

**STEBEN COUNTY AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**

*Wednesday, November 7, 2018*

*10:00 a.m.*

*Legislative Committee Room  
Steuben County Office Building  
Bath, New York*

**\*\*MINUTES\*8**

**COMMITTEE:** Robin K. Lattimer, Chair                      K. Michael Hanna, Vice Chair                      John V. Malter  
Robert V. Nichols    Thomas J. Ryan

**STAFF:** Jack K. Wheeler    Mitchell Alger    Jennifer Prossick  
Amy Dlugos    Eric Rose

**LEGISLATORS:** Joseph J. Hauryski    Carol A. Ferratella    Kelly H. Fitzpatrick  
Hilda T. Lando    Steven P. Maio    Frederick G. Potter  
Gary D. Swackhamer    Scott J. Van Etten

**OTHERS:** Larkin Podsiedlik, Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Peter Landre, Cornell Cooperative Extension – State Extension Specialist (Grape Program)  
Julie Kikkert, Cornell Cooperative Extension – Team Leader (Vegetable Program)  
Scott Ward, Steuben County Farm Bureau  
Mary Perham

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Lattimer called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked Mr. Hanna to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION: APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 3, 2018, MEETING MADE BY MR. NICHOLS. SECONDED BY MR. RYAN. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.**

**III. DEPARTMENT REQUESTS**

A. County Manager

1. **Dana Lyons** – Mr. Wheeler informed the committee that the Save the Lyon Commission has been working to find a redevelopment or other type of project to reuse the old Dana Lyon School in Bath. With the help of the Steuben County IDA and many county departments, they are now under contract for the sale of the school to The Savarino Group out of Buffalo for the redevelopment of the new section of the school into affordable senior housing.

**IV. OUTSIDE AGENCIES**

A. Cornell Cooperative Extension

1. **Regional Agricultural Teams** – Ms. Podsiedlik introduced Peter Landre and Julie Kikkert from Cornell Cooperative Extension and Scott Ward from the Steuben County Farm Bureau. We are here today to talk about a funding request to establish regional agriculture teams in Steuben County. Ms. Podsiedlik presented a PowerPoint presentation on the regional agriculture teams.

Ms. Podsiedlik stated there are only four or five counties in the State that are not members of a regional agriculture team. The difference between Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Regional Agriculture Teams is expertise. The Regional Agriculture Teams have members that have a Masters or Ph.D. level of expertise in their field. We do not currently have expertise in dairy, livestock and field crops; farm business management;

commercial horticulture (fruit and vegetable) production and management; specialty crops or nutrient management. Our extension office has challenges with both recruitment and retention of masters and bachelors level educators and specialists. That turnover affects continuity and connection with our producers and our farmers need consistent access to cutting-edge expertise.

Ms. Podsiedlik presented a slide showing maps of the regional agriculture teams for grapes, dairy/livestock/field crops and vegetables. We are currently a member of the Finger Lakes Grape Program. That program has been very successful. Some of the benefits of being a member of that program is we have access to one specialist and one technician; there is a weekly newsletter to inform us on harvest decisions; IPM meetings with over 100 growers; industry research and priority meetings; and teaching and demonstration vineyards with 23 classes. We have 15 member-growers in Steuben County.

Ms. Podsiedlik reviewed the benefits of regional agriculture programming which includes providing high quality extension for farmers and associated businesses in the region; ability to carry out applied research and demonstration trials on farms; specialized educators with stronger and more formal relationships with faculty; enhanced connection to producers and agribusiness to extension educators and faculty; increased efficiency for follow-up on reported problems; more efficient grantsmanship; and provides associations with broader skill sets at a more affordable cost.

Ms. Podsiedlik stated they are proposing forming two regional agriculture teams; one for dairy/livestock/field crops and one for vegetables. Our Board voted to look into forming a new Southwestern New York Dairy/Livestock/Field Crops team. Plan B would be to request to join another pre-existing team. A regional vegetable team does exist and if we joined, then we have been told that a potato specialist could be located within Steuben County. Our proposal is to hire one full-time agriculture education and to join the six-specialist Cornell Vegetable Program in January 2019. Then we would look to form a four-specialist Southwestern New York Dairy/Livestock/Field Crops program in mid-2019. This change would allow us to leverage \$1 million for each specialty. She stated with this, farmers would have direct access to Masters and Ph.D. level specialists which would provide them with more face time. Additionally a potato and livestock specialist would be located in Steuben County. These specialists would be considered Steuben County educators. Mr. Landre explained we will be working in partnership with the other participating counties.

Ms. Podsiedlik stated you may be wondering why now. We are anticipating staff transition and in 2019, Cornell has committed expansion funds of \$100,000 if we start the teams and we would receive \$15,000 for each specialist. This would significantly reduce our first-year cost share.

Mr. Ward commented this is really the only course of action that makes sense. It would make sense to create/join the western dairy/livestock/field crops team as we would have more control. The Farm Bureau is in consensus on the idea of having regional agriculture teams.

Ms. Podsiedlik stated that with regard to costs, in 2019 it will cost \$56,000 for the dairy and vegetable teams. In 2020 and after, the cost would be \$97,000. The total investment for just salary and regional cost share in 2021 would be \$156,000 for a regional dairy team, regional vegetable team, 1 local agriculture education, and our continued participation in the Finger Lakes Grape Program. We have staff who are close to retirement and that will free up more money and we can restructure. For 2019, we can commit a portion of the salary that we had for Stephanie Mehlenbacher and reserve funds of \$40,000; the agriculture educator salary and your contribution of \$19,000 would fill in the gap to buy into the regional agriculture teams. By 2021, she believes they could see a reduction in the county appropriation, or if we remain level, that funding could be put towards agriculture or 4-h programs. She is requesting \$19,000 for 2019, which would bring the total budget request to \$409,000 which represents a 10 percent increase from last year.

Ms. Podsiedlik stated the alternatives if we do not join two new regional agriculture teams is that we would stay in the Grape program and hire a consumer agriculture and natural resources educator; hire a livestock and farm

business educator in 2019 and hire a dairy and field crops educator in 2020 for a total cost of \$149,000. With that, we would still have gaps in commercial horticulture.

Ms. Lattimer asked with the regional concept and funding and the restructuring of staff, would other programs be lacking? Ms. Podsiedlik replied yes and no. We have a communications person and receptionist who are close enough to retirement. Our goal would be to hire someone who could fill both those positions. Our financial literacy program is 50 percent by the County and 50 percent by United Way. We had an appropriation from United Way of \$35,000 and now we only receive \$21,000. If that appropriation goes to \$15,000, we cannot support that program anymore. That is not something that we would prioritize over agriculture. Our priority programming with County funding is agriculture and 4-H. Even without agriculture teams, there would be a loss of programming anyway.

Mr. Nichols commented he thinks this is the only way to go. Right now, ever since Jim Grace and Carl Albers retired, there has not been a lot done for agriculture.

Mr. Malter asked what is the appropriation we are giving Cornell Cooperative for 2019 without this proposal? Mr. Wheeler replied \$382,000. Ms. Podsiedlik explained that goes to administration and overhead. We have dedicated \$98,000 toward agriculture. Mr. Malter asked is this a one-time proposal for \$19,000 for one year? Mr. Wheeler replied it is in addition to their appropriation. Ms. Podsiedlik stated we would also ask for this in 2020. Mr. Wheeler commented it is likely that if you go this direction, it will be a multi-year appropriation.

Mr. Malter asked will it become sustaining by the reductions in staff? Ms. Podsiedlik replied we have 13 staff. Of those, 8 are paid using the County appropriation. At the end of 2019, we anticipate one retiring; as well as one each retiring in 2020 and 2021. These are anticipated retirements. Mr. Malter asked why wasn't this brought up prior to the budget? Ms. Podsiedlik replied we did not know about the increase in Cornell's commitment until September. Mr. Landre commented we did not know we would have the additional funding until the Federal budget came out, which was in October. Ms. Podsiedlik stated she and Mr. Wheeler had been discussing this potential.

Mr. Malter asked are the other counties approving additional money? Ms. Podsiedlik replied we do not know yet. We don't know if a dairy team will be formed or not. If the Southwestern Dairy Team does not work out, we will request to join another dairy/livestock team.

Ms. Lattimer asked what is the process for forming a new team? Ms. Podsiedlik explained if we can get two other counties ready to move forward, we can hire two specialists and one could start here. We will not wait for all four counties to commit. A regional team can consist of two or more counties. Hopefully this will be an incentive for the others. We absolutely need a team across the southern tier and it makes sense.

Mr. Nichols commented until the economy changes, you will not see large increases in farms. Most farms at the current milk and beef prices are sustainable now and everyone is trying to get through it.

Mr. Malter asked if we approve this, will it need to go through Finance? Mr. Wheeler replied yes. Ms. Podsiedlik commented we all agreed so we could take advantage of Cornell's funding, to let Mr. Landre know by the end of December. Everyone is in the process of gathering information and support.

**MOTION: APPROPRIATING AN ADDITIONAL \$19,000 TO THE CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION BUDGET FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING TWO REGIONAL AGRICULTURE TEAMS FOR DAIRY/LIVESTOCK/FIELD CORPS AND VEGETABLES MADE BY MR. MALTER. SECONDED BY MR. HANNA FOR DISCUSSION.**

Mr. Nichols stated he is in favor of this. If we go ahead this year, you are committing to the program. Mr. Malter commented this is supposed to sustain itself after a couple of years. Mr. Ryan commented the history of our

county is agriculture. Mr. Nichols stated he is in favor, but again, this will not just be for one year. Ms. Lattimer commented we are also saying that we don't want any big surprises.

**VOTE ON PREVIOUS MOTION: ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.**

**V. DEPARTMENTAL REQUESTS**

A. Planning

1. **Code Enforcement** – Mrs. Dlugos stated the County has been providing Code Enforcement services for the Town of Addison since 1983. Marv Rethmel has been the Code Enforcement Officer. Due to recent changes in his schedule, this is a good time to formalize that agreement. Additionally, this notifies the Town that the County has no jurisdiction to enforce the floodplain laws or any other local laws; that the County will bill the town for any expenses not covered by permit fees; and establishing the Code Enforcement Officer's hours. The Code Enforcement Officer will issue permits from 4pm to 5pm Mondays and Thursdays at the Planning Department at the County Office Building.

**MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE PLANNING DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO AN INTER-MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF ADDISON FOR CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES AND ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE HOURS OF THE CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER MADE BY MR. MALTER. SECONDED BY MR. HANNA FOR DISCUSSION.**

Mr. Malter asked why are we doing this for only a couple of towns? Mr. Wheeler replied under State law, if a town chooses not to do code enforcement, it is our responsibility and we charge back the costs to the town.

**VOTE ON PREVIOUS MOTION: ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0. Resolution Required.**

**VI. OTHER BUSINESS**

A. *NYS Association of Conservation Districts* – Mr. Ryan announced he attended the NYS Association of Conservation Districts meeting last week and Steuben County came back with an armful of awards.

B. *Hunting/Fishing Rights on County-Owned Land* – Mr. Ryan stated he is a representative on the Region 8 Fish and Wildlife Board, as well as the State Board. The State Fish and Wildlife Board represents 55 counties and 1.5 million members. One of our major tasks is to work on hunting and fishing access rights for the public. He had asked Mrs. Dlugos to provide him with a list of properties that the County owns. We own 1,000 acres of woodlands along with 11 acres along the Canisteo River. The property along the Canisteo River would be perfect for fishing access rights and the State has indicated they would be interested in assisting with the access and parking areas. The Canisteo River produces Walleye and small Bass.

Mr. Ryan stated there are three separate large tracts of land by Call Hill with 150 acres, 50 acres and 104 acres. At one time in the past, those tracts were identified as public hunting and outdoor recreation areas, but the signs are no longer there. He is asking the committee to review what our policy is toward those properties and to look into whether they could become allowable for public access. We would use the same rules that the State uses on their fish and wildlife areas. This is an asset and there are more acres that could be accessed.

Mr. Malter asked do we stop people now? Mr. Wheeler replied we do not monitor. Mr. Ryan stated we would not want hunters to put up permanent tree stands. One thing we would want to do is manage those properties. If the properties are not managed they will become a wasteland.

Mr. Hauryski commented those properties should have been managed. Billy Morris had already marked trees on another property on Call Hill. Those were marked four years ago and we haven't harvested them yet. In order to harvest we would need to do an RFP. Mr. Ryan stated you have to specify what the owner's needs are for harvesting. Mr. Hauryski stated that was done through the harvesting plan. He stated that he had asked the Law Department to draft up what our options are.

Ms. Prossick stated she sent an email depicting the three options available. You are currently operating under the first option in which there are no permits issued and no invitation to be on the land. This is the lowest level of liability for the County.

Mr. Van Etten asked why would we even have these properties? We should put them up for sale and get them back on the tax roll. Mr. Wheeler stated some of the property around Call Hill encompasses the radio tower. Mr. Malter commented some of the parcels are landlocked and some have restrictions. Mr. Van Etten stated a lot of those parcels have adjacent property and those property owners may want to purchase. Mr. Wheeler stated we assume that those conversations were had, but we should resurrect that conversation if that is what you would like to do. Mr. Hauryski stated he would bring that conversation back up.

Mr. Wheeler stated that Ms. Prossick did a law review and we checked with the insurance carrier. Additionally we did a survey of counties and have responses. Most counties allow fishing access. Some take the same approach as we currently do. Genesee County has a park and they collect fees and hold a lottery for permits for hunting. It seems that all of the counties are pretty comfortable with allowing fishing.

Mr. Malter stated Mr. Ryan wants to notify the public that the property is available. Ms. Prossick stated in the case where the County extends an invitation to enter the property to use it recreationally, the County has the duty of reasonable and ordinary care against foreseeable dangers. Mr. Hauryski stated you just have to make sure there are no open wells and use common sense to fix things.

Ms. Lattimer asked have we created a policy or procedure for fishing access? Mr. Ryan replied he assumes that we would just follow the State's guidelines. Ms. Prossick commented the State is different as they have reforested lands. If you do reforested lands, you cannot remove them from that purpose.

Mr. Wheeler suggested that staff go back and look at each of these properties. We do have easement issues with Call Hill. The request to allow public fishing would be the easiest. We will look at each of the properties and see what opportunities there are. Mr. Van Etten asked were those properties acquired through tax foreclosure? Mr. Wheeler replied we have to assume so unless they were purposeful for the radio tower. Ms. Lattimer stated she is in agreement to have a review of each of the properties and to categorize them for fishing and/or hunting, and look at other options.

**MOTION: TO ADJOURN MADE BY MR. NICHOLS. SECONDED BY MR. RYAN. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.**

Respectfully Submitted by

Amanda L. Chapman  
Deputy Clerk  
Steuben County Legislature

**\*\*NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR\*\*  
Wednesday, December 5, 2018  
Legislative Committee Room  
9:30 a.m.**

**Please send agenda items to the Clerk of the Legislature's Office  
NO LATER THAN NOON  
Wednesday, November 28, 2018**