



**BOARD OF AGRICULTURE MEETING MINUTES**  
**Room 2, Wells Conference Center**  
**Orono, Maine**  
**November 8, 2018**

**Present:**

**Board of Agriculture Members:** D. Bell; J. Bickford; S. Erich; G. Garrison; Ann Gibbs (for Walt Whitcomb); J. Jordan; B. Malay; E. Mallory; D. Marean; M. Meyerhans; L. Phelps; J. Smith; H. Spalding, L. Titus; Ralph Turner (for Eric Seaman, Maine Vegetable and Small Fruit Growers Association)

**University of Maine Representatives:** R. Brzozowski; R. Causey; G. Criner; F. Dastoor; J. Dill; J. Ferrini-Mundy; T. Gabe; C. Gerbi; J. Hecker; D. Humphrey; M. Hutton; J. McNamara; E. Miller; F. Servello;

**University of Maine System Representatives:** J. Page

**Guests:** D. Flannery; O. Hartkopf; F. Morton; N. McBrady;

**Staff:** J. Dieffenbacher-Krall; K. Poulin

**Call to order and introductions** – *Marilyn Meyerhans, Chair*

Marilyn Meyerhans called the meeting to order. Introductions ensued.

**Review of Board's Legislative Charge** - *Marilyn Meyerhans, Chair*

Marilyn reviewed the Board of Agriculture's legislative charge, to "advise the Chancellor of the University of Maine System and the President of the University of Maine at Orono on matters concerning the operation and management of agricultural research conducted by the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station and university farm-based programs, including those of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service."

**Approval of April 5, 2018 Minutes** - *Marilyn Meyerhans, Chair*

**Motion:** Recommended approving the draft minutes of April 5, 2018. **Minutes of the April 5, 2018 meeting were unanimously approved.**

**University of Maine Update** — *President Joan Ferrini-Mundy*

President Ferrini-Mundy expressed her appreciation for the invitation to address the Board of Agriculture. She told the group that she values the land grant mission of the University of Maine. She also cited the depth of Cooperative Extension presence across all 16 counties in Maine. Additionally, President Ferrini-Mundy remarked that one of her first activities upon arriving in Maine was to participate in the Legislative Ag Tour held July 31.

President Ferrini-Mundy told the board about a new initiative called Strategic Vision and Values: Defining Tomorrow at the University of Maine to succeed the Blue Sky Plan. It will be presented to the University of Maine community on 11/15. It has three elements:

- Learner success (at all stages, students and professionals) Intended to serve all learners. Part of a vision of the University of Maine as a community of learners.
- Creation of new knowledge/discovery (usable knowledge)
- Partnerships (new and streamlined ways to collaborate)

She directly appealed to the board to provide input as the strategic vision is developed and finalized.

#### **A Perspective on Meeting the Maine Agriculture Sector's Agricultural Engineering Needs** —*Dana Humphrey, Dean*

Dean Humphrey gave a PowerPoint presentation titled "Engineering Needs of Agriculture." He provided a brief overview of the UMaine College of Engineering, highlighted some UMaine engineering projects related to agriculture and aquaculture, shared his analysis of the survey of agricultural engineering needs done by UMaine Cooperative Extension, and identified some possible options for meeting the agriculture community's engineering needs. He offered a useful grouping of the responses to the survey for Agricultural Engineering Needs for Maine Farmers. Dean Humphrey sees most of the responses falling into two classic engineering disciplines, civil and mechanical. In terms of options to meet the identified survey needs, he presented five possibilities: 1) dedicated engineering staff 2) use private sector engineering consultants 3) Advanced Manufacturing Center 4) funded research projects 5) senior capstone projects.

A discussion followed on whether the private sector could meet all the agricultural engineering need or whether a dedicated university staff position was needed. Dick Brzozowski stated he believes there is a need for a dedicated engineering staff position. There was an extended discussion on how a "facilities engineer" links clients to the right professionals. Dean Humphrey said the person should be a licensed professional engineer. He indicated that a person with those credentials would likely require a salary of \$80,000. Dean Humphrey cautioned that the position could not be 100% fee based as there is some time that will be expended that can't be billed to a particular client.

Cooperative Extension representatives offered to draft a job description. Dean Humphrey agreed to review it. Cooperative Extension will try to have it ready for the State of Maine Agricultural Trades Show in January. If not available by the time the Trades Show is held, Cooperative Extension will have a job description ready for consideration at the winter/spring 2019 Board of Agriculture meeting.

#### **University of Maine System Briefing and Update-** *Chancellor James Page*

Chancellor Page pointed to the significance of voters passing Question 4 that provides \$49 million to modernize and improve the facilities and infrastructure of Maine's public universities. Coupled with \$50 million made available for debt service during the first year of the biennium a total of \$99 million has been invested in the University of Maine System during the last two years. He thanked the Board of Agriculture for their input and advocacy to help realize the investment.

Chancellor Page reflected when he assumed his role the University of Maine System was facing a significant structural shortfall. Now thanks to significant effort we are in a different place. For him, the current goal is how to position the institutions comprising the system to best serve students and various constituencies. He stressed the importance of maintaining an active feedback loop that supports relationships and partnerships.

Chancellor Page discussed the differing levels of support for the University of Maine System based on the region of the state. He expressed a desire to work in partnership with Board of Agriculture members and the organizations they represent to explain to Maine people the importance of the partnership between the University of Maine and agriculture.

He mentioned that he has asked President Ferrini-Mundy to examine how the research profile of the University of Maine both in terms of basic and applied research could be raised. President Ferrini-Mundy has been tasked with reporting to the chancellor in the spring.

Dave Bell asked about the chancellor's initiative to downsize the physical plant footprint of the University of Maine System. Chancellor Page answered that significant progress had been made. He cited benchmarks of a 5% reduction in five years and 10% in ten years with January 1, 2019 as the base year. The system is also setting up a rotating fund to finance demolition.

**College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture and Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station Update; Overview of the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, & Agriculture – Dean Fred Servello**

Dean Servello gave a PowerPoint presentation. He introduced the Associate Deans for Research and Associate Directors of the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station, Chris Gerbi and Mark Hutton. He also introduced Jade McNamara, Assistant Professor of Human Nutrition, who started September 1.

Dean Servello gave an overview of the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, & Agriculture. Twenty-eight percent of all of the students attending the University of Maine are housed in the college, and its degree programs are in high demand.

He discussed the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, & Agriculture Roadmap. A document was distributed, "Roadmap to Excellence 2018-2023." The Roadmap comprises nine initiatives.

1. Achieving excellence in undergraduate student advising and program quality.
2. Growing our research enterprise in the service of science and Maine.
3. Enhancing quality and impact of our graduate education programs.
4. Rising to meet Maine's health care needs.
5. Accelerating facility renewal and modernization.
6. Expanding our private and public fundraising efforts.
7. Enhancing our culture of excellence: equity, inclusion and diversity.
8. Communicating our impact to advance our success.
9. Strengthening our support systems as the foundation for program excellence.

Mark Hutton concluded with some specific updates concerning Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station research facilities. Aroostook Farm has a new potato harvester which will greatly improve harvest quality and efficiency of research plots. A new building is under construction at Witter Farm to replace the building that was damaged in a November 2017 storm. A new greenhouse was slated to be erected at Highmoor Farm this fall but the project has been delayed and will start spring 2019. At the Darling Marine Center, work on the Flowing Seawater Lab is scheduled to begin in April. A solar project is under consideration for Blueberry Hill Farm. The design phase for a pesticide storage building at the same research facility is nearly completed.

#### **Update on Cooperative Extension Dean Search —Lisa Phelps**

Lisa Phelps reported that the search committee has finished its work and presented all of the information gathered during the process to the UMaine president and provost. President Ferrini-Mundy will make the final decision on who is hired.

#### **Cooperative Extension Update —Lisa Phelps, Richard Brzozowski, Food System Program Administrator**

Dick Brzozowski gave a PowerPoint presentation. He opened with a slide from the Aroostook Farm Field Day held August 8. He told the group Dr. Lisa Phelps is serving as Interim Director of UMaine Cooperative Extension. She assumed the Interim Director role on September 1. Lisa is a member of the senior management team. She is also State Program Leader for the 4-H Program in Maine and the Program Administrator supporting the Maine Extension Homemaker Council.

Dick announced several new hires throughout Cooperative Extension.

- Lilly Calderwood – Split appointment Wild Blueberry Specialist & Asst. Professor of Horticulture
- Matthew Wallhead – Split appointment Ornamental Horticulture Specialist & Asst. Professor of Horticulture
- Deborah Bouchard – Aquatic Animal Health Specialist & Director of the Aquaculture Research Institute
- Rebecca Long - Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems professional in Oxford County
- Kerry Bernard - Pesticide Safety Education Professional, Diagnostic & Research Laboratory
- Thomas Rounsville - Molecular Diagnostic Professional, Diagnostic & Research Laboratory
- Anne Devin- AgrAbility Veteran Outreach Professional

On financial issues, Dick reported for FY18 grant funding supported research and outreach programs with approximately \$2.3 million in funding (up from \$1.9 million in FY17). In terms of the FY20 budget, a small decrease in student enrollment may result in a small structural deficit thereby affecting Cooperative Extension's budget but he does not anticipate any loss of positions.

The Farm Bill expired September 30th without new legislation to replace it. Cooperative Extension continues to be hopeful for a small increase to Federal Capacity funds for Cooperative Extension programs, and for funding of SNAP-ed programs.

#### **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Motion:

Recommend electing Marilyn Meyerhans chair and Don Marean vice-chair. The motion passed unanimously.

**Agricultural Policy Platform** – *Heather Spalding, Deputy Director, Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association*

Heather Spalding distributed an agricultural policy platform developed by Coastal Enterprises, Inc., Maine Farmland Trust, Maine Farm Bureau, Maine Food Strategy, Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association, Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society, Good Shepherd Food Bank, and Cultivating Community. Ralph Turner shared a policy document titled “Agricultural Policy Needs for Maine” presented by the Maine Vegetable and Small Fruit Growers Association, Maine Potato Board, and Maine Aquaculture Association.

**Next Meeting Date**

The group expressed a desire to meet in late March/early April. Staff were advised to avoid scheduling the meeting on 3/21 when the Ag Day at the Legislature is held. The Board wants to meet with Governor-elect Janet Mills and the commissioner for the Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry as part of the day’s agenda. It also expressed a desire to hold the legislative reception it has organized for many years typically held in the Legislative Council Chambers.

**Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.