponsors. USS wants to really support YIA in different ways. Keith commented about former YIA members working at USS – He is sure others would match USS contributions. They are trying to retain youth by keeping them employed in SLC. Working in the mine now is not like it was when our fathers and grandfathers worked there.

Review of New Position

- Mary spoke of an employee at the Depot that was hired as a temp. She proved to be a real asset to the Depot, and they kept her on. Her name is Hailey Eidenschink. They are looking at her doing a crossover – what can depot do to serve Extension. Hailey gives virtual tours – developed a role around

this idea – new but not new – can be budgeted through the Depot. Jan commented that Hailey is a natural educator with tremendous potential. YIA and IE partners with both – will serve youth community in a different way.

- Keith asked if this was a U of M position. He doesn't want to lose someone with that talent – concern to keep her in St. Louis County and serve the whole county – not just Duluth. Frank said she has great skills – Mary is supervisor now – will transition to Jan but will work together – must over communicate and be on the same page. Mary and Jan meet weekly about youth programs – keep communication lines open – make sure Mary has input – use her expertise and innovation. Keith commented on using ARPA money. Jim G commented funding is already in place with Depot budget dollars, partnership with Depot and Extension.
- We might need to tweak the job description and have finance director look at it. Frank made motion to approve MOA – knowing some changes will be made. Mark 2nd the motion. Discussion. All in favor. Motion carried. Jim G suggested edits to virtual learning opportunities – include in job description – something about Depot director also a part of working with this position.
- Mention Hailey as a key person (don't use her name). Jan stated that branding with the Depot and University is already in place. Jim T commented not to forget about cultural diversity – Fond du Lac and Bois Fort.

Regional Director Update: Keri Cavitt

- Keri loved hearing ideas for future meetings.
- She will be having individual conversations between now and March with each CEC member – discuss how engagement happens. Watch for invite from her and Mary.

Civil Rights

- We need to treat everyone fairly and equitably. CEC – do we have parity with community we are serving. There will be an invitation to complete an electronic survey – by email – some questions are optional – some are required. When there are opportunities for new members, we need to look at gaps in our communities. These are federal funds, and we are obligated for civil rights parity and diversity.
- Keith asked if data is confidential. Keri replied that it is. The data will be aggregated and shared.
- It is important to achieve 100% PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY.
- When asked if available in another format, Keri stated it could be printed and mailed if requested.

Business Items

Election of Officers

Jim G took over this part of the meeting. Keith motioned to move the slate forward of Jim T as Chair and Doug Hoffbauer as vice chair. Mark 2nd the motion. Motion carried. All approved. Jim Takala will remain as chair and Doug Hoffbauer as vice chair.

Farm Family of the Year

- Members were given a packet with criteria, past recipients and a nomination form.
- Keith ordered 10 new flags that have been flown over the capitol. He presents one each year to our Farm Family. He also gives these flags to centennial farms.
- Frank talked about letting others know – maybe getting input from Troy and Bob.
- Keith suggested looking at CSAs. Or other non-traditional agriculture. Last year the nominee was a berry farm.
- The nomination form is due in April. Members need to come to the March meeting with names for nominees.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 28, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. This date was selected from a doodle poll that was sent out to members. Keri would like to get back to a rotating schedule.

Next meeting...March 28, 10:00-11:30 a.m. – Cotton Town Hall with virtual option

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,
Shirley Lantz