Cheshire Advisory Council Meeting

Date of meeting: January 12, 2024
Time of meeting: 6:00 PM
Location of meeting: Cheshire County Extension Office, 12 Court St., Keene NH

Agenda:

1. Guest: Paul Chiarantona, UNH Extension Public Affairs Manager
2. Office Update
3. Program Updates from Staff

Present:

Rachel Brice, Paul Chiarantona, Eloise Clark, Dick Drew, David Hoffman, Matt Kelly, Carl Majewski, Aaron Moody, Christine Parshall, Lucius Parshall, Karen Seaver

Minutes:

Chair Aaron Moody calls the meeting to order at 6:00 PM at the Cheshire County Administration Building, Keene.

Minutes: November 9, 2023 meeting: Dick moves the minutes be accepted. Lucius seconds. All approve.

4-H Position: Funding for the position was approved in December by the Provost of UNH. It’s been posted. 5-8 applications have been received, both local and national. A search committee will identify finalists. February 20, the Advisory Council will have a chance to interview them. The person will begin early spring. Perhaps the letter sent by the Advisory Council helped speed the process?

The role of Advisory Council’s: Paul Chiarantona is Public Affairs Manager for UNH Cooperative Extension.

About one third of his job is supporting Advisory Council’s around the state. He has been to visit all 10 counties and finds each Advisory Council is different but all need support for members. We discussed how we learned about Advisory Council and what motivated us to join. What does Cheshire County Advisory Council do well and what areas could we improve? Do well: good communication, like meeting new people, not a lot of homework, mutually supportive, like program presentations. Do better: Not very goal oriented, need to be clearer about outreach and outcomes, letting people know who we are in terms of expertise.

Paul presents a slideshow outlining advocacy options such as postcards to legislators and letters to newspapers to help build support among local elected leaders and the general public. The Advisory
Council also has the opportunity to collaborate with staff and support their programming as well as provide feedback on hiring and budget. Paul introduced a mock Advisory Council calendar, with a focus on self-governance and goals. Only six meetings are formally required per year, leaving time in between for sub-committee meetings. Expectations include: attend all Advisory Council meetings; attend two Extension programs per year; participate in one advocacy activity per year; meet one on one with the County Administrator and staff; attend new member orientation (online); assist in hiring and budget preparation. Sub-committees can serve as a pipeline for new Advisory Council members. The State Advisory Council has not been active post-Covid. Paul will send this slideshow and a copy of the Advisory Council handbook to all members via email.

**Program Updates**

Carl has been working on farm resiliency programs, weathering climate change with other counties as well as Cheshire. Pruning demonstrations are planned at the County Farm garden.

Matt has been overseeing tree work at the County Garden. He’s working on the Climate and Forest Carbon chapter of an updated version of *Good Forestry in the Granite State*. To that end he showed a two minute video *Understanding Forest, Climate and Carbon* for distribution to schools and the general public. He also attends state forester’s meetings and helped lead a tour in Stoddard with SPNHF.

Christine has been cooking with older adult groups as well as workshops with Head Start parents. She has found the question of “Where do you get your food?” to be a good conversation starter. She’s been enjoying working with Alstead 5th and 7th graders.

**Budget:** Carl reports the budget will be reviewed by the Executive Committee of the County Delegation next Monday, 3/18.

**Council membership:** We will need new members for next fall, as some are leaving in June.

The next meeting is Tuesday, Feb. 20th: 4-H candidate interviews.

Meeting adjourns 7:45 PM.

Submitted by,

Eloise Clark

Secretary
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Cheshire Advisory Council Meeting

Date of meeting: March 14, 2024
Time of meeting: 6:00 PM
Location of meeting: Cheshire County Extension Office, 12 Court St., Keene NH

Agenda:

1. 4-H Position
2. Program Updates from Staff
3. County Advisory Council Engagement Plan:

Present: Eloise Clark, Chris Faucher, Mark Florenz, Dave Hoffman, Matt Kelley, Carl Majewski, Aaron Moody, Christine Parshall

Minutes:

Chair Aaron Moody calls the meeting to order at 6:00 PM in the conference room of Cheshire County Courthouse.

Introductions are made. Chris Faucher is visiting us and is the horticulture teacher at the Cheshire Career Center at Keene High School.

4-H Position:

May 9th will be the next date for the Advisory Council to interview candidates for this position. We thank the search committee for their time dedicated to filling this important role. At present, Diane Dugray is doing some of the organizational work. 4-H leaders and volunteers are also stepping up to run shows and events in the interim. However, an experienced person is needed to organize and oversee the Cheshire Fair.

Health & Well-Being: Christine has been enjoying working with a Master Wellness Volunteer at Franklin School in Keene. K-2 are the ages served.

Forestry and Natural Resources: Matt has seen an increase in woodlot visits. There is now an online form to help schedule that is popular with younger landowners. Hayley Andreozzi, wildlife specialist announced grants for women landowners of up to $1,500. Matt is leading a workshop in conjunction with the NH Timberland Owners Association on silviculture. They will tour Yale Forest and also visit Froling Energy Biomass operation. Matt is also working with Amanda Littleton of Cheshire County Conservation District and Michael Neary of Distant Hill Gardens to help land conservation in the Alstead/Walpole area.

Food and Agriculture: Carl has also had an increase in farm visits. Ongoing programs include pesticide safety at KSC, CCCD’s equipment field day, tree fruit pruning and Twilight Meeting at Alyson’s Orchard,
nitrogen management for CT River Watershed farms. He announced State Funding of $8 million for crop losses due to extreme weather.

**County Advisory Council Engagement Plan:**

Discussion following Paul Chiarantona’s presentation in January. What do Advisory Council members get out of being on the council? All enjoy site visits and presentations by local organizations. Carl explains the budget process. Eloise discusses past advocacy activities for members of the County Delegation (Legislators) including postcards and calls. Letters to the editors reach a wider forum. Paul should be able to provide templates. Carl, as COA explains, meets two times per year with the County Commissioners to explain what Extension has been doing. Perhaps a council member could go with Carl to lend support? There is also new legislator orientation every couple of years where different departments describe what they do. In the past, county Commissioners and Delegate members have been invited to participate in programs as judges for events. What subcommittees are needed to make Advisory Council’s work more “actionable” and create more “engagement opportunities”? There is also a need to recruit younger Advisory Council members. Discussion will continue at our June meeting.

Meeting adjourn at 7:05 PM.

Submitted by,

Eloise Clark

Secretary
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