

## Cochise County Extension Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2023, 10:00am – 12:00pm, Cochise College, Benson, AZ

Randy Norton, in the absence of Chairperson Dennis Moroney welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:06am.

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous 12/03/2021 meeting was made by Alan and seconded by Moiria.

### Introductions

- Advisory Board and alternate members present: Gwen Calhoun, Aaron Cardona, Barbara Clark, Tyler Curry, Daniella Reidmiller, Alan Seitz, James (Stew) Stewart, Nathan Watkins, Moiria White, and Jason Zibart (10)
- UArizona personnel present: Felicia Ferguson, Connie Forsyth, Carlyne Greeno, Jan Groth, Trevor Lauber, Kim McReynolds, Randy Norton, Joshua Sherman, Evelyn Whitmer, and Ashley Wright. (10)
- Guests present: None

### New Business

#### Elections

- Motion from Alan to nominate Nathan Watkins as chairperson, seconded by Moiria. The motion carried with all in favor.
- Motion from Alan to nominate Moira as vice-chairperson, seconded by Nathan. The motion carried with all in favor.

#### Terms

- All in agreement with continuing for another 2-year period.

#### Extension Operations

- Post COVID, some continuing with flex schedules, some days in office some days remote.
- Sharon Buono, Business Manager currently on extended leave

#### State of the Unit Presentation

- What is learned from the process? Gain an understanding of Cochise revenue sources, Cochise expenditures, and budget transparency.
  - Income sources include:
    - State/Smith Lever (53%)
      - Primarily faculty and staff salaries, ERE (Employee related expenses)
    - Grant/Federal (14%)
      - Faculty, Staff, ERE, Operations, Travel
    - Gift (2%)
      - Staff, Operations, Other Activities, Specific Program-related expenses
    - Cash/Other (2%)
      - Staff, Operations, Travel, Prof. Development, Retention, Start-up
    - County (28%)
      - Staff Salaries, UArizona South Sierra Vista Rent and Utilities, Operations
  - Projected Usage of Funds
    - Personnel – 91.2%
    - Operations/General Expenses – 8.3%
    - Travel – 0.5%
    - Carlyne explained the Cochise ratio of faculty to staff is about the same across the state with the influx of funding from legislature there will be an increase in faculty hiring.
    - Carlyne shared that during COVID travel dropped by roughly 90%, many conferences were made available online which requires no travel. Being at 10%

travel now and by the end of the fiscal year expect to be at about 50%, and back to normal within the next year. Randy explained many conferences are still virtual which reduces travel burdens.

- The largest projected increase is in personnel dollars.
- The county account continues to have a carryover, the provost office recommends spending these cash accounts down. We see a downward trend from FY21 through FY30 of roughly 172K.
- Revenue generation might include seeking additional grant funding, cost recovery and possible other ideas.
- We are a public institution and answer to our stakeholders, the goal is to be transparent.

#### New Positions

- Recent new hires include Felicia Ferguson for Range Monitoring, and Trevor Lauber for Water Wise Community Programming.
- Statewide new hires include Diaa Elshikha as Irrigation Specialist, Cathy Martinez as the Interim 4-H Associate Director, and Michelle Walsh as Associate Director, FCHS.
- The Animal & Comparative Biomedical Sciences (ACBS) new Director, Dr. Scottie Merrill, will start 04/03/2023.
- Additional promotion to seek candidates for the 4-H Assistant Agent position.
- Cochise Director position currently has 10 candidates under review.
- Dr. Ed Martin remains the Interim Cooperative Extension Director, no word yet on the recent presentations and if a candidate was selected.
- Reopening soon: Positive Parenting and Financial Literacy positions

New Economy Initiative (NEI) supported by the Arizona State Legislature. This is a three-year increase, the most recent amount is 7.35M, as of 12/13/22, coming to Cooperative Extension starting July 2022. Effort to make this an ongoing commitment, but no guarantee. New positions have been approved across the state, none currently in Cochise County. If there is a need, we can put forward a proposal for funding of said position. Contact Randy.

Needs Assessment/Strategic Planning is needed to identify needs which goes back to the survey that was sent out last summer/fall. That survey is going to serve as a basis for the discussions related to strategic investment planning for the new funds coming in. The Interim Director, Ed Martin, made the decision to invest in our local agents by providing additional funding to their programming in the amount of \$10K for one year. Many were involved in the participation of the survey that was sent out, Cochise reported about 190 surveys returned. The boards involvement is appreciated. Will be submitting a report of how the county solicited the survey.

A \$30M grant Irrigation Improvement fund has been approved. The funding is for making improvements in efficiency and irrigation. Required to show an efficiency increase by using the new system. Much focus on research. Local producers worry of all funding going to flood irrigation, which is needed, but many local producers are already more efficient due to wise water usage already in place. It doesn't look like the legislation verbiage restricts partnering with other agencies to increase your leverage. Randy and Josh can provide additional information and application website. Randy will send out information to the board members. Link to more information, <https://extension.arizona.edu/water-irrigation-efficiency-program>

New agricultural internships, these internships would be "on farm", these interns would be working with the farm, this would also cover some of the risks such as insurance cost increase due to internship on premises the idea is that the internship costs will cover that. The goal is to get more young people involved in agriculture and give them opportunities to get hands on experience. Farm Intern Director is Maritza Broce, can be reached at [mbroce@arizona.edu](mailto:mbroce@arizona.edu)

New faculty tour was a success. New Cooperative Extension faculty took a bus tour from Tucson to Yuma, Maricopa, Sierra Vista, and finished at the dairy outside of Willcox.

## Reports

### Faculty/Program Updates

Jan – Master Gardener class full, capped at 28. Several workshops planned, pruning, container vegetables, cactus and succulents, and Earth Day will be the spring plant sale. Working on field trip program again, to run in conjunction with University South Foundation in Sierra Vista.

Evelyn – National Extension award for FCHS received, Building Healthy Community (BHC) grant end in July, final reports in works. Eight healthy community initiatives with focus on needs within communities. Partnering with farm-to-school initiatives. Working on veggie van and additional grant funding. Leadership academy continues.

Trevor – Spring seeker program finding springs in mountains, native plant education and water conservation, rainwater cistern training, beavers of the San Pedro, new Water Wise calendar with focus on dragonflies. Youth program Alex is back in schools and has reached 2,684 students. Currently, working with ADHS for well water testing, almost reached max limit. Updating website and listserv and newsletter.

Ashley – AI clinic was successful, maybe extend to twice a year. Range Livestock Nutrition Workshop different lead by Dr. Joselyn Beard, split schedule not back-to-back, Cochise scheduled for March 31<sup>st</sup>. Equine Symposium is Saturday in Tucson. Ag Day event is Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> in Willcox. Working on additional grants. Providing YQCA training for youth. BQA new requirements, must have a vet-client relationship. University of Arizona Meat Lab has been closed.

Kim – 22<sup>nd</sup> Year Range Monitoring program with Coronado Forest, nearing end of 5-year agreement, working on additional funding, partnered with White Water Draw and Hereford NRCD for workshops, partnered with Jan on Hereford NRCD for wildlife attractors such as butterflies, AZ Game and Fish provided information on what not to do. Continued work with Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape, Mark Apel and I co-chairing, received funding from America the Beautiful grant focus to remove bullfrogs from ponds in the landscape and other work. The landscape has been expanded to the NM state line to open opportunities for state and private ranches. To protect the mission for Fort Huachuca by keeping open space working lands.

Randy – Continued work with field crops research and Extension, the Ag Day in Willcox big event offering CEU's. Variety testing in cotton and corn, one cotton variety trial, 3 corn hybrid trials, will have same number in 2023. Work with the dairy in different forages for production of silage and the efficiency of water usage, identifying varieties well adapted to area and grow forages in winter when less evaporative demand. Quantifying water savings worked on across the state, specifically for dairies to conserve and increase efficiency of water usage. Weeds research with Jose Dias. Nematode plots down here after many years without, it continues to be a yield robber, an unseen issue. Southwest corn borer did have outbreak in Rodeo. In both 2-gene and 3-gene corn. No reports in the Sulphur Springs valley.

Josh – Western SARE formed advisory board for state implementation, planning the 2023 SARE Sustainability conference, 2022 was the year of conferences, currently planning the wine/grape conference taking place 03/06-07/23, tour of Greenlee and Apache Counties for 100+ year old trees still in production, peach, almond in 6-7 thousand feet elevation, took cuttings and they are rooting now. The goal is to protect them and learn from them. Pomegranate research project, state trees with lead in NM, bringing in 100K for 4 years in the study of pecan trees.

## Board Member Updates

Moiria – Painting the W in Willcox, frustrated that neither 4-H staff are here and the lack of programming happening in Cochise County. Excited that Ashley is doing the YQCA training. Need to get the 4-H Agent position filled so our kids will have some programming.

Stu – Stewart's Pastures raising meats and the other is a non-profit organization introducing people to agriculture and producing food. Attending Wide Open Pastures Conferences twice.

Nathan – UA Meat Lab closing with no notice and no alternative, we are looking to get out of the meat business. Now part of the biggest AMA in AZ, what should the goals be, this is all new for us and the ADWR, they have no idea, we have no idea, a lot of pressure from non-farmers that have moved into the area. ADWR will be looking to UArizona CE for information. We have to reapply for our water rights and don't know what is going on, if we will be approved or not and it may be a year and a half from now.

Tyler – Josh was a large help with the pepper conference, chili field day went well hoping next year will be bigger including elementary school kids.

Aaron – Farm is going decently, trying to grow farmers in the area through the National Young Farmers Coalition chapter. My co-op finds contracts which gives growers the opportunity to provide produce, needs not already being met, provide to food banks, TUSD, TMC, etc. Focus on direction where it is lacking. Trying to get more to convert to organic and as one unit rather than against each other. Leading a non-profit organization and need CE support since there is no support for organic currently. CE needs a horticulturist with a focus on organics. Organizing farmers with this AMA now in place, goal to reduce water usage but it needs to be reasonable. Should be able to grow what we have a market for. Farmers have enough hoops to get through, we buy retail to sell wholesale. We need CE to be our voice in this.

Barbara – I appreciate hearing about these food systems, still have a very successful community garden, food boxes, neighborhood still engaged. A few land ownership changes looking for a younger generation to come in.

Daniella – Still seeing our collaboration ongoing, promoting nutrition and activity, seeing increase in interest, incentivizing student, and staff health, talking with health directors to see what the needs are. Going to be involved in Healthy Communities I have been hearing from community members and some staff who have been involved.

Next Meeting Date: TBD (Send a poll, around April 17th)

Future Agenda Items: Strategic Planning, thoughts about positions

Nathan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Moiria seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Connie Forsyth