

# **Cochise County Cooperative Extension Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

**June 17, 2025 | 9:30 AM**

**Arevelos Farms, McNeil, AZ**

## **Call to Order**

Moiria White, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:29 AM.

## **Introductions**

All attendees introduced themselves and shared their favorite vegetable, plant, or crop to grow.

## **Attendance**

**In-Person:** Ashley Wright, Moiria White, Kim McReynolds, Ron Bemis, Nathan Watkins, Carol Holden, Jason Zibart, Jan Groth, Aaron Cardona, Connie Forsyth, Tricia Dunham, Haley Chappell, Alan Seitz

**Virtual (Zoom):** Rhegan Derfus

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## **1. Approval of Previous Minutes**

The minutes of the February 27, 2025 meeting were reviewed. Nathan Watkins moved to approve the minutes; Alan Seitz seconded. Motion carried.

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## **2. Extension Operations – Carol Holden**

### **a. Sierra Vista Location Updates**

- There have been challenges with room assignments at Groth Hall (Rooms 503/506). Currently, the two offices are being consolidated into Room 506, with Room 503 remaining as a dedicated classroom/meeting space.
- An agreement with the UA South Foundation will cover six months; after 12/31/2025, occupancy will be month-to-month.
- Estimated savings with the new setup: \$8K/year plus utilities, compared to \$22–24K/year previously.
- Budget requests have been sent to Cochise County; Board members are open to attending a County Supervisors' work session.
- The Discovery Gardens Facility Use Agreement has been extended for one year.

## **b. Personnel Updates**

- **Horticulture Agent:** Hiring is paused due to visa uncertainties; considering possible reclassification to staff position.
- **Water Wise Agent:** Applications being accepted; based in Willcox.
- **FCHS Agent:** Position will post after July 1, 2025.
- **Range Monitoring:** Two final candidates remain for interviews.

## **c. New Hires**

- **Jennifer Bell:** 4-H Assistant; experienced with 4-H and FFA, she is one month in the role and is doing great.
  - **Savanna McReynolds:** ½-time Administrative Support; prior AmeriCorps experience.
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## **3. Advisory Board Terms Expiring 06/30/2025**

- **Ron Bemis:** Renewed term, will expire 06/30/2027.
- **Aaron Cardona:** Withdrawn; feels input is not utilized by Extension.
- **Amber Morin:** Absent; will be contacted.
- **Nathan Watkins:** Declined; retiring after 28 years of service.
- **Jason Zibart:** Willing to continue, excluding Chair or Vice Chair responsibilities will expire 06/30/2027.

## **4. Chair/Vice Chair Elections**

- **Chair:** Ron Bemis nominated Moiria White; Alan Seitz seconded. No opposition. **Moiria White elected Chair.**
  - **Vice Chair:** Alan Seitz nominated Ron Bemis; Nathan Watkins seconded. No opposition. **Ron Bemis elected Vice Chair.**
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## 5. Financial Outlook FY26 – Connie Forsyth

- Current positions are secure; FY26 includes salary increases for eligible faculty and staff.
  - County appropriation decisions are pending; the majority of funds support staff salaries.
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## 6. Community Updates (3-minute limit per member)

- **Moiria White:** Positive cattle market; recent changes in wolf management considered a win for ranchers.
  - **Ron Bemis:** Concerns regarding non-scientific wildlife management of wolves and drought impacts on small ranchers.
  - **Alan Seitz:** Water issues for homeowners; AMA limitations noted.
  - **Nathan Watkins:** Water access challenges for orchard operations; concerns about small rancher viability.
  - **Jason Zibart:** Community health updates; support for SNAP and fresh vegetable programs.
  - **Aaron Cardona:** AMA updates; capital investment and produce contract concerns.
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## 7. Faculty/Program Updates

- **Rhegan Derfus:** Mobile farmers market, leadership academy, SNAP/EFNEP funding concerns due to Big Beautiful Bill.
- **Ashley Wright:** Farmer/Rancher Workshops, New World Screw Worm education, AI clinic planning, poultry health updates.
- **Kim McReynolds:** Rain gauge readings, drought assessment, Chihuahuan Scrub & Drone workshop planned for September.
- **Jan Groth:** Discovery Gardens updates, Master Gardener Class finishing up, field trips starting again, beginning gardener class in the works, just held drip irrigation workshop.

- **Haley Chappell:** 4-H program updates (Easter Bunny photos, WAMM Fest, YQCA, Small Stock Day, Large Stock Day), school engagement, Fair preparation, new activities planned, new assistant, Jenny is doing great.
  - **Carol Holden:** Supporting small nonprofits, grant applications, Sentinel Landscape collaboration, SSWA Watershed group.
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## **8. Old Business**

- **Meat Lab:** Soft launch June 6; official opening June 13. Open Fridays 9 AM–4 PM; only card/check payments accepted; UA-raised beef only.
  - **Alan Seitz:** Apologized for previous meeting remarks; willing to resign if Board requests. Email vote requested.
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## **Adjournment**

Chair Moiria White adjourned the meeting at 11:25 AM.

**Minutes Prepared By:** Tricia Dunham