



Kane County

KC Agriculture Committee

Meeting Minutes

Government Center
719 S. Batavia Ave., Bldg. A
Geneva, IL 60134

KENYON, Roth, Allan, Juby, Lenert, Sanchez, Williams, ex-officios Pierog (County Chair) and Tepe (County Vice Chair)

Thursday, April 18, 2024

10:30 AM

County Board Room

1. Call To Order

Chairman Kenyon called today's meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT	Board Member Michael Kenyon Board Member Bill Roth Board Member Leslie Juby Board Member Jarett Sanchez Board Member Rick Williams Ex-Officio County Board Chair Corinne M. Pierog
ABSENT	Board Member Deborah Allan Board Member Bill Lenert Ex-Officio County Board Vice Chair Vern Tepe

Also present: Co. Bd. members Bates*, Gumz*, Kious*; KCFB Mgr. Arnold; Dev. Dir. VanKerkhoff & staff Tansley, Thavong, McKenna, and Castro; Environ. & Water Res. Dir. Wollnik; ASA Spec. Shepro*; ITD staff Peters; and members of the press and public, including State Dir. for Illinois Emy Barwley.

3. Remote Attendance Requests

There were no remote attendance requests for today's meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes: March 21, 2024

RESULT:	APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT
MOVER:	Jarett Sanchez

5. Public Comment (Agenda Items)

None.

6. Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items)

None.

7. Partners

A. Kane County Farm Bureau Updates (Steve Arnold, Manager)

KCFB Mgr. Arnold shared pictures from the previous week's "Touch-a-Tractor" event. He stated that there were 2500 in attendance. Arnold reminded the Committee that 42 scholarship applications that were reviewed last month. The foundation awarded \$43K in scholarships to 25 students for the 2024-2025 school year. They will be announcing those students and their fields of study at a scholarship recognition ceremony on Friday, July 12, 2024.

B. The Working Farms Fund (Emy Barwley, State Director for Illinois, The Conservation Fund)

State Dir. of Illinois Emy Barwley presented information on The Working Farms Fund. She stated that the fund creates a pathway to affordable land ownership for next generation farmers. In 2021, The Conservation Fund launched the Farms Fund, which helps rebuild the local food system and grows sustainable farm businesses. The fund accelerates adoption of sustainable agriculture practices, and breaks down traditional barriers to capital for farmers. The fund also increases the supply of locally-grown food, and permanently conserves farmland at risk of being lost to development.

Rustic Road Farm owner, Marc Bernard, shared his background and how his farm stand started. Bernard and his spouse purchased a home with a barn on five-acres in Elburn, Illinois in 2011. They started out from scratch, carving out growing areas, planting raspberry bushes and apple trees. Rustic Road Farm is a Community-Supported Agriculture farm stand (CSA). When you purchase a CSA share, a portion of their organic grown fruits and vegetables is set aside for you. Marc believes in their organic and sustainable approach to growing crops and livestock. In December 22, 2023, they signed a lease with the Conservation Fund for increased sustainability for their farm stand. Today, the Bernards are farming 18 acres, raising heirloom pigs, free-range chickens and pasture eggs. There are several hives producing honey, and an installed hoop house allowing them to farm almost year-round. The farm has become an integral part of the community, welcoming residents to their twice-weekly farm stand and special events. Much discussion ensued.

8. Presentations/Announcements**A. ARPA Proposal for Kane County Farm Resiliency (Matt Tansley, Planner)**

Dev. Dir. Planner VanKerkhoff announced that in Resolution 21-156, the Kane County Board approved the recommended Spending Plan as proposed by the American Rescue Plan Committee (ARPA), which designated \$42M to be used for Kane County Department and Elected Office project requests.

Dev. Planner Tansley stated that the Farmer Recovery & Resiliency Grant Program is a competitive program designed to address a range of needs and operating expenses. While recipient farmers were appreciative of the grants to address recovery and operational needs, they also expressed that the low award amounts did not allow for the types of on-farm improvements that would provide sustained benefits. Tansley indicated that up to 35 food-growing farm operators will receive assistance to support the recovery and resiliency of their operations. At least 50% of the awardees will be able to increase their scale of production and/or sell their products through new markets. Lastly, at least 25% of the awardees will be enabled to make long-term infrastructure investments through the offset of operating expenses. Much discussion ensued.

9. New Business

None.

10. Reports Placed On File

RESULT:	APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT
MOVER:	Jarett Sanchez

11. Executive Session (if needed)

None.

12. Adjournment

RESULT:	APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE
MOVER:	Bill Roth
SECONDER:	Rick Williams

This meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Rachel Santora
Recording Secretary