

Minutes – CEC Meeting @ Virginia GSC – November 3, 2022

Present: Jim Takala, Mark Baumann, Doug Hoffbauer, Frank Jewell, Keith Nelson, Richard Pierce, Gary Rantala
Others: Keri Cavitt, Cacia Wauters, Nicole Baxton

Chair Jim Takala called the meeting to order at 9:03 am. Roll call was taken. Agenda was approved. Minutes from October 13, 2022 were approved as printed.

Feature Program

SNAP-Ed: Chris Strand, Abby DeVita, Linda Erdahl, and Heather Snesrud

Background of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) –

- Work with people who receive or qualify for snap benefits – nutrition education as well as healthy lifestyle education – work with youth, seniors, and families
- Works collaboratively with community partners – policy systems and environmental change work – cooking instruction class or walking curriculum
- Work with local grocery store for healthier items at checkouts
- Funding comes from USDA's "farm bill" – USDA designates an implementing organization in each state to administer SNAP-Ed – plan is submitted annually, approved with fiscal year budget
- Goal is to improve the likelihood that persons eligible choose healthy options – consistent with myplate.gov
- Spectrum of prevention – starts with individuals and expands to potentially influence policy and legislation

Abby's work with youth in local schools –

- Goal is to increase exposure to fruits/vegetables through education and taste testing so youth are more likely to try these outside of school
- Incorporate physical activity in lessons to encourage activity outside of school
- Schools currently served: Myers-Wilkins, Laura MacArthur, Stowe, Lincoln Park Middle School
- Myers-Wilkins worked on environmental education – used garden produce in recipes in class, hosted a family night to show off school garden where families took produce home and received recipes

Chris's work with Hibbing HRA – empower program –

- Direct education w/ residents - hands on cooking, meal planning, food budgeting, nutrition basics and safety
- Expanding to gardening + walking club in 2023

Linda's work with food shelves –

- SuperShelf program – transforms food shelves, creates a welcoming environment for communities to access appealing healthy food
- Values; good food, respect for all, collaborative partnerships, evidence based practices, systemic thinking
- Duluth food shelf chosen for the study – received a grant to create a grocery store feel (new paint, signage, and arrangement of food – with produce up front)
- After the transformation – individuals were less likely to choose boxed foods
- Aurora area food shelf – now taking on SuperShelf model – opening in a few months (potentially) – stage 2 going to add outdoor kitchen for food demos – how to chop, mix, etc.
- Colleges/Universities have food shelves on campus – incorporated SuperShelf model – new signage helpful

Questions:

- Is Second Harvest the umbrella over which they operate? They are a partner – a food bank that provides food to the food shelves.
- What is the funding source for the food shelf? It varies from food shelf to food shelf but comes from private and public funds.
- How is the relationship with tribal partners working now? Are we able to integrate and work with them? For groups like Ruby's Pantry, how does that tie in to SNAP-Ed? Is there a relationship with other groups? Bois Forte has a community food shelf, but the educator didn't have the experience to do a SuperShelf, so the state helped partner to get that done. Does that exist with Fond du Lac? Yes.
- Work being done in Duluth based schools – what about 2142? How many of those are involved? Any NER, Northwoods, or Tower? If they are 50% or more free/reduced they are eligible. Have worked with Mesabi East. Virginia schools have fallen short of that guideline.

- NER (with mining layoffs) families are/will be in stressful situations. (Babbitt is in this situation now.) How forward thinking are we being – what’s going to happen in the next 2 months outside of Duluth? How fast can SNAP-Ed react? There needs to be evidence to show they can partner – need to fill out the form to show this need.
- Have all the principals been informed? Chris will follow up. The struggle with SNAP-Ed is because some things are out of their control. Based on research, the numbers might not show right away. When families don’t fill out forms then the need isn’t shown.
- How can we support schools so forms are in and numbers are true? Some families are no longer together so it is harder to get forms filled out.
- The barriers of SNAP-Ed – focused on highest need and if they’re under 50% free/reduced then they don’t usually seek out those schools - educators are told not to go to those schools. Educators are doing a lot with less time and less educators. Highest need is the priority. They encourage anyone to reach out so educators can follow up - have schools contact them too.
- Any promotional plan to get the public to help support financially with private donations? SNAP-Ed works with each food shelf to encourage certain ways to handle food drives and encourages promotion of whole grains, fruits/vegetables, and spices. Can be donated in bulk? Yes. Troy encourages farmers to take product they have to food shelves - not a campaign but it helps make the product available.

Keri shares Mary’s video to open up conversations about the MOA and structure – finances and support from county – specifically rent.

- Keith doesn’t see the board changing the rent structure. Could reciprocate and add additional resources. Would rather charge rent than subsidize afterwards. What the board has tried to do is create a safe, secure building, with a workplace that is inviting. Keith will have rent piece conversation with Mary. Rent structure that was imposed years ago was designed to minimize space request. Not supportive of rent piece. If we need to do more, then we need to enhance/augment the relationship with the University.

Feature Program

AFNR: Troy Salzer

UMN Ag Extension Newsletter now includes embedded video (view the newsletter [here](#))

NEFGC Field Day – Baumann Family Farm – Floodwood – 9/15/22

- 3-year process for this field day to happen. Showcase of components of the operation that could be utilized in other operations. Over 100 people attended.
- Livestock handling equipment, GPS guidance systems and weed and brush control in pastures – how he applies products (fertilizer or chemical), hay storage yard – storing so water runs off and doesn’t have bales sitting in water, forestry chopper demonstration related to pasture renovation and creation, new pasture establishment with nurse crop-fall grazied – invested in reducing tree population.

Questions:

- Do you see the herd population moving north? Last year was hard on the population of beef cattle. Tons of forage that we can’t afford to transport out of region because of gas prices. SLC is the #1 producer of mixed forage in MN.
- How do we effectively increase the knowledge of the public about where their food source comes from? Looking at options to inform the public – a 4-H family asked to use the You Tube channel videos during county fairs. SNAP-Ed also does a good job of educating about where food comes from.

Fall Program Conference Learning Lab Bus Tour – Duluth – 10/5/22

- White Pine Ranch – Bill and Devaney O’Brian
 - Devon cattle and Tunis sheep – heritage breeds
 - Equipment demonstration – what they utilize
 - Silvo pasture focus – open and wooded – thinning to get better production

Questions:

- What does silvo stand for? Forested pasturing, aspect of managing livestock in wooded areas to capture value of shade, growth, and production. Balance of appropriate tree cover and open areas to get grass to flourish.

- Is there an issue of pasturing in forested areas related to a clean water concern because it can cause damage to streams? Troy has worked with a Cornell forester/farm owner on how to manage and minimize impact to livestock and water.

Farmer Doug Farm – Doug and Lois Hoffbauer – Agritourism – offer many products to the public

Bay Produce – Superior, Wisconsin – hydroponic vegetable production

Gardening from the ground up received an “all extension team award”

Financial Statement

Budget distributed. Not much has changed. Hailey’s position added – unusual position, but great addition. Troy noted that Hailey has been a great resource for himself and his former intern.

County Commissioner Update

No updates.

Regional Director Update

Keri will send information in an email.

Business Items

Honor those leaving the committee – Frank’s work has been much appreciated.

2023 meeting dates discussed. Thursday might work better for Keith – but fine with either. Most prefer mornings and would like to move meetings around. Like Camp Esquagama during the summer. NERCC facility – potential meeting location – large meeting room and could tour the building after.

Other: advertising for future committee members. Survey will be sent on meeting days, times, and recommendations of future committee members. Keith may have some ideas. Jim Takala has spoken with Nicole Kudrle about interest from 4-H families.

Performance Reviews

Closed session.

Meeting adjourned approximately 11:25 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Baxton