

Cochise County Extension Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date: July 8, 2024

Location: Triangle T Guest Ranch, Dragoon, AZ

Chairperson: Nathan Watkins

Call to Order

Nathan Watkins welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 2:06 PM.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the February 23, 2024, meeting minutes was made by Alan Seitz and seconded by Ron Bemis. The motion was approved unanimously.

Attendance

- **Advisory Board Members Present:** Nathan Watkins (Chair), Moiria White (Vice-Chair), Ron Bemis, Aaron Cardona, Tyler Curry, Amber Morin, Dennis Moroney, Alan Seitz, Jason Zibart.
 - **University of Arizona Personnel Present:** Kim McReynolds, Carol Holden, Haley Chappell, Randy Norton, Tricia Dunham, Connie Forsyth.
 - **Guests Present:** None.
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New Business

Advisory Board Elections

- Members with expired terms as of June 30, 2024:
 - Moiria White (Vice-Chair), Tyler Curry, Julia Johnson, Dennis Moroney, Alan Seitz.
 - All agreed to serve another term, except Julia Johnson (absent). Carol Holden will reach out to Julia to confirm her decision.
- **Officer Elections:**
 - Chair: Moiria White was nominated by Nathan Watkins, seconded by Dennis Moroney, and unanimously elected.
 - Vice-Chair: Ron Bemis was nominated by Alan Seitz, seconded by Dennis Moroney, and unanimously elected.

Extension Operations

1. **Personnel Updates:**
 - **Resignations:**
 - Maria Molina, Community Outreach Assistant II (EFNEP), left to join Cochise County in a similar role.
 - Breanna McCormick, Community Outreach Professional II (BHC), resigned following her husband's military reassignment.

- **New Hires:**
 - Dana Brothers, Community Outreach Professional II (BHC).
 - Sylvia Hinojosa, Community Outreach Assistant II (EFNEP).
- Both hires were fully grant-funded and unaffected by the hiring freeze.

2. Open Positions:

- **Assistant/Associate Agent, Commercial Horticulture:** The search with Another Source was discontinued after receiving only one underqualified application. Low interest may be tied to the University of Arizona's financial image.
- **Extension Assistant (4-H):** The hiring freeze was lifted on July 1, and recruitment is expected to begin soon.

Cooperative Extension Strategic Positioning

- Input from listening sessions is being analyzed by external consultants, with findings expected to be shared at the Extension Annual Conference in the fall.
- Concerns were raised about the session's format, perceived underrepresentation of rural voices, and low participation.

Reports

Advisory Board Member Updates

- **Amber Morin:** Announced the release of the Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape documentary on August 2 at the Bisbee Royal Theater and invited board members to attend.
- **Nathan Watkins:** Expressed gratitude for his recovery and provided an update on his nephew's accident.
- **Ron Bemis:** Discussed the ongoing Douglas AMA meeting, which is reviewing Arizona water statutes and related documents.
- **Dennis Moroney:** Highlighted issues with neighbors not adhering to the "Fence Out" law for open-range ranching and emphasized the need for stronger rancher advocacy.
- **Aaron Cardona:** Voiced concerns about the growing anti-agriculture sentiment among new residents. Shared his experience attending the University's strategic planning session.
- **Tyler Curry:** Noted increased activity at the Sunsites water fill station, reflecting changes in local water use.
- **Alan Seitz:** Reported on water conservation efforts among Cochise County growers, emphasizing efficient irrigation methods like pivots and drip systems.
- **Jason Zibart:** Shared updates on grant projects, including a new farmers market in Benson, operational success of the mobile MRI, and efforts to establish a fund for future upgrades.
- **Moiria White:** Praised the success of the 4-H Large Stock Activity Day, which saw over 100 attendees. Highlighted challenges in recruiting volunteers and noted that Haley's support is expected to help with volunteer engagement.

Faculty/Program Updates

- **Haley Chappell (4-H):**
 - Reviewed the carcass workshop held at Cattlemen’s Processors and plans for a future full-processing workshop.
 - Shared upcoming events, including canning classes and a Youth Quality Assurance class.
 - Announced interest from Benson community in starting a new 4-H Club.
 - **Carol Holden:** Partnering with SEAGO on a daycare incubator program and assisting a nonprofit with financial management for grant applications.
 - **Kim McReynolds:** Reported on the Range Livestock Workshop in Willcox, soil mapping projects, and collaborative efforts with Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape.
 - **Randy Norton:** Provided updates on winter forage trials, summer crop evaluations, and an irrigation workshop held in May. Mentioned plans for another workshop in the fall and noted the unavailability of Dicamba labels next year due to misuse.
 - **Evelyn Whitmer (via Carol Holden):** Highlighted ongoing efforts with the “Curious Quails” walking program, financial literacy classes, and nutrition program updates.
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Old Business

University Financial Action Plan Updates

- No layoffs are expected, though a 3% statewide budget cut is anticipated.
 - Sierra Vista office costs are under review. Master Gardeners will remain, supported by a facilities use agreement for their garden and room 503.
 - A possible reduction in vehicles is being considered, aiming to minimize operational impact.
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Next Meeting

A poll will be sent to determine the date for the next meeting.

Future Agenda Items

- Meat Lab Status.
 - Grant opportunities for improving irrigation efficiency.
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Adjournment

Moiria White moved to adjourn at 4:03 PM, seconded by Ron Bemis. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tricia Dunham
Administrative Assistant