



Kane County

KC Agriculture Committee

Meeting Minutes

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

JUBY, Roth, Allan, Lenert, Penesis, Sanchez, Williams and ex-officio Pierog (County Chair)

Thursday, March 20, 2025

10:30 AM

County Board Room

2025 Committee Goals

Goals from the July Agriculture Committee meeting

- Revise County Code Definition of the Agriculture Committee
- Awareness & Support of Agriculture - Raise public awareness and support for agriculture in Kane County as an industry sector and community resource
- Farmland Protection - Work in concert with the Farmland Protection Commission and County Board to oversee the successful implementation of Kane County's Farmland Protection Ordinance and related conservation efforts, and pursue funding
- Continue Growing for Kane Program - Direct the implementation of programs and policies that expand the production of locally grown foods and improve community access to fresh and healthy food choices, and pursue funding
 - Continue partnerships with Kane County Farm Bureau and Northern Illinois Food Bank
 - Implement current grant funded projects
 - Continue to apply for additional outside grants
 - Implement economic development projects for Agriculture
 - ARPA Small grants for farmers
 - Other projects identified by the Economic Development Strategic Plan for Kane County

1. Call To Order

Chairman Juby called today's meeting to order at 10:33 AM.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT	Board Member Leslie Juby Board Member Bill Roth Board Member Deborah Allan Board Member Bill Lenert Board Member Ted Penesis
ABSENT	Board Member Jarett Sanchez Board Member Rick Williams Ex-Officio County Board Chair Corinne M. Pierog

Also present: Co. Bd. members Arroyo*, Bates*, Kiouss*, Strathmann*; KCFB Mgr. Arnold, KCFB Pres. Joe White, KCFB Dir. Brett Dienst; Dev. Dir. VanKerkhoff and staff Tansley, Castro; ITD staff Peters; and members of the press and public including Northern Illinois Food Bank Dev. Officer Hester Bury; Local Food and Farm Consultant Janice Hill, Community Health Systems Health (CHS) Planner Sophia Hamilton and CHS Coordinator Liliana Peterson.

3. Remote Attendance Requests

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

4. Approval of Minutes: February 20, 2025

RESULT:	APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT
MOVER:	Ted Penesis

5. Public Comment

None.

6. Partners

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

Kane County Farm Bureau (KCFB) Mgr. Arnold thanked Chairman Juby and Co-Chair Roth for participating in the 24th Annual Shopping Spree on February 24, 2025 at the Batavia Jewel. He highlighted that Roth raised \$1,935.60 for the Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry. Arnold stated that KCFB President Joe White and three volunteers accompanied him at the Illinois Farm Bureau Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference (GALC) in Springfield last month. Former White House Chief of Staff, Reince Priebus, was the conference speaker. The conference was followed up with a Statewide Legislative Reception with six state legislators in attendance. Arnold noted that in the months of March, April, and May a preview of the State Legislative priorities will be added to the monthly Kane County Farmer publication. The April issue will highlight the Livestock Management Facilities Act, and address a Bill within the General Assembly for Illinois to adopt California Emission Standards. Arnold announced that a semi-annual water well testing program was recently completed. There were seventy-five samples collected from fifty members to test their private water supply. There were twenty-five scholars chosen to receive \$47K in college scholarships for next year. The 19th Annual Touch-A-Tractor event will be held on Friday, April 11 through Sunday, April 13 at the Kane County Farm Bureau in St. Charles. On Saturday, April 12, from 4:30-5:30 p.m., families are welcome to attend a "Meet & Greet" with elected representatives to learn about farms, food, and agriculture as part of the 3-day Touch-A-Tractor Open House. Arnold noted that public officials who reserve their spot by April 4, will have the option to reserve two complimentary tickets to the 2025 Kane County 4H Foundation Pork Chop Dinner and Fundraiser. Lastly, Arnold mentioned that there will be a landowner meeting for the TransCanada (TC) Energy with American Natural Resources (ANR) Pipeline Project, to discuss easement agreements. He thanked the Committee for their support for the Agriculture Day Proclamation. Much discussion took place.

B. Northern Illinois Food Bank Updates (Hester Bury, Development Officer)

Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB) Dir. Hester Bury provided updates on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. She stated that in May 2023, the Northern Illinois Food Bank was awarded \$2.5M in ARPA funds to be used over three years for purchase of food to distribute to member agencies in the county. She noted that through February 2025, the NIFB used \$1.1M for food purchases, and distributed \$1,993,365 pounds of food. The remaining \$1,353,093 of grant funds will be used by June 30, 2026. Bury provided a list of the non-perishable staples, fresh produce food items, and a list of agencies that benefited from those purchased food items. Lastly, Bury stated that the NIFB will continue to advocate for the continuation of food programs and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Bury addressed questions and comments from the Committee. Much discussion ensued.

7. Presentations/Announcements**A. Kane County Behavioral Health Needs & Resources (Sophia Hamilton & Lily Peterson, Health Department)**

Community Health Systems (CHS) Health Planner Sophia Hamilton provided an overview of behavioral health outcomes and resources in Kane County. She stated that improving behavioral health has been a long term goal for the Kane County Health Department (KCHD) since 2007. She noted that behavioral health encompasses a number of topics including mental health and well-being, substance use, life stressors and crisis, and stress-related physical symptoms. An individual that has chronic heart disease or diabetes potentially contributes to their anxiety or depression. However, individuals with poor mental health can also contribute to them having difficulty managing diseases. (Committee Member Allan arrived at 11:20 a.m.) Hamilton noted that having reliable data accessible to the community is important because it allows the KCHD to plan for what the populations need. She stated that there are three dedicated epidemiologists at the health department that help gather data, identify secondary sources, and analyze information. Hamilton presented a brief demonstration on the newly developed online tool called "Kane Health Atlas." This website is an interactive and customizable resource, and is available in ten languages.

CHS Coordinator Lilianna Peterson provided a walkthrough of the Behavioral Health 360 website. She stated that Behavioral Health 360 is a self-help website created in response to mental health areas with limited to no access to mental health providers. She indicated that this resource platform was developed to assist residents seeking formal help, obtain prevention and early detections, and further allow health care providers to assign assessments to their clients. Peterson and Hamilton addressed questions and comments from the Committee. Discussion ensued.

B. Updates Including the Kane County Land Transfer Navigator Program (Janice Hill, Consultant)

Local Food and Farm Consultant Janice Hill provided updates on the Kane County Land Transfer Navigator Program. She noted that Land Transfer Navigators is a national program developed by the American Farmland Trust, with support from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS). The goal of the program is to increase the transfer of farm and ranch land to a new generation of producers. The program catalyzes practitioners from across the country to support equitable farm and ranch transfers that work for both aspiring and retiring generations. Hill's role over the next four years will be specifically in training and sharing resources to support land trusts and public purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) programs. She indicated that she is the only navigator based in Illinois in Kane County, although she has several counterparts in Michigan and Wisconsin. There are 36 navigators across the country, along with several educators who are part of the program. The goal of the program is to gain education and share experiences between organizations to serve farm families. She explained that there have been several requests from beginner farmers calling about land access, entitlement, and security and land search. She looks forward to the navigator program addressing these requests. Hill noted that the Kane County 2040 plan is operating under three primary ordinances including the Farmland Protection Ordinance, Growing for Kane Ordinance, and the Kane County Stormwater Ordinance regarding Watershed Benefits. Lastly, Hill will be gathering land transfer materials and surveying ten local agriculture professionals on their needs for generational land transfer for eased lands. Much discussion ensued.

C. IL-EATS Program and Workshop Recap (Matt Tansley, Planner)

Chairman Juby suggested to move the IL-EATS Gathering Recap presentation to next month's meeting.

8. New Business

A. 2025 Proclamation in Support of Agriculture in Kane County

RESULT:	APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE
MOVER:	Bill Roth
SECONDER:	Ted Penesis

9. Reports Placed On File

RESULT:	APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT
MOVER:	Bill Roth

10. Executive Session (if needed)

None.

11. Adjournment

RESULT:	APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE
MOVER:	Bill Roth
SECONDER:	Bill Lenert

This meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Rachel Santora
Recording Secretary