

**Extension Management Team
Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2008
Belknap County Office, Laconia NH**

Attendance: Alice Mullen, Nancy Bradford-Sisson, Darrel Covell, Wendy Brock, Claudia Boozer-Blasco, Geoffrey Njue, Juli Brussell, Paul Bonaparte-Krogh, David Foote, Charlene Baxter, Debbie Cheever, Ann Hamilton, Chuck Hersey, Hugh Christian, Jim Grady, Amy Ouellette

Darrel introduced Andy Fast, Belknap County's new Forester to the group.

County Updates:

Sullivan County

A new secretary was hired. Their visit with President Mark Huddleston is Monday, March 17. Sullivan County will have about a \$2 million deficit, but they expect no problems with the Extension budget.

Strafford County

Deborah Goard is the new Forester in Strafford County. They are currently operating with two temporary administrative assistants. The Strafford County Extension budget passed through the commissioners and the sub-committee fine; however, on Saturday, Geoffrey learned that one of Strafford's reps suggested cutting agencies as part of the Strafford County budget, which is up 17% this year. When the overall county budget went up for vote, there was a tie. Things are up in the air now. They're feeling very anxious. Geoffrey asked the advisory council to come to the next public budget hearing on Sat., March 15.

Rockingham County

Their budget is approx. \$559,000, up 3.2% this year. Commissioners requested that educators submit requests to attend conferences when expenses are over \$100. Lynn Garland and Rollie Barnaby are retiring at the end of May. Claudia will let the staff know what type of retirement recognition will take place. Their County Conversation event with UNH President Mark Huddleston is June 2, 2008. Plans are in the works. The focus will be the CYFAR project. In January, Nada hosted the new Commissioner of Agriculture, Lorraine Merrill at an event for Rockingham County farmers and dignitaries. They have a full council and have been working on their county website.

Jim said we should not use county money to pay dues to professional associations and attendance at association meetings.

Merrimack County

Budget approved as submitted, with a 2.3% increase due to support staff salaries and benefits. March 25 is the final public hearing. The overall Merrimack County budget is up

about 10%. Deb feels confident with the Merrimack County Administration and how they manage funds. The nursing home residents are moving into their new facility this week. The staff is considering holding the next President's visit in Henniker at a state-of-the-art sawmill.

Grafton County

Their budget request increased by only 0.78%. It passed through the sub-committee fine. Their relationship with the commissioners is excellent due to communication and working together on county projects. Kathy gave a summarized report of Extension efforts to all towns in Grafton County. Four published the reports in their county report booklets. Advisory Council is down one adult and one teen member. Senator Deb Reynolds was a judge at their 4-H activities day last week. Volunteer management program associate position is being advertised. This person will work with Master Gardeners and 4-H volunteers. Tom Buob and Nory Parr are retiring in May.

Family, Home & Garden Education Center

Alice worked with her council to write value statements and a mission statement. They have a marketing team. She recommended a publication called NH Center for Non-profits Core Capacities. Alice attended a meeting of NH non-profits, which she found to be a positive experience. Significant Issues grant proposal submitted to fund a project on energy.

Hillsborough County

They're in the midst of the county budget process. First, IT for the entire county is addressed. Salaries are next. Their budget is about \$448,000. Dan feels very confident with their current support staff. Their next county conversation is coming in September. Hillsborough County staff have been quite successful obtaining Outreach Scholarship grants. They need two advisory council members. They're working on bringing more diversity to the council. The county is working on a master plan for 330 county acres. Wetlands have been mapped. Dan is facilitating these meetings. This is good for publicity.

Coös County

They're concentrating on three things at present: support staff, the budget and building the advisory council (because five members' terms are ending). They have a 99-year lease in their state-owned building; however, Extension will need to share expenses with the State and Fish & Game. Last year, the budget was overspent. This did cut into their program funds. Sue is concerned that the building and land expenses will exceed budgeted funds this year. They have a support staff member who has been out for a long time. They're operating with only one support staff member, who has been willing to work overtime. Sue will hire temporary support staff soon. At the public budget hearing, someone suggested the county cut budgets that are not mandated by the State. Another suggestion was for department budgets to be cut by 5%. They have two county nursing homes in Coös. There are many empty beds. The delegation did not vote on the budget. The reps are discussing the budget today in Concord. Sue offered a revised budget with a 4% cut from the original 2008 proposal, which was much appreciated. The county is in bad economic shape because of the mill closures.

Cheshire County

The budget passed through the commissioners with no trouble. The sub-committee meeting went fine too. Other agencies were called in for cuts but Extension was not asked to do so. The budget still needs to go through the vote. Lauren Bressett is retiring in December. Carl facilitated a 4-H needs assessment. They're planning an open barn day at the county farm. Marshall Patmos has been around the office working on the Christmas tree pest management course.

Carroll County

The early budget process went well. They returned about \$14,000 to the county from the 2007 budget, which the county government was happy about. The delegation wants somewhere between \$500,000 and \$1 million cut from the overall county budget. So far, the Extension budget is ok, but Ann is not sure what to expect. In their recent audit, their large travel reimbursements were flagged. Peter Pohl's retirement party expenses were flagged as well, although attendees paid for food and party supplies. The advisory council submitted a grant to fund green building, their future office. Not sure what to expect there.

Belknap County

Andy Fast is the new Belknap Forester. The Extension budget passed through the commissioners and sub-committee fine. The public budget hearings did not go smoothly. A small group of concerned citizens heavily scrutinized several departments' budgets line item by line item. After two public hearings, the county budget passed. Amy and staff are concerned about "outside agencies" budgets in the future. A series of agriculture and forestry workshops will be advertised in the local paper in hopes of generating public awareness. The council is full except for two vacancies, held for the new forester to fill, since there are no forestry reps on the council at present. The overall county budget request is up about 10% and the Extension budget is up 2.3% due only to support staff salaries and benefits.

Civil Rights review is coming August 25-29, 2008. A team from USDA will audit Cooperative Extension and the Agriculture Experiment Station. This is a TEAM EFFORT. All Extension staff must be ready and willing to help. Paul is going to work with every county to prepare. Any ads that are placed in papers are great pieces to have in your civil rights folder. Big picture of Civil Rights Review...as info becomes available Paul will be posting it on the website under Diversity, Civil Rights and EEO. Many documents are there already. He's working with the UNH Diversity office to make sure our documents are current. Paul handed out a civil rights compliance review checklist. When Paul sends important info to us by email, he is going to state "civil rights" in the email subject line. Paul asked if any counties feel comfortable with their civil rights documenting procedure. Three said yes. The on-line reporting system is an excellent place for compiling civil rights efforts since October 2007. Before that, we used TERS. Jim urged us to tell staff to bring all on-line reporting up to date. This is the place where we record our audience data. There are times when it's difficult to derive diversity data from events like twilight meetings (large audience, informal, no pre-registration). With other events, it's easier to obtain this data. Public announcements on radio stations...get the radio station's demographics. Paul handed out a new document titled "Civil rights guide for UNHCE offices – COA's responsibilities". In this paper: build a file with

meeting minutes from all staff meetings and council meetings. Keep all support staff hiring papers or electronic files. Office compliance: the poster tells people how to file a grievance. If this ever happens, the COA must notify Paul. If you have your own civil rights grievance, staff may contact Stan Swier, UNHCE's Civil Rights rep. Mandatory posters are listed on the State's Dept. of Labor website. Workers compensation flow charts were handed out. Hang them up. This takes the place of the pink half sheet that currently hangs in county offices. This workers comp info does not apply to county support staff except Carroll County's because they are university employees. Things to think about: "And Justice for All" poster, physical disability accessibility - if you have any issues at all, be sure to have a plan, Darrel knows where to obtain over-sized wheel transporters for outdoor activities, put a statement about special accommodations on each county webpage. Chuck asked if there are certain tasks that should take priority to prepare for the civil rights audit. Many times, it's difficult to interpret people's race and ethnicity, financial status and more. Show evidence where you've made genuine efforts to reach underserved and diverse audiences. Juli suggested posting notices for activities/programs at urban farmers' markets. Marilyn suggested that each county researches local sources for interpreters and accommodations for physical disabilities. Northeast Passage (located on campus) is a good source and can be found on the web. Kathy requested that Jim and Paul give us the specific statements we should put on our county webpages and a checklist of civil rights documents in our files. Jim said preparing for the civil rights audit is critically important. The responsibility to prepare rests on all staff and the COAs are responsible for making sure staff complies. PLs need to back up COAs since we have no authority. Support staff are expected to learn the material in the civil rights guide too. Staff should not take vacation during the last week of August.

SPIT update

Goal 1, Obj. 1, A: *Refine the system of identifying and prioritizing significant issues to include information gathered from some or all of the following resources (list).*

Goal 1, Obj. 1, B: *Consider and commit to significant issues that may range from short to long term, simple to complex. This commitment may include multidisciplinary efforts, grants and multi-state collaborations, new investments in time and resources, and partnerships.*

- The first round of Significant Issue Grant RFP's were announced to staff on Jan. 2, 2008. Proposals are due March 14. Winners will be announced April 15.
- Issues Identification Prioritization Process for UNHCE is under development/discussion by SPIT. County staff, whole programs (4-H for example) and specialists will have major input.
- Significant issue focus areas will be announced Dec. 2008.
- A second round of Significant Issue Grant RFP's will occur in 2009.
- Issues identified and prioritized by this process will be used in program area reviews (4-H, Ag., etc.). Criteria will include mission fit, current programs that address issues, alternative coverage, Extension capacity, potential partners and more.

Goal 2, Obj. 4, C: *Determine how volunteer management can be made more effective to achieve the desired outcomes.*

- Paul Bonaparte-Krogh reassigned to half-time volunteer management coordinator.
- Volunteer policy manual in progress, not a SPIT activity, but relevant to this objective, so worth mentioning.

Goal 3, Obj. 3, C: *Continue to encourage UNH departmental affiliation for all Extension specialists.*

- Decision was made to fund two full graduate assistantships (tuition plus stipend for two years) each year to Extension staff working in partnership with UNH or UNHM faculty members.
- Updated RFP sent to staff on Nov. 1, 2007, due Dec. 15, 2007, nine proposals were submitted, decisions made Jan. 1, 2008.
 - Becky Grube, Extension Associate Professor/Specialist in Sustainable Horticulture, teamed with Kelly Cullen, Department of Resource Economics, Robert Mohr, Whittemore School of Business and Economics, and Charlie French, Extension Associate Professor/Specialist, Community Development, to submit the successful proposal, *On-Farm Biodiesel Production and the Establishment of the New England Energy Consortium*.
 - Matt Tarr, Extension Assistant Professor/Specialist, Wildlife, and Kim Babbitt, Department of Natural Resources, were also awarded a graduate assistantship for their project, *Vernal Pool Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Wetland Policy Analysis for the State of New Hampshire*.

Goal 3, Obj. 3, D: *Develop an outreach seminar series on the UNH campus featuring the work of Extension specialists, other faculty, institutes and field staff.*

- Outreach Seminar series planned

Goal 3, Obj. 4, B: *Expand marketing efforts to reach a variety of audiences, including underserved and diverse audiences.*

- Staff will receive a civil rights review during regional staff meetings
- Discussion underway to make diversity training mandatory for all staff who have not already participated in such a program (like at Supervising@UNH or Managing@UNH).

Goal 3, Obj. 4, C: *Prepare and share program impact information in a clear, easy-to-understand format for use by county advisory councils and others.*

- SPIT, Program Leaders, specialists and educators will receive public value training at regional staff meetings.
- A proposal will be submitted to CREES requesting funds for a two-day intensive training on public value in 2009.

Discussion about SPIT progress

Deb Cheever asked if citizens are going to be involved in the process of identifying significant issues to be addressed before program area reviews. Amy responded that stakeholders will be involved throughout the process. Jim discussed the rationale for the first round of SIG RFP's and the use of reserve funds. This process dovetails with the strategic plan and identification of common themes that will help people as they address significant issues with limited resources. Issues will be addressed more "globally" than by individual program areas. Marilyn emphasized the role of creating coalitions for tapping into existing coalitions. Paul said that the volunteer policy manual is in development. Chuck noted that many opportunities for graduate research exist throughout NH, not just on campus. Alice asked that at upcoming regional staff meetings, we are given something to work on, not asked to listen to lectures. The plan is to work on writing public value statements in small groups. SPIT feels that public value training is crucial to provide for staff as soon as possible. Paul emphasized the importance of face-to-face meetings when important issues need to be discussed. Jim would like to see the "us" "them" mentality of counties vs. Durham to end because all work for UNH and we're all in this together.

Financial status:

There has been a slight rescission at UNH due to the State's financial issues. The university is working on the 2009 budget. The governor will give them a target. There's a union drive going on. UNHCE does not have the money to comply with the 5.5% salary increase. We will pay separation incentives from our reserves. Vacant positions will not be filled with permanent staff until we've recouped the dollars associated with the pay-outs.

Communications update:

- Holly and Peg helped with new dairy publication by John Porter and a landscaping publication by Mary Tebo.
- Staff are asked to contact Holly or Peg early on when a new project/program involves intellectual property (publications and web-based tools). A memorandum of understanding will be drawn up between Communications and the appropriate staff.
- Holly led the charge to create banners advertising UNHCE at Farm & Forest.

Communications tools available for our use:

- Cold Fusion is a web-based database program. HTML programming is used on static webpages. Cold Fusion allows changes to be made automatically on a webpage when data is changed by an Extension staff member. Contact Steve Judd if you would like to use Cold Fusion as a tool to put info on our website.
- David showed "Community Assets for People Mapping" demo that was created with Captivate software, which enables voice-overs during a Powerpoint presentation viewed on-line.
- On our home page, if you click onto eXtension (lower left), it will bring you to eXtension's home page. The northeast Extension Directors identified energy as an important Community of Practice. Juli is leading the charge. The eXtension wiki is juried. David demonstrated how to do a Google search on all states' Cooperative Extensions (accessed through UNHCE's website).

- del.icio.us – stores all of your bookmarks on the web, so you can access them at home, in the office and on the road
- Go into the intranet, ITDE for interesting ITDE tips and tools
- drop.io gives you a space on a big server to store a big file. It is password protected.

Nancy asked about our on-line event calendar. It has some problems. You can't post more than one event for the same time period. David will look into this.

Extension Management Team "EMT" may need a name change. Jim and Paul would like to change it to the County Management Team "CMT". Fine with the group.

State Advisory Council meeting is on April 17. Shane will give a GIS presentation. Paul is sending out an email to council members asking for significant issues facing each county. The COA will narrow it down to one or two. An advisory council rep will present the issue(s) at the state advisory council meeting, not a staff member. The issue(s) should be somehow linked to Extension or something they think Extension should address. Paul is hoping that by emailing state advisory council members beforehand, they will come to the meeting with the thoughts already in mind. It will be at the NH Higher Education Assistance Foundation Conference Center, 3 Barrell Court, Concord.

Submitted by Amy Ouellette