

Buffalo County Minutes

Committee/Board: Agriculture and Extension Education Subcommittee

Date of Meeting: Monday, August 17, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Mr. Gary Stanton at 8:30 a.m.

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

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

Meeting verified with Open Meeting law compliance

Approve agenda: Mr. Nelson motioned, second by Mr. Sendelbach. Agenda approved.

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

Public comments Regarding Posted Agenda Items: None

Educator Reports:

Soils and Crops: Ms. Grace Finnerty, Crops and Soils Educator, introduced herself to the committee encouraging them to share agriculture-related concerns they have that may pertain to Buffalo County. Ms. Finnerty also reported on her recent work.

- Dairy Breakfast attendance in Buffalo and Trempealeau counties. were opportunities to meet many landowners/producers in the area.
- Bragger farm tour was an opportunity to meet neighboring farmers and learn of emerging crops planted in Buffalo County.
- Land Conservation Farm Visits near Gilmanton.
- Buffalo-Trempealeau Producer-led Watershed Group meeting.
- Field Days attendance gaining a better understanding of on-farm research and possible options for research in this area.
- Outreach Event Planning – Soybean Fall Midge Field Day and Beef Producers Field Day, Phosphorus Management Outreach event.
- Collaborating and meeting co-workers with the goal of bringing ideas for on-farm research/trials.

4-H Youth Development: Ms. Bianca Mullen acknowledged Ms. Finley Noll for excellent work as the 4-H Summer Intern. Noll's last day was August 12. Ms. Mullen reported on 4-H spring/summer learning opportunities for young people.

- Math & Science Night – C-FC School, 70 participants

- Dog Project Fun Day – an engaging education event designed to introduce and highlight the Buffalo County 4-H Dog Project.
- STEAM Adventure Days for youth grades 5K – 6 grades. 15 participants engaged in a wide range of science, technology, engineering, art, and math learning for 2 full days.
- Buffalo County 4-H Make & Take Hub at the Buffalo County Fair. An interactive booth providing hands-on activities and opportunities for youth and families to learn more about 4-H programs.

Ms. Payton Freund reported on:

- Lego Challenge with MCYC
- Art in the Park Cloverbud Day
- Lakefront Explorers program in collaboration with Pepin County
- National Night Out youth focused booth – outreach for nearly 500 young people and families.

Human Development and Family Relations: Ms. Mary Wood reported:

- Moving Forward Jail Reentry Program – as of mid-May, began the transition to offer classes in the Pierce and Dunn County jails where the Buffalo County inmates are currently housed - 24 online classes with 112 participants
- Literacy Link Program – Will present at the upcoming National Council on Family Relations Conference and the Wisconsin Literacy Forward Conference.
- Chippewa Valley Grief Services Project – Serving as an advisory committee member.
- A Better Beginning – Teaching monthly classes for separating and divorcing parents as well as individual court ordered parenting classes.
- Strength in Service Summit – invited to be part of the coalition team based on Healing from Loss and Grief and The Veteran Experience programs.
- Promoting the Wisconsin School Phone Ban webinar series sponsored by UW Madison, Division of Extension.
- Working with Human Services and Law Enforcement to develop special training for staff to work better together.

Area Extension Director Report:

Financial Update: In light of budget season, Dr. Weiss reviewed the current financial reports noting that 90% of the current Extension budget is for staffing. Operating accounts for approximately \$5100 of the budget. Expecting the 2027 budget to be similar in numbers.

Rural Health Transformation Grant Update: Dr. Weiss gave an overview of this grant opportunity to provide education and technology to health care workers in our local communities. Extension has applied for the available funding. Wiess has communicated with the Health and Human Services director regarding possible funds for such programs.

Personnel Update: Dr. Weiss reported that Finley Noll completed a successful 4-H internship and will be entering her second year of college. She also reported that Ms. Bianca Mullen will conclude her position as Associate 4-H Educator as of September 4, 2026. With the approval of the county administrator, she will move forward with the refilling of the soon to be vacated 4-H Educator position.

Committee Chair Report: No report given.

Correspondence: Mr. Nelson expressed concerns about not being informed of Extension happenings. Suggestions for sharing program information were discussed.

Future Agenda Items: Rural Health Grant Update; 4-H Educator Position Update

Next Meeting Date and Time ~ The next scheduled committee meeting is Monday, September 14, 2026, at 8:30 a.m.

Public comment not related to agenda items: None

Adjournment ~ The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxane Weisenbeck, Administrative Assistant