

**Chippewa County
Agriculture & Extension Committee
Regular Meeting
December 4, 2025
Chippewa County Courthouse, Room 302
7:45 AM**

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 07:45 AM

2. Roll Call

Members Present:
Kari Ives, Matthew Peterson, Pam Guthman, Timothy Goettl
Members Absent:
Joel Seidlitz
Others Present:
Jerry Clark, Ryan Sterry, Margaret Murphy, Jeanne Walsh, Jordan Blue, Kristen Bruder, Jaclyn Sadler

3. Members of the Public Wishing to Be Heard

(Comments will be limited to 5 minutes per speaker.)

There were no members of the public wishing to be heard.

4. Consent Agenda

(Unless separation of an item is requested, all items will be adopted under one motion.)

Motion:	Approved
Result:	(4 - 0)
Mover:	Pam Guthman
Second:	Matthew Peterson
Ayes:	Kari Ives, Matthew Peterson, Pam Guthman, Timothy Goettl
Nays:	None
Absent:	Joel Seidlitz

1. Approve the Agenda
2. Approve the Minutes - October 2, 2025
3. Schedule Next Meeting Date - February 5, 2026

5. Reports

1. Educator Reports

Each Educator presented their report to the committee.

- A. Crops and Soils - Jerry Clark
- B. Livestock - Ryan Sterry
- C. Community Development - Garret Zastoupil

- D. Health and Well-Being - Sandy Tarter
- E. Horticulture - Margaret Murphy
- F. Human Development and Relationships - Jeanne Walsh
- G. Positive Youth Development - Jordan Blue

2. Area Extension Director Report - Kristen Bruder

6. Business Items

7. Agenda Items for Future Consideration

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at: 09:03 AM

Result:	(4 - 0)
Mover:	Matthew Peterson
Second:	Timothy Goettl
Ayes:	Kari Ives, Matthew Peterson, Pam Guthman, Timothy Goettl
Absent:	Joel Seidlitz



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Crops & Soils

Jerry Clark | Regional Crops and Soils Educator

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An AgriAbility of Wisconsin program for staff from Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Health Services Independent Living Centers where staff learned about a Day in the Life of a Farmer related to crop production to increase awareness of seasonal and day-to-day functions on a crop production farm. Total Reach: 85 staff from Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Health Services Independent Living Centers.

A clinic for students where students learned forage feed and nutrition analysis recommendations and the nutrition impact on dairy cattle and type and structure of dairy cattle to improve forage and feeding practices and increase dairy production efficiency and improve farm profitability. The goal of the program is to increase knowledge and understanding of the importance of forage and feeding impact on dairy animals. Total Reach: 28 high school agriculture students (Collaborated with: Amber Gilles, Jordan Blue, Ryan Sterry)

Planning for three in-person and one virtual crop management update programs for crop growers, agency staff, consultants and educators. The goal is to provide timely crops and soils management updates where the audience learns about the most recent research findings from University of Wisconsin and Extension specialists that can help them make more productive and profitable decisions moving into the 2026 crop season. (Collaborating with: Liz Gartman, Anne Pfeiffer, Daniel Smith, Joshua Kamps, Kevin Jarek, Megan Sankey, Melissa Ohlrich, Scott Reuss, Will Fulwider)

An on-farm study to better understand the effect of nitrogen application rates on nitrogen cycling and corn yield. Results from this study will help corn growers in that they can implement and adapt N management practices to optimize economic return, improve efficiency of N fertilizer resulting in more sustainable corn production and farm profitability. Total Reach: 25 farmers and agency professionals (Collaborated with: Deanna Wiersgalla, Ryan Sterry)

An on-farm research study to better understand manure application, commercial nitrogen application rates, and nitrogen credits on corn yield and potential effect on ground water. Results from this study will help farmers, agriculture industry professionals, and agency professionals in adjusting manure and commercial nitrogen applications to optimize corn yield and protect groundwater resources. Total

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Reach: 64- farmers and agronomists (Collaborated with: Abby Augarten, Christine Clark, Jordan Kampa, Joshua Kamps, Liz Gartman, Steven Hall)

A nutrient management program for farmers where participants learned to identify nutrient application strategies and management decision points to improve farm profitability and protect ground and surface water. The goal of the program is to increase overall efficiency of nutrients applied to the landscape.

Total Reach: 8 farmers

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

A land evaluation clinic for students where participants learned land management principles, soil properties, and land use, to increase effective land management practices and maximize soil and agricultural land production into the future. The goal of the program is to increase knowledge and understanding of the importance of land and soil management and the impact agriculture and commercial development has on the land. Total Reach: 88 agriculture students 8 high school agriculture teachers (Collaborated with: Amber Gilles)

- *Land management is critical to future social, environmental, and economic sustainability. Agriculture, housing development, and commercial industry rely on sound land and soil management to grow and prosper in communities. A land evaluation clinic was held to help students increase understanding, knowledge, and awareness of land and soil management. The clinic provided students an opportunity to examine land management practices and the effect those practices have on soil and land. Students from area high schools attended the clinic as part of their agriculture and natural resources courses. Students examined soil pits to learn about soil structure, drainage, and land use. They also studied how the soil influenced current uses of the land in relation to the location of the soil pit to the landscape. Eighty-eight students attended the clinic from eight high schools around Wisconsin. A post-meeting evaluation with all 8 teachers indicated a high value and usefulness of the program. 85% of students increased their knowledge of soil in relation to its current or future use.*



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Livestock

Ryan Sterry | Regional Livestock Educator

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In October and November, Ryan met with community partners to continue efforts to learn about livestock producer needs and develop programmatic relationships in the Chippewa Valley. Examples include the Chippewa County Ag Education Council, Chippewa Valley Technical College Animal Science Advisory Council, Northern Wisconsin State Fair, Farmer-Led Watershed Council staff, UW-River Falls agriculture students, and more.

An educational article for the Wisconsin Agriculturalist magazine, for farmers and ag industry professionals, focusing on replacement beef heifer selection and development. (Location type: Both) Total Reach: The Wisconsin Agriculturalist has both an online and print editions, with a circulation of approximately 22,000.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

An artificial insemination course for dairy and beef producers, where they learned how to breed their own cattle. Through this program, producers will be able to save money and increase reproductive rates by breeding their own cattle in a timely fashion. (Collaborated with: Heather Schlessner & Sandy Stuttgart)

- Artificial insemination (AI) is an important tool for dairy and beef producers to make genetic improvement. In the past decade, a need for training has arisen due to fewer private companies in Wisconsin offering AI training. Also during this time, companies have realigned and concentrated their service areas, sometimes creating voids in AI services for hire. As a result, dairy and livestock educators have collaborated to develop and deliver an AI program for beef and dairy producers. As a result of this work, 14 people were AI trained in the Fall of 2025. Participants were asked to complete a pre/post style evaluation to measure their change in knowledge relating to the various topics covered. Participants indicated an overall change in knowledge of 1.12 on a 4-point Likert scale. Participants were asked to rank the various topics taught, and they indicated that AI practice in cows, AI Technique, Reproductive tracts and semen handling, and Heat Detection were their most valued topics.

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Community Development

Garret Zastoupil | Regional Community Development Educator



A walking tour with presentations from downtown organizations and business owners as part of the Food Entrepreneur Ecosystem Development (FEED) Summit. Participants learned about the opportunities that downtown, business district organizations, and others can offer entrepreneurs at various stages in their business development, providing encouragement and identifying resources for entrepreneurs to consider when opening or expanding their businesses. Total Reach: 30 Food Business Entrepreneurs (Collaborated with: Patrick Nehring)

A two-part professional development workshop series for the Chippewa County Long-Term Support team. Using the High5 assessment, staff members first gained clarity on their top personal strengths and how they apply those strengths daily. The second session focused on analyzing the team's collective talents to identify gaps and maximize efficiency across the unit. This initiative established the foundation for a strengths-based work culture, which directly leads to increased staff engagement and more effective service delivery to county families. Total Reach: 27 Human Service Professionals (Collaborated with: Deanna Wiersgalla)

The 2025 statewide FEED Summit, hosted in Eau Claire, is a catalyst for entrepreneurial ecosystem development in Wisconsin's food and farm sectors. Designed to support new and emerging entrepreneurs, the event fosters sustainable business growth through strategic networking, resource sharing, and capacity building—ensuring long-term viability and resilience for early-stage ventures. Total Reach: 51 Entrepreneurs, Consultants, and Business Assistance Services (Collaborated with: Hannah Altimus, Addison Vang, Cathryn Herlihey, James Pyecroft, Kelly Maynard, Lissa Radke, Michelle Grimm, Patrick Nehring, Sara Tedeschi, Stephanie Plaster)

Planning for a three-part workshop series titled "Building Powerful Networks of Support" for librarian directors, staff, volunteers, and leaders in collaboration with IFLS Library System. The goal is to build the strategic capacity of these individuals to lead their organizations, so that they can strengthen volunteer, financial, and community support for libraries across the IFLS region.

Continued development of the Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative and its efforts to re-open the former St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls as an full-service interim healthcare facility, and to build a

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new full-service hospital in Lake Hallie, Wisconsin to replace the 34% of regional health care lost with the closure of the two HSHS hospitals in Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls and 19 Prevea clinics across the region. Total Reach: CVHC has more than 1,000 members in the Chippewa Valley Region. The CVHC Board of Directors is made up of 6 community leaders and three physicians. CVHC is working closely with the 160+ medical professionals who are part of the Oakleaf Physicians Network. (Collaborating with: Bill Oemichen, Karl Green, Kristen Bruder)

Planning for the launch of the "Chippewa Valley Nonprofit Exchange," a collaborative effort to consolidate nonprofit resources and professional development opportunities. The Exchange aims to strengthen nonprofit capacity by developing and sharing resources.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

A presentation where Extension educators connected with over 20 local nonprofits around the services and programming Extension provides in the community. This presentation was designed to make partnership connections and provide a greater understanding on how Extension serves and partners with local organizations. Total Reach: around 50 service professionals working in a nonprofit setting (Partnered with: Margo Dieck)

- United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley requested an informational presentation to their grant recipients, which was around 20 nonprofits in the area. Margo and I prepared a presentation that highlighted local Extension programming, state resources Extension educators can access, and how to partner with Extension for programming. - prepared and provided a presentation to nonprofit partners - partners reached out to Extension educators to learn more and request programming.*

Health and Well-Being

Sandy Tarter | FoodWise Regional County Coordinator



Update on FoodWise funding: Due to an extended timeframe to use FoodWise carryover funding, Area FoodWise Coordinator Sandy Tarter and FoodWise Nutrition Educator Joy Weisner positions will each be reduced to 50% on December 1, 2025, and continue on until the end of the federal/ FoodWise fiscal year, September, 2026.

Continued planning for transition of kitchen supplies and FoodWise resources to local partners. The goal is to share equipment and curriculum for adults needing support with independent living skills including healthy eating and food preparation.

Sharing of FoodWise Hmong Food Fact Cards to area Food Service Directors and partners. This addition of culturally relevant Hmong vegetables added to the Harvest of the Month collection will bring awareness and knowledge of these foods to local partners in effort for them to incorporate these vegetables with their menu selection.

Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | Regional Horticulture Educator

To view the Extension in the Valley, E-Newsletter, [Click Here](#).



Provide garden articles to the public published in the Extension in the Valley, tri-county monthly newsletter that focuses on Agriculture and Horticulture news, where participants learn about various topics. This month includes information on the winter care of houseplants, planting & care of amaryllis, the herb Rosemary, winter care of trees & shrubs and choosing a Christmas tree. This ongoing effort is designed to keep participants connected to current horticulture topics and concerns. Total Reach: Reach is to approximately 700 emails on distribution list (Amber Gilles, Jerry Clark, Ryan Sterry)

Developing a Community Garden Oversight Committee to increase educational outreach and community involvement at the gardens. The goal is to ensure the gardens are sustainable, well-maintained, and inclusive spaces for all members, foster community engagement and provide educational opportunities for gardeners and the public.

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Planning work on invasive plant awareness and removal for 2026. The education committee is currently developing a plan to identify goals and actions steps to provide educational outreach to the public on invasive plant identification and management.

Human Development and Relationships

Jeanne Walsh | Human Development and Relationships Educator



A 6-session course for females housed in the Chippewa County Jail, where participants learn how to find and apply for rental housing, understand their responsibilities as a renter, how to communicate effectively with their landlords, and manage housing expenses. Through this, those with negative rental records and those new to renting are able to increase their ability to find and keep safe affordable housing, thereby increasing their stability and decreasing their reliance on public supports.

A coaching program for families and individuals, where participants learn how to create financial goals and gain money management skills. The goal of this program is to enable participants to prepare for and take charge of household financial situations that occur due to changes in income or unforeseen hardships.

Participation in Chippewa County Health Communities- Voices in Prevention and Men's Mental Health. The goal is to support the reduction of vaping and alcohol misuse, and increase harm reduction in Chippewa County.

2 financial articles for the Employee Wellness Newsletter for Chippewa County employees. The goal is to reduce holiday stress and over-spending, and simplify gift-giving.

Planning for Planning AHEAD series for Chippewa County employees beginning in February, 2026. The goal is to help participants understand how to prepare for the end of life for themselves or a loved one.

Facilitation of the Chippewa County Hungry and Homeless Coalition. County partners discussion on programs and needs in the community. The goal of this coalition is to reduce poverty, hunger, and homelessness in the county.

Participation in Chippewa County Recovery Court Team. This team meets weekly. The goal of the program is to break the cycle of dependence, reduce drug and alcohol related crimes, increase community safety, offer effective sanctions, rewards, and treatment programming to participants,



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increase employment stability of participants, and ensure participants contribute to all court related costs.

Positive Youth Development

Jordan Blue | 4-H Program Educator

To view the Chippewa Chatter, E - Newsletter, [Click Here](#).



The addition of AmeriCorps member, Emma Bruder, in Chippewa County allows us to expand our reach by building capacity in other youth-serving organizations, where we are partnering with the Boys and Girls Club to deliver an eight-week cooking program, Camp Nawakwa to identify STEM and outdoor education opportunities, Chippewa Falls Parks and Recreation to teach youth about city parks and available resources, and Embark in Eau Claire to provide dog safety education. With Emma's support, our impact will increase youth development

programming to over 100 youth in Chippewa County, strengthening community partnerships and providing diverse educational experiences that promote life skills and engagement.

Planning for a camp counselor recruitment and interview preparation program for youth applicants in collaboration with area colleagues. The goal is to equip youth with strong interview skills and leadership readiness, so that we have a confident, capable team of counselors who can create safe, engaging camp experiences that promote positive youth development.

A cheese identification station for area agriculture students during Chippewa County Dairy Judging Day, where participants practiced identifying Wisconsin cheeses and learned about local production processes. Through this effort, youth expanded their agricultural knowledge and gained skills that support future careers in the dairy industry and promote appreciation for local food systems.

(Collaborated with: Jerry Clark)

A LEGO building session for 30 youth, where participants explored engineering concepts through creative building challenges. Through this effort, youth strengthened problem-solving abilities, teamwork, and innovation—skills that support future success in STEM fields and lifelong learning.

(Collaborated with: Zachary Rozmiarek)

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A club meeting for the Jim Town Jumpers, where members transitioned leadership and explored the importance of by-laws and club rules. Through this effort, the club strengthened its governance and built confidence in following 4-H policies and procedures.

A Leaders Association committee work session for volunteers, where committees worked together to set priorities and plan the upcoming year. Through this effort, volunteers gained meaningful ways to engage in county programming, strengthening leadership capacity and broadening the impact of 4-H in the community.

A communications session for youth in grades 7–13, where 15 youth and 6 adults explored the Wisconsin 4-H Arts Ambassadors Communications Team and practiced communication skills to strengthen youth leadership and collaboration across the program.

A partner meeting with Wisconsin Farmers Union, where we explored strategies to build capacity within both organizations and began planning farm-to-table programming. Through this effort, we aim to develop initiatives such as cottage baking education, policy engagement, and youth-in-governance opportunities, fostering stronger community connections and empowering youth to understand food systems and civic leadership.

Planning for multi-county youth development programming for 4-H members and community youth in collaboration with Area Six 4-H educators. The goal is to deliver engaging events in speaking, STEM, robotics, performing arts, and leadership throughout the year, so that youth across Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties have expanded access to skill-building opportunities and collaborative learning experiences. (Collaborating with: Rachel Hart-Brinson, Zachary Rozmiarek)

Planning for a monthly Cloverbud Club for youth in grades K–2, where participants will explore age-appropriate 4-H activities through hands-on learning and play to foster curiosity, social skills, and early engagement in the 4-H program. In partnership with a dedicated volunteer, each monthly session focuses on a different 4-H project area. This club was designed as an accessible, condensed introduction to 4-H for community youth in response to growing interest in expanded opportunities for younger youth of Chippewa county.

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Serve on the Positive Youth Development State Arts Advisory Board, providing input on statewide arts programming and helping to plan future events in the Chippewa Valley. This role supports efforts to ensure that 4-H arts opportunities are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of youth across the region. (Collaborated with: Jay Johnson, Erin Dahle, Alicia Schroeder-Hagg, Ellen Andrews)

Planning for an overnight leadership camp for youth in grades 7 and up in collaboration with Camp Nawakwa and county volunteers. The goal is to provide hands-on sessions focused on real-life skills such as first aid, financial literacy, resume building, and professional etiquette, so that participants build confidence, independence, and leadership abilities that prepare them for success in life and future careers.

Value Added

Investment in Chippewa Extension Brings Additional Resources.

Development of a handout to direct participants at local food pantries to resources and assistance for basic needs. The goal of this effort was to promote 211, FindHelp, and 988 for wrap-around support for local residents who are experiencing food insecurity. (Margo Dieck)

Co-Chairing the Chippewa Valley Suicide Prevention Workgroup, which covers suicide prevention efforts in Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties. The goal of this group is to collaborate on efforts to reduce deaths by suicide in the region. (Margo Dieck)



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Area Extension Director

Kristen Bruder | Chippewa, Eau Claire and Dunn Counties



The role of the AED is like that of the department head in the county. If you have ideas, thoughts, or want to chat about Extension please reach out! Below is a brief overview of the role of AEDs:

Extension fully invests in Area Extension Directors (AEDs) who oversee an area. These administrative positions are responsible for partnership management, staff development, financial management and program coordination.

Through the many interactions the AED has with county partners and local educators, the AED develops a solid understanding of the local needs and county priorities and helps to align Extension educational programs to ensure the programs address county needs. Educators also communicate local needs to their programmatic Institutes which collectively identify opportunities to address statewide needs.