



OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

MAELC Board Meeting December 19, 2023 Minnesota Department of Agriculture

The December 19th, 2023 MAELC board meeting was called to order by Senator Aric Putnam at 10:15 a.m.

Members Present: Patrice Bailey, Lindsey Brockberg, Sen. Gary Dahms, Pat Dingels, Nikki Flaaen, Sen. Heather Gustafson*, Michelle Kamenov, Keith Olander (on behalf of Terry Gaalswyk), Steve Olson, Chris Ovrebo, Rep. Kristi Pursell*, Sen. Aric Putnam, Dr. Amy Smith, Rep. Brad Tabke

Members Not Present: Rep. Paul Anderson, Brian Buhr

Quorum was established.

Staff:

Sarah Dornink and Kelsey Biel (student worker)

Guests:

Luke Becker (Robbinsdale Armstrong High School), AJ Bloomer (Robbinsdale Armstrong High School), *Nathan Hanel (Southern Agricultural Center of Excellence), Anja Johnson (Extension Educator, 4-H Plant Science), Sue Knott (MAITC), *Kirstin Koch (Extension Educator, Animal Science), Doris Mold (Sunrise Ag Associates), Keri Sidle (MAITC)

**denotes participants via zoom*

Welcome

Sen. Putnam welcomed everyone to the MAELC board meeting.

Approval of Agenda

Senator Dahms moved to approve the agenda. Olson seconded. Motion prevailed.

Approval of Minutes

Senator Dahms moved to approve the minutes. Brockberg Seconded. Motion prevailed.

Financial Report

Dornink provided an overview of the three budgets.

Operating Budget

Dornink reviewed the Operating Budget. The student worker salary (line 6) increased due to hiring an additional student worker, Meredith Taylor. MAELC will go back to one student worker in Spring 2024 as Biel leaves for student teaching. Taylor is able to utilize work study funds, which saves MAELC money.

The largest expense item was Dornink's trip to Phoenix for the Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE)/National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) conference (line 32). The final expenses for the 2023 Agricultural Education internship (line 40) have come in and funding has been secured for Summer 2024.

MDA/Special Project Budget

Redwood Valley High School underspent their grant, so the remaining dollars were moved to "Funds to be returned to MDA" (line 11). Letters were sent out for those grants whose deadline is December 31, 2023; these grants are from Round 26 (Line 28). All initial 75% payments for new grants previously approved in June (Round 26-2) have been paid out (line 41). Funds were returned to the MDA for unspent grant funds from previous fiscal years (line 56). Going forward, this will change since MAELC and MDA now utilize a reimbursement process for any grant expenses incurred. Dornink submitted a reimbursement report recently; however, those dollars have not yet been received from MDA.

FBM Budget

All of the FBM programs received the first 50% payment for the new Challenge Grants (lines 1-8). One application for the Instructor Capacity Building grant has been received and approved. FBM programs have until September 1, 2024 to apply for these funds. Last fiscal year's Mentor Programs have been wrapped up; FY24 Mentor Program grants have started. All the Professional Development grants have received the first 75% of their funding for this fiscal year (line 37). Under evaluation, Doris Mold received her final payment from the last biennium's evaluation (line 46). The final report for last biennium was submitted to the MDA, and both the final payment and the first payment for the new biennium were received.

Kamenov moved to approve the financial report. Smith Seconded. Motion prevailed.

Grant Committee Report

Common Fund Grant Report

Ovrebø provided a brief overview of the Common Fund applicants. There were five applicants with two recommended for funding.

- **University of Minnesota Foundation (Minnesota 4-H Plant Sciences) – Minnesota 4-H; Nurturing Agriculture Educators for a Sustainable Future (\$20,160)**

Anja Johnson, Extension Educator with 4-H Plant Sciences and Advisor of the State Ambassador program, and Kristin Koch, Extension Educator with Animal Sciences, provided an overview of their grant proposal. This initiative empowers students to explore educational careers by teaching younger peers and cultivating agricultural literacy in grades K-6. Through the establishment of a sustainable statewide program, the goal is to inspire participants to pursue rewarding careers in Agricultural Education as teachers or extension educators. They will also collaborate with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Education department and have participants attend a "Change Lives, Teach Ag" workshop.

**See presentation for more information (included in board packet).*

It was asked if any of the previous participants in the Dakota County pilot program were now in agricultural education. Johnson explained most of those youth participants went into some sort

of agricultural employment. There have been at least four students who are now employed as either Extension Educators or agriculture teachers.

- **University of Minnesota-Agricultural Education** - *Food Security Education: Unlocking individual, program, and community potential – Developing professional development and curriculum for MN AFNR Teachers*

Dr. Laura Rice presented via video as she is currently on maternity leave and unable to attend. This project facilitates innovative professional development for Minnesota agriculture teachers and provides experiential learning opportunities for their students through purposefully designed and curated curriculum to promote food security. In collaboration with the Global TeachAg Network, the work and outreach activities will equip educators to address Food Security at the individual, program and community levels specific to Minnesota.

**See presentation for more information (included in board packet).*

Overbo moved to approve both projects as presented. Brockberg seconded. Motion prevailed unanimously.

**Smith abstained from voting*

Strategic Initiative Grant Report

Brockberg provided an overview of the proposed 2023-2024 Strategic Initiatives grant recipients (Round 27). The Grant Committee reviewed 25 applicants and recommended 17 for funding.

Brockberg moved to approve the Strategic Initiative grant winners as presented. Overbo seconded. Motion prevailed unanimously.

**Olander abstained from voting*

Scholarship Committee Report

Smith provided an overview of the scholarship application process for 2023-2024 Diversity Scholarship. There were three applicants for the November 1, 2023 deadline. The committee reviewed three applications and decided to interview two candidates. Each of the candidates interviewed were awarded \$5,000.

Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Presentation

Sue Knott and Keri Sidle, Education Specialists with Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC), provided an overview of the organization and the resources they offer. MAITC is a public-private partnership between the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the MAITC Foundation; MAELC serves in an ex-officio position on the Foundation board. MAITC's mission is to empower K-12 educators to infuse agriculture in their science, social studies, language arts and nutrition curricula to grow agricultural literacy.

Over 146,000+ students have been impacted through MAITC resources and events. Their materials are also being used in all of Minnesota's 87 counties, and partner with 83% of Minnesota Public Schools Districts to use MAITC resources.

The National Ag in the Classroom conference will be held in Minnesota in June, 2025!

**See presentation for more information (included in board packet).*

Executive Director Report

Dornink thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She shared greetings from MAELC Program Coordinator, Kari Schwab, who is on maternity leave through January 15, 2024. Dornink also thanked Kelsey Biel, one of MAELC's student workers, for the extra assistance during Schwab's maternity leave. Meredith Taylor, MAELC's other student worker, is also helping fill in.

Highlights since the last meeting include hosting the fall Team AgEd meeting and attending the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council Food & Ag Summit, Ag Literacy Networking Group meeting, and the Southern Agriculture Center of Excellence Advisory board meeting. Dornink also attended the Association of Career & Technical Education and National Association of Agricultural Educators joint conference in Phoenix in early December and presented a workshop on Minnesota's statewide AFNR advocacy efforts.

The Agricultural Education Internship program will again be running for the summer of 2024. Interviews are completed and offers have been sent out. Six intern positions are sponsored by funding through MAELC legislative dollars and outside donors. Dornink thanked former MAELC board member and current internship Program Coordinator, Paul Aarsvold, for assisting with interviewing candidates in Schwab's absence.

Looking ahead, the State Teach Ag Results (STAR) statewide committee, which MAELC chairs, will meet in early January to re-enroll Minnesota in the national program for agriculture teacher recruitment and retention. MAELC will share a booth with MAITC at the Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA) conference. Dornink will also present a roundtable during the MSBA conference about Shop Safety with T.J. Brown from South Central College and Tim Barrett from the Minnesota Department of Education.

MAELC and the Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators (MAAE) will be co-hosting six AFNR Legislative Breakfasts around the state on Saturday, January 13. The meetings will be in Brainerd, Brooklyn Park, Detroit Lakes, Mankato, Rosemount and Willmar.

At the end of January, Dornink and Schwab will attend the MAAE Ag Tech Conference in St. Cloud. In addition, MAELC is supporting the FFA Ag Policy Experience (APEX) Conference that runs February 25-27, which includes an educational legislative reception on February 26th and culminates with FFA Day at the Capitol on the 27th.

The MAELC office will be closed over the holidays.

Blueprint Update

Dornink explained the current 2025 AFNR Education Blueprint will be wrapping up in the next year. To prepare for the 2030 AFNR Education Blueprint, she proposed holding listening sessions during the summer of 2024 and holding committee meetings August through October. Dornink explained the role for board members is to attend a listening session, with some also serving on the committees due to their content expertise. Feedback from board members about updating the Blueprint and the specific process was requested.

It was asked how successful the previous listening sessions and Blueprint were. Dornink noted that general knowledge related to agricultural literacy has not changed much, however within other sectors there have been positive outcomes. She suggested having more focused strategies in the next iteration

of the Blueprint will lead to more effective impact. A suggestion was made to hold one of the listening sessions during MAAE Summer Conference to allow more agricultural teachers to attend.

Flaaen moved to proceed with the 2030 AFNR Education Blueprint process. Overbo seconded. Motion prevailed.

Legislative Update

With the 2024 legislative session approaching, legislative members shared their priorities for the upcoming months. Senator Gustafson asked to learn more about the Academy for Sciences and Agriculture (AFSA). Dornink explained MAELC assisted in creating AFSA and offered to facilitate a tour of the school for any interested board members.

2024 Minnesota Perkins Four Year State Plan Public Comment Period

Kamenov explained that Perkins funding is federal money that goes out to each state to support Career and Technical Education programming at both the secondary and post-secondary level. Every four years, state plans must be created or reviewed and submitted to the federal government. Minnesota has decided to renew the current Perkins plan, and the public comment period is open to feedback, questions, and partnerships.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Update

Bailey thanked the House and Senate agriculture committees for their assistance in supporting Minnesota agriculture. The MDA is currently in the process of hiring a director for the Emerging Farmers Office. They will also be hiring additional staff to expand the services provided by that office.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

Farm Business Management Presentation

FBM Overview

Keith Olander, Executive Director of AgCentric, the Minnesota State Northern Agricultural Center of Excellence, presented an overview of Minnesota Farm Business Management (FBM). Seven colleges in the Minnesota State system offer FBM programming.

FBM is a one-on-one, student-led program designed to help a farmer-student with financial and business management. While the faculty instructors serve each farmer-student's unique needs, there is a common curriculum utilized, which is guided by statewide leadership. The curriculum offers several certificates, including Essentials in FBM (30 credits), Applications in FBM (30 credits), Advanced FBM (30 credits), Current Issues in FBM (30 credits), and Commodity Marketing in FBM (50 credits). Each farmer-student is also encouraged to submit their data through Finpack to a statewide database for analysis. This allows for individual comparisons/benchmarking by each farm to see how they are performing compared to their peers. The database received more than 35,000 queries per year

It was asked how unique FBM is to Minnesota, and how many other states offer FBM. Olander noted there are 13 states that offer FBM, but none offer it in the same capacity as Minnesota.

**See presentation for more information (included in board packet).*

FBM Challenge Grant Evaluation Presentation

Doris Mold, who was hired to evaluate the FBM Challenge Grant program, provided an overview of the evaluation final report for the FY2022-FY2023 program.

Mold noted the FBM Challenge Grant has made a very positive impact on Minnesota agriculture and keeping farmers, as well as increasing their operation's stability. All FBM programs met at least five of the eight Challenge Grant Parameters, which was required to receive final funding. For the Targeted Additional Instructor grants, Central Lakes College received both and hired an Urban FBM Instructor and a Specialty Crops Instructor.

An instructor survey was implemented beyond evaluating the grant reports; 54 of 57 invited instructors completed the questionnaire. Instructors rated their overall job experience between good to excellent after implementation of the Challenge Grant.

Mold also completed research related to the value of FBM and the FINBIN database. 120 completed responses were received. The survey was widely shared and included lenders, Minnesota bankers, FSA, FBM educators and students, and extension educators. A majority of respondents indicated they and/or their organization highly value the FINBIN database.

**See presentation for more information (included in board packet).*

Minnesota State & Farm Business Management (FBM) Update

Olander highlighted pieces from the written report. Tina LeBrun has been named the Executive Director of the Southern Center of Agriculture (SACE) as of October 2023. The FBM 70th Anniversary event was held on Monday, September 11th with nearly 200 individuals attending. FBM received a \$50,000 award from the MDA to facilitate enrollment of emerging farmers into FBM. They have also been awarded \$61,000 to lead a project with the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) and 14 Native American farmers to build benchmarks of their on-farm practices.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators (MAAE) Update

Brockberg provided an update about MAAE and the current status of Minnesota AFNR teachers and students. They will be hosting the 2024 Winter AgTech conference January 26-27 in St. Cloud. MAAE's concerns include teacher burnout and teachers leaving the classroom mid-year, the relationship with the Minnesota Department of Education and having the AFNR Specialist position filled, and helping instructors embrace change (in the classroom and in FFA).

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

University of Minnesota – College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) Update

Buhr was unable to attend due to a campus event.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

University Agricultural Education Updates

Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU)

SMSU submitted a written report.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

University of Minnesota-Crookston (UMC)

UMC submitted a written report. Dornink highlighted they have hired a faculty member to take over Mr. Nathan Purrington's teaching assignments as he is looking to retire.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Dr. Smith highlighted the Fall and Winter Invitationals, bringing almost 800 FFA members to campus. They have five teacher candidates who will complete student teaching in Spring 2024.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

Other Business/Announcements

The next board meeting will be held in-person in June 2024.

Dornink recognized the passing of former MAELC board members Rep. John Poston and Mr. Bob Marzolf.

The Minnesota Department of Education will be working with South Central College on updating CTE classroom safety guidelines.

Sen. Putnam adjourned the meeting at 1:58 pm