

Minutes – CEC Meeting – Cotton Town Hall  
November 21, 2018

Present: Jim Takala, Gary Rantala, Roger Sabin, Doug Hoffbauer, Don Dicklich  
Others: Jim Gottschald, Patty Swedberg, Mardi Harder

Chair Jim Takala called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. Minutes from October 24, 2018 meeting were approved as printed.

CEC Holiday Project Discussion –

Doug made a request to the MN Turkey Growers Association for meat thermometers to distribute along with the roasting pans and brochures. The association sent recipe cards and refrigerator magnets—another source to contact for proper cooking methods and food-related questions. They will be added to the “thank you to sponsors” section on the brochure. Doug commented he liked the new recipes in our brochure.

Patty provided an update as to the financial contributions received: (\$2,100) Fairview Range-\$2,000, Sons of Norway-\$50, Sons of Norway-Haarfager Lodge 40-\$50. Super One Foods-Virginia sold the roasting pans to Extension for .89 ea. Thank you cards will be sent. The sign-up form was available for members to check the shift they volunteered for.

2019 Farm Family of the Year Discussion –

Jim T. suggested Pat and Karen Brodeen of Cook to be considered for nomination. They have beef cows, and had dairy cows for 25 yrs.—then exited. Pat organizes on his own.

Gary suggested Mark Peterson Berry Farms, Eveleth as a candidate. He owns a u-pick berry operation, is a member of the Soil & Water Board and retired ag instructor. Peterson Berry Farms deserves to be recognized at some point.

Doug suggested to rank...the members ranked as follows: 1. Pat Brodeen, 2. Mark Peterson. Jim T. will follow-up. Don stated to keep in mind it's a committee decision, and think Com. Nelson wanted to do some recognition with Brian Toivola. A special recognition was held at the St. Louis County Fair in August. Doug stated he would put Brian on the list as a 3<sup>rd</sup> one to get an application. Not sure if others do outreach.

Patty distributed copies of the county budget and asked committee if they had any questions. There are 4<sup>th</sup> qtr. expenses that will catch-up throughout end of this yr. and into early 2019. Doug asked if the 2019 budget included additional funds for Kendall's replacement. Patty responded it does not as Kendall just announced his retirement approx. a month ago. A question was asked—if a wood program would continue. Jim T. mentioned Virginia will operate six months next yr., and believe Hibbing will operate in the winter.

Program Updates:

Patty stated the Fall Gest Garden Workshop was held October 18<sup>th</sup> in Duluth...great content and cooking demo by Francois Medion, and another guest showcased fermentation. Master gardeners prepared food dishes, focusing on kohlrabi as the vegetable of the year. The evaluations were very positive; 35 registered participants.

Mardi circulated copies of the 2012 Census of Agriculture data—including a profile for SLC and ranked items. A new one should be out soon.

Auditor Don Dicklich was recognized for his remarkable work not only as County Auditor, but also as an Extension Committee member. He has provided excellent guidance and recommendations in continuing and expanding Extension program in SLC. Refreshments were served.

#### Agriculture-Horticulture Position-Virginia Discussion –

The sub committee arranged a breakfast meeting prior to today's CEC meeting. Doug feels it's critical the position be filled soon—maybe March 1 as farmers meet during winter and spring/summer is busy season. Gary added it takes time to acquaint themselves with the area and work.

Jim T. circulated a survey that was available at the beef producers mtg. In summary, interest areas ranked high were ag production and profitability, forest and pasture management, strong ties with industries to keep woodash project and succession and estate planning. Jim G. stated Com. Jewell asked about capacity of a university position for the vacancy, and if my recollection was Com. Nelson maybe considering a hire with the County. Members shared that Dean Durgan opened the door for SLC when concerns regarding the promotion process for university employees was discussed. Doug feels the best candidates would be through the university. He would like to see a horticulture component along with assistance with master gardener program. Bob is carrying alot...going forward he needs support with the program in the North...it's a natural part of the job. Jim T. visited with CEC at Itasca County. It was mentioned some MG's travel from Hibbing to be involved in project work. Jim T. asked if our county had a limited number of MG's...Patty responded we do not. We keep a list of people interested in becoming a MG, and applications are reviewed and interviews scheduled (one/yr.). Some of our MG's in the North have long distances to travel...just the nature of the geography. Don stated Bob is good with recruitment and getting people connected with MG's. Gary stated the bulk of the position may be ag production and profitability. Mardi mentioned there may be current university staff that have interest in the position.

The committee asked Patty what the county contract rate is for the ag position—she responded almost \$33,000 including expenses. Mardi shared full-time extension educator position contract price for Yr. 2019 is \$94,812. Members discussed the need for additional funding. Doug made a motion the committee would like the County to increase the budget at the MOA contract price. Don will second the motion as an option to stay on the table and get the funding. The motion passed—unan. Jim G. stated this increase in funding being asked for has not been factored in the County Extension budget nor with Administration. Don said we are only making a recommendation to the County Board to find another \$60,000-\$65,000 to have some flexibility. Mardi shared benefits are included in both a .75 FTE and 1.0 FTE. Hiring timelines for the county and university were discussed. Jim G. inquired if the committee has more local direction in a university hire process. In his opinion a county contract may be better as we have more control over the work direction and the university would have their own goals with an MOA. Jim T. stated the sub committee may want to meet again—possibly December.

Gary/Jim T. made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:10 am---motion passed—unan.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Patty Swedberg