

Buffalo County Minutes

Committee/Board: Agriculture and Extension Education Subcommittee

Date of Meeting: Monday, June 1, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Administrator, Lee Engfer at 8:32 a.m.

Board Members Present: Mr. Steve Nelson, and Mr. Robert Sendelbach. Absent: Mr. Gary Stanton

Others Present: Ms. Mary Campbell Wood, Dr. Kari Weiss, Ms. Bianca Mullen, Ms. Finley Noll, Ms. Payton Freund, Mr. Lee Engfer and Ms. Roxane Weisenbeck

Meeting verified with Open Meeting law compliance

Election of Chair & Vice Chair: Mr. Engfer called for nominations for Committee Chair. Motion by Mr. Nelson, second by Mr. Sendelbach to nominate Mr. Stanton as Committee Chair and cast a unanimous ballot. Motion carried.

Mr. Engfer called for nominations for Committee Vice Chair. Motion by Mr. Nelson, second by Mr. Sendelbach to nominate Mr. Sendelbach for Committee Vice Chair and cast a unanimous ballot. Motion carried.

Committee Vice Chair, Mr. Sendelbach led the remainder of the meeting.

Approve agenda: Mr. Engfer explained the new agenda format. Agenda approved.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Minutes of the previous meeting: Motion by Mr. Nelson, seconded by Mr. Sendelbach to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Motion carried.

Public comments Regarding Posted Agenda Items: None

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Annual Report: Dr. Weiss presented the 2025 Annual Report for the University of Wisconsin Madison Division of Extension Buffalo County. Stressing the effects of several educator vacancies as well as the loss of federal funding resulting in the loss of the Food Wise program. Extension took measures to absorb the cuts through reductions, realignment or operations. The organization is committed not to pass along this loss of funding to county partners.

Buffalo County Extension, in spite of the many transitions, carried out significant and meaningful programming in 2025.

Ms. Wood shared Human Development and Relations programming highlights.

- A Better Beginning for divorcing and separating families reached a milestone mark in 2025 serving 1000 individuals through this court ordered program.
- Moving Forward Jail Re-entry Program offered 65 classes to 191 learners in Buffalo, Trempealeau and Pepin County jails. Moving Buffalo County inmates to other locations has presented considerable challenges to the continuation and delivery of the re-entry program. The grant supporting this program expires in December of 2026.

Ms. Mullen shared Buffalo County 4-H program achievements.

- Through the dedication and commitment of 4-H volunteers, youth leaders, community partners and staff, the Buffalo County 4-H program maintained strong engagement in 2025.
 - 340 Youth Enrolled
 - 11 4-H Clubs
- The Wisconsin 4-H Thriving Survey results indicate a high quality 4-H program in Buffalo County. Youth experience strong relationships, seek new possibilities and feel supported by caring adults.

Dr. Weiss explained the end of the Food Wise program in Buffalo County due to the loss of federal funding. The Food Wise programs provided by April Duval, Food Wise coordinator, ended in September of 2025.

Dr. Weiss also reported that in 2025 the Buffalo/Pepin County Teen Court program transitioned the coordinator position to the Pepin County 4-H Educator. The program continues across counties to support youth in both Buffalo and Pepin Counties.

The 2025 budget actuals vs. budgeted were noted. The numbers are indicative of personnel transitions.

Area Extension Director Report: Dr. Weiss gave personnel updates. The new Regional Crops & Soils Educator, Grace Finnerty, will begin on June 8, 2026. She has chosen the Buffalo County Extension office as her home base. She will serve Buffalo, Trempealeau and Jackson counties.

Dr. Weiss introduced new 4-H staff. Payton Freund, 4-H Outreach Associate and Finley Noll, 4-H Summer Intern will work with Bianca Mullen, Associate 4-H Educator to round out the 4-H programming team.

Committee Chair Report: No report given.

Correspondence: Mr. Engfer stated that he had been in contact with the county insurance company regarding the possibility of continuing with the Pony Rides at the

Fair. The County's liability policy does not provide coverage for Pony Rides. The Fair would need to provide coverage if allowed. 4-H policy restrictions would make it difficult for this to be a 4-H sponsored event.

Future Agenda Items: None stated at this time.

Next Meeting Date and Time ~ The next scheduled committee meeting is Monday, August 17, 2026, at 8:30 a.m.

Public comment not related to agenda items: None

Adjournment ~ The meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxane Weisenbeck, Administrative Assistant