

Minutes: Piscataquis County Extension Association Executive Committee Meeting 2/12/2018

Present: Members: Karen Murphy, George McKay, Carole Boothroyd, Beth McEvoy

Staff: Donna Coffin, Trisha Smith, Sheila Norman, John Albertini

Call to Order

- Beth McEvoy, President, called the meeting to order at 3 pm. Karen Murphy was appointed timekeeper.
- Donna introduced John Albertini as the new Administrative Specialist. John brings with him many years of hands-on experience in an office, a broad knowledge of the latest office software and technologies, excellent written and verbal communication skills and a passion to learn.

Business

- Minutes of the December meeting were approved by unanimous vote, with no corrections.
- The Piscataquis Cooperative Extension Budget Report was approved by unanimous vote.

Program Updates

- **Highlights of the 4-H Program Update from Sheila Norman and Barb Baker**

Rebecca H. is representing Piscataquis County at the **Healthy Living Summit at the National 4-H Center** in February. As part of her participation in this program, Rebecca will work with Trisha on her return to provide educational activities for the Farmers' Market.

Sew Much Fun, a quilting Special Interest (SPIN) club, led by quilters Sally Downing and Barbara Lockwood, will meet at the Piscataquis County Office on February 20, 21 and 22 from 1-3 pm. Each participant will create a quilted pillow project to keep.

The spring session of the **Milo Afterschool program** will begin on March 13 at the Brownville Elementary School and meet on Tuesdays for 6 weeks. Two topics will be offered: Gardening and Entomology, led by our 4-H volunteers and Wildlife, led by a UMaine STEM Ambassador. The annual field trip to UMaine is part of this session and available to youth who participate in either fall or spring sessions.

The **Piscataquis County Public Speaking Tournament** will be held on Saturday, February 24 at 9 am at the Piscataquis County Extension Office. Scorers earning a blue ribbon or a high red will be eligible to participate in the State Tournament at the University of Maine on April 7 (snow date April 8).

Piscataquis County hosted **the first Winter Leaders' Forum** on January 13 in Dexter. Leaders from Piscataquis, Penobscot, Waldo and Hancock counties reported that it was time well-spent.

4-H Reward Card at JOANN's give shoppers 15% off their in-store and online purchases and gives a minimum of 2.5% of every transaction as a donation to 4-H. **The JOANN Paper Clover Campaign**, which runs February 1-28, also donates to 4-H programs. In Maine, these donated funds help support participation in the National Summits.

- **Home Horticulture Report from Trisha Smith**

Trisha thanks Erin Callaway and Piscataquis Regional Food Center for sponsoring her registration at the **Community Food Systems Symposium and the Maine Foods to Institution Summit**. Trisha also attended the **Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets' Annual Convention** and will go to the **Community Forum for Food Security** on March 3. Trisha's participation in these panels promotes our pilot program, the Piscataquis Passport Project.

Changes to the **2018 Passport Program** include a simplified sign-up form for youth over 8 years old, which is expected to increase the participation numbers in this age group. The free summer meals program at Sedomocha, for all children under 18 years of age, funded by USDA, will be adding breakfast meals this summer. A potential future expansion of the program may include a Passport for Seniors which would emphasize opportunities for inexpensive or free meals and activities for seniors.

The **Worm Bin Boot Camp** with Jock Robie was fabulously successful and resulted in 10 new worm bins out in the community. A second session has been offered and is already full. Both classes are invited to a worm bin harvest on May 3. Jock offered the Cooperative Extension a harvest kit to keep in the office for the cost of materials (\$40).

Trisha's activities with **the school garden** will begin in March. She is also exploring the idea of gardens for folks with limited mobility at The Commons at Central Hall with Tara Smith and a possible demonstration garden at the Piscataquis Regional Food Center with Erin Callaway.

- **Piscataquis Activities from Donna Coffin**

Donna reports 16 **one-to-one contacts** in December-February, including questions on: value added producer grant, One Tomato Project, farm enterprise options, taking the pesticide test, direct marketing, small ruminant health, farm labor management, senior farm share income level.

Past events that Donna attended included staffing the UMaine extension booth at the **Harvest Festival** at the Cross Center in Bangor, where hundreds signed up for a chance to win one of three books. Donna sent follow-up emails to folks interested in gardening and farming. Donna also attended the **Maine Agricultural Trades Show** at the Augusta Civic Center, January 9-11, 2018. The Recipe to Market: Is it for ME? event planned for December 14 was not held because not enough people signed-up.

Upcoming Programs/Meetings include **Is Farming for ME?** March 26 from 6:30-8:30 at the Piscataquis Extension Office in Dover-Foxcroft with Adult Ed. Committee members will hang posters for the event. **Keeping Small Ruminants Healthy** featuring Dr. Catarina Ruksznis DVM and Dr. Karen Murphy DVM is on Saturday, April 14 from 1-4 pm. Adults and accompanied youth are invited to attend this free program. Location TBA.

Plans for **One Tomato**TM included discussion of how to increase participation, suggestions for events and organizations that can promote the program and type of cultivars and number of plants needed. Richard Neal will be asked to provide 400 seedlings and a golden paste tomato will be added this year.

Suggestions for distribution: Black Fly Festival in Milo, Community Suppers at the Dover-Foxcroft Congregational Church, Foxcroft Academy classes, the Milo Horticultural Club, Kiwanis. A total of 1,394 plants have been distributed in the area in the last four years, with a total estimated value of cherry tomatoes grown from seedlings of over \$9,600. Many thanks to Richard Neal for growing three different types of cherry tomatoes this year-red, orange and yellow and for donations of vegetable seedlings from Checkerberry Farm that were distributed to the Dover-Foxcroft Food Cupboard and the Sedomocha student garden.

New Business included discussion of a future tour of Monson to see progress by the Libra Foundation and a tour of the Plant, Animal and Insect Lab in Orono with the Penobscot County Executive Committee in June.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm

Next meeting: March 12 at 3 pm. Special guest: 4-H member Rebecca from the Greenville Super Science Club to talk about her recent out-of-state 4-H trips.

Submitted by Carole Boothroyd, Secretary 2/25/2018