

**Minutes – CEC Meeting – Cotton Town Hall – Cotton, MN  
May 15, 2019**

Present: Jim Takala, Roger Sabin, Gary Rantala, Doug Hoffbauer, Rick Pierce, Keith Nelson  
Others: Bob Olen, Troy Salzer, Sarah Westerberg, Patty Swedberg, Mardi Harder

Chair Jim Takala called the meeting to order at 9:07 am. Minutes from the April 17 meeting were approved for printing. Introductions were made.

**Feature Program Presentation – Horticulture and Agriculture – Bob Olen**

- Bob discussed how he learned that the three big cost generating problems in St. Louis County are the opioid crisis, Type 2 diabetes and mental health. Bob provided studies showing the benefits that gardening and nutrition play in combating mental illness and depression.
- Celebrate Gardening - Gardening for a Healthier Life was held at the Mt. Iron Community Center on February 28, 2019. There were 3 presenters, 65 participants and a 62 page resource folder.
- Spring Gardening Extravaganza--Gardening for a Healthier Life and Environment was held at the First United Methodist church in Duluth on April 13, 2019. There were 4 keynote speakers, 11 workshops, 150 participants, and a 152 page resource book published. The event was full. 200 booklets were printed. WDSE purchased 50 books. The conference cost was \$35--included lunch, workshops and the booklet. Bob talked about the need for a larger venue and lack of parking at the current venue. Keith mentioned reaching out to the county commissioners to help get into a larger venue for next year.
- Bob discussed Education and Outreach through the media:
  - Great Gardening WDSE/WRPT – 40,000 viewers; live weekly, replayed and archived
  - KDAL radio 6.10 AM, 103.9 FM: 12,000 listeners; live weekly call-in format
  - Duluth News Tribune: 21,000 readers
  - Senior Reporter: 11,000 copies distributed at no charge

Keith talked about using the St. Louis County website and Dana (communications manager) to access social and mass media. Jim talked about recording and preserving Bob's sessions and making an archive available as podcasts. Troy agreed that podcasts could be reused in other settings as a basis and followed with a discussion panel--would be very beneficial. Keith mentioned the importance of making sure our contracts allow for that. Jim asked Patty if she has looked into costs for recording podcasts. Patty stated PHHS is working with Creative Arcade and their estimate for 5 podcasts came in at \$15,600.00--if this is a direction we are thinking about we should keep in mind for the 2020 budget. IT could possibly do editing which may lower the cost. Keith mentioned he county board has a contract with 3 different entities and we could easily add to, provided the contracts are run by Kim. Patty added the PHHS quote also included expanding social media for a broader reach, so that cost is also figured into the estimate. Jim stated the importance of taking the initiative and getting it done. Keith would really like us to explore in-house.

- Keith suggested that Bob and Troy connect with the Youth in Action Coordinators to see if they can get the youth involved.
- Keith suggested that Mardi and Jim send a copy of the Spring Gardening Extravaganza booklet with a personal note to Dean Durgan. Doug made a motion. Keith supported the motion. All approved. Motion carried unanimously.
- Gary suggested the Timber Hall in Embarrass as a possible venue to accommodate a larger crowd.
- Bob discussed the Master Gardener Program--63 volunteers, active emeritus and interns. One educational meeting and 2 leadership council meetings per month.

Keith intends to bring forward a resolution to the SLC board to consider in opposition to the introduction of elk into the Cloquet Valley. The wildlife biologist from Fond du lac has stated there is no historical record of elk being in the Cloquet Valley forest, so for SLC this is not about reintroduction. There is no test today that can assure us that elk do not carry chronic wasting. For SLC, Keith feels that is too big a risk to take.

### **Feature Program Presentation Continued – Horticulture and Agriculture - Troy Salzer**

- Troy has worked in Extension in multiple counties since 1997. A business item he enjoys most is the diversity of the questions that come in. He uses them to assess, research, and focus on regional activity trends and stated it helps him formulate many of the programs that he has worked on.
- Nathan Winter has helped him to refine his needs assessment process. Mercedes will be working regionally as an intern to help Troy put some programs together.
- Another component of Troy's activity is valuing the livestock killed by wolves; last year he valued 144 wolf kills (3-4 per week) calves mostly, but also bucking bulls, goats, sheep, roping horses, and llamas.

#### **Upcoming Events:**

- Small space cover cropping in gardens etc. - May 23<sup>rd</sup> in Carlton County
- Controlling Japanese Knotweed Program – June 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Magnolia Salon Presentation about the byproducts program – June 13<sup>th</sup>
- Farmer's Market Vendor workshop - June 20<sup>th</sup>
- Northeast MN Forage and Grassland tour - Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> at Radaich Farm
- Troy and Nathan have talked about putting together YouTube videos on the step-by-step processes of how to put in wildlife plots – watch the video and call Troy with additional questions.
- Jim stated it would be good for Troy to identify opportunities for producers to increase profitability. Forage production and the impact of an InterSeeder, for example. Troy stated an important component is our relationships with other organizations. Troy would be happy to work with Erin (formerly with NRCS, currently with BWSR) and Gary Rantala (soil and water board) to put together a proposal like Pine County did two years ago. Troy stated the InterSeeder has been one of the key pieces of equipment to allow us to do (1) renovation of forage fields less expensively, especially when dealing with as many rocks as we have in our county and (2) implementing multispecies cover crop blends.

### **Farm Family of the Year for SLC**

- Pat and Karen Brodeen are hosting a Fall Beef Cattle Round-up and came up with the idea all on their own. They support folks in their region and this is just one of the things they do to contribute to the Ag community up near Cook. Bob mentioned we have 3 past Farm Family recipients sitting at the table. Jim suggested Troy start thinking about the families for next year.

### **SLC Budget Report**

- Patty discussed the current report and the Yr. 2020 budget. The budget will be discussed at next CEC meeting as well--the budget submission date is June 21<sup>st</sup>. She will email it to the committee prior to the June 19<sup>th</sup> mtg. There are computer/equipment replacements to consider and videotaping/podcasts of educational sessions. YIA will be hosting the 2020 conference at the DECC—received a very reduced rate and Visit Duluth will make a \$1,000.00 contribution. The conference has needed a larger venue with additional space for quite some time. The Eveleth Curling Club is a possible venue—would like to alternate venues between Duluth and the Iron Range. Patty's estimate at this pt. is an additional \$6,000-\$7,000 for the conference. Conference contributions received from local businesses/organizations are approx. \$10,000. Jim asked how much it costs to put the whole thing on--Patty stated it's approx. \$18,000.
- Jim suggested as a way to free up more of Bob and Troy's time, we should consider Gary Rantala to take phone calls in peak times and make it a paid position...he asked what the board thinks. Bob stated it could be very helpful but added with talking to people directly they get a real sense for what is going

on in the community and that is valuable to both he and Troy. Mardi asked about interns and mentioned Mercedes from the university that Troy had referred to. Would be helpful for Troy/Bob to provide advisement. Bob stated help on the media side would be helpful.

- Mardi referred to the 2020-2022 MOA budget proposal...2% increase ea. yr. from 2019. Doug questioned the numbers on the proposal. Patty and Mardi will look into it and rerun the numbers.

### **CEC Holiday Project**

- Doug said we should evaluate if we are accomplishing what we set out to do. Bob would like to look into making it more effective, rather than just giving up on it. Jim mentioned instilling a component on education e.g. what it takes to produce the food we give. Bob suggested having them watch a video. Doug doesn't think we would have the manpower or space to do that. Bob suggested Super One sponsoring some sort of education and stated he thinks there needs to be an education component for urban audiences. Gary brought up the process and time it took to perfect the honey crisp apple and how the process took 25 years. Jim asked if there is an Ag component or video to share with YIA students. Troy said he has spoken with the north coordinators about having an agriculture component in the spring conference. Gary mentioned having youth out to his farm in the past and it being very successful. Bob mentioned pitching a video idea to WDSE.

Meeting adjourned at 11:16 am.

Next Meeting will be held at Camp Esquagma on June 19th. The feature presentation will be Youth in Action.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Sarah Westerberg