



OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

MAELC Board Meeting July, 2025 Forest Lake Area High School

The July 2, 2025 MAELC board meeting was called to order by Senator Putnam at 10:02 a.m.

Members Present:

Rep. Paul Anderson, Patrice Bailey*, Sen. Gary Dahms*, Nikki Flaaen, Terry Gaalswyk, Julie Grossman (on behalf of Brian Buhr)*, Sen. Heather Gustafson*, Paul Hansen, *Rep. Rick Hansen, Michelle Kamenov, Rep. Bryan Lawrence, Jeff Lindeman, Sen. Aric Putnam, Eric Sawatzke, Amy Smith, Julie Tesch

Quorum was established.

Staff:

Sarah Dornink (Executive Director), Kari Schwab (Program Coordinator)

Guests:

Sophia Berg (Ridgewater College), Lindsey Brockberg* (MDE), Ashley Crowson* (MN FFA), Jessica Daberkow (MAAE), Cathleen Drilling (UMN), Betsy Jensen* (PEP), Tina LeBrun (Southern Agricultural Center of Excellence), Dr. Mike Martin (UMC), Dr. Steve Massey (FLAS), Mike Miron (Forest Lake Area High School), Keith Olander (AgCentric), Amber Seibert* (MAAE), Courtney Spence* (SACE), Cliff Vrieze*

**attending via Zoom*

Welcome

Dr. Steve Massey, Superintendent of Forest Lake Area Schools, provided a welcome to the board and guests.

Approval of Agenda

Gaalswyk moved to approve the agenda. Tesch seconded. Motion prevailed.

Approval of Minutes

Hansen, P. moved to approve the December 2025 MAELC meeting minutes. Lindeman seconded. Motion prevailed.

Financial Report

Operating Budget

Dornink reported on the operating budget. Meeting expenses were lower than expected in FY25 (lines 7-8) due to transitioning the December board meeting from in-person to virtual because of a snowstorm. The items under Sponsorship (line 30) include the Ag Policy Experience (APEX), FFA State Convention (which included a Teach Ag documentary viewing),

the 2025 Midwest Future Agri-Science Teacher (FAST) Symposium, and the Outstanding Teacher Mentor Award to be given at the MAAE summer conference. All Undergraduate scholarship awards were disbursed (line 36), except \$1,000 due to a student that changed their major halfway through the year. Two Graduate scholarships were awarded (line 38); these are \$5,000 awards with recipients receiving \$3,000 during their student teaching semester and the remaining \$2,000 when they sign a teaching contract. The second disbursement will be encumbered into the next fiscal year.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)/Special Project Budget

Dornink reviewed the MDA/Special Projects Budget, explaining grants are awarded in two programs – Common Fund and Strategic Initiatives. Awardees receive 75% of funding up front and the remaining 25% upon the submission of a final report and invoice. Any grant recipients that underspent their project are noted on the budget sheet. These dollars will not be claimed from the MDA; the total amount to be “returned” to the MDA can be found on line 72.

Farm Business Management (FBM) Budget

This budget includes funds for FBM Challenge Grants, FBM Additional Instructor grants, Mentor Program grants, and FBM evaluation. Dornink submitted a progress report in May to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in order to receive the third payment. The final payment will be requested with the final report (due September 30, 2025). Dornink also completed a site visit with the MDA, and conducted site visits with the seven FBM colleges.

Flaen moved to approve the financial report. Smith seconded. Motion prevailed.

Common Fund Grant Committee Report

Tesch provided an overview of the Common Fund applicants. There were five applicants for the 2024-2025, Round 2 Common Fund grants, with two recommended for funding.

Southern Agricultural Center of Excellence (South Central College) – Farm Transition for FBM Education

The committee recommended partial funding of \$25,000 (original request - \$30,000).

Tina LeBrun, Director of SACE, presented their proposal to expand farm succession education in Minnesota, focusing on underserved farm families and rural communities.

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

Tesch moved to approve the SACE/South Central College Common Fund proposal as presented. Rep. Lawrence seconded.

Roll-Call Vote:

Rep. Paul Anderson - Yes

Patrice Bailey - Yes

Sen. Gary Dahms - Yes

Nikki Flaen - Yes

Terry Gaalswyk - Abstained

Julie Grossman - Yes

Sen. Gustafson - Abstained

Paul Hansen - Yes

Rep. Rick Hansen - Yes

Michelle Kamenov - Yes

Rep. Bryan Lawrence - Yes

Jeff Lindeman - Yes

Sen. Aric Putnam - Yes
Eric Sawatzke - Yes
Amy Smith - Yes
Julie Tesch - Yes

Motion prevailed.

Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators (MAAE) – Meat Processing Curriculum

The committee recommended partial funding of \$49,200 (original requested amount was \$75,000). Jessica Daberkow, MAAE, and Sophia Berg, Ridgewater College, presented their project. The Meat Processing Curriculum Project will develop and pilot a comprehensive meat processing curriculum for Minnesota high school agriculture teachers, emphasizing hands-on meat cutting labs, food safety practices, and careers in meat processing, retail, and hospitality.

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

Julie moved to approve the MAAE Common Fund proposal as presented. Gaalswyk seconded.

Roll-Call Vote:

Rep. Paul Anderson - Yes
Patrice Bailey - Yes
Sen. Gary Dahms - Yes
Nikki Flaaen - Abstained
Terry Gaalswyk - Yes
Julie Grossman - Yes
Sen. Gustafson - Abstained
Paul Hansen - Yes
Rep. Rick Hansen - Yes
Michelle Kamenov - Abstained
Rep. Bryan Lawrence - Yes
Jeff Lindeman - Yes
Sen. Aric Putnam - Yes
Eric Sawatzke - Abstained
Amy Smith - Yes
Julie Tesch – Yes

Motion prevailed.

Grant Committee Report

Flaaen provided an overview of the proposed 2024-2025, Round 2 Strategic Initiatives grant projects (Round 28-2). There were 24 applicants requesting over \$225,869. Nineteen were recommended for funding, totaling the remainder of grant funds available for FY25 (\$114,719).

Flaaen moved to approve the Strategic Initiatives grant winners as presented. Sawatzke seconded.

Roll-Call Vote:

Rep. Paul Anderson - Yes
Patrice Bailey - Yes

Sen. Gary Dahms - Yes
Nikki Flaaen - Yes
Terry Gaalswyk - Yes
Julie Grossman - Abstained
Sen. Gustafson - Abstained
Paul Hansen - Yes
Rep. Rick Hansen - Yes
Michelle Kamenov - Abstained
Rep. Bryan Lawrence - Yes
Jeff Lindeman - Yes
Sen. Aric Putnam - Yes
Eric Sawatzke - Yes
Amy Smith - Yes
Julie Tesch – Yes

Motion prevailed.

Scholarship Committee Report

Smith presented the 2025-2026 Undergraduate and Agricultural Education for All scholarship awardees. It was noted that the scholarship committee has the authority to act, so a formal vote was not required for these awards.

Mentor Program & Professional Development Grant Recipients Presentations

MAELC values mentor programs and professional development opportunities that help retain agricultural education instructors at the secondary, post-secondary and Farm Business Management levels. Support is provided for these efforts through Mentor and Professional Development grants. Recipients of these grants provided an overview of their programming and impact.

Teacher Induction Program (TIP)

Dr. Amy Smith presented about the Minnesota Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Teacher Induction Program, which supports beginning agriculture teachers. AFNR TIP started in 1999 and has supported over 500 new teachers. The program provides monthly professional development and resources to retain teachers.

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

Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators (MAAE) Professional Development Workshops

Jessica Daberkow, Professional Development Coordinator for MAAE, highlighted the support provided to high school agriculture teachers through summer professional development workshops. The topics are chosen based on instructor indicated needs through a yearly survey.

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

Professional Excellence Program (PEP)

Betsey Jensen presented about the Professional Excellence Program, which is designed for new Farm Business Management (FBM) faculty in their first three years of teaching. The program helps new faculty and addresses challenges such as finding new faculty and staying updated on new topics.

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

Postsecondary Instructor Mentoring (PIM) & Professional Development, Farm Business Management (FBM) Professional Development

Keith Olander, AgCentric, and Tina LeBrun, SACE, presented about the professional development and mentorship opportunities available for FBM instructors and post-secondary agriculture, food and natural resource instructors. These include the Fall Conference for FBM instructors, a Post-Secondary Summit and the Post-Secondary Instructor Mentoring (PIM) program.

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

FY26/FY27 Biennium Legislative Funding Proposal Approval

Dornink reviewed the proposed FY26/FY27 Biennium Legislative funding proposal.

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

Flaaen moved to approve the FY26/FY27 Biennium Legislative Funding Proposal as presented. Rep. Lawrence seconded.

Roll-Call Vote:

Rep. Paul Anderson - Yes
Patrice Bailey - Yes
Sen. Gary Dahms - Yes
Nikki Flaaen - Abstained
Terry Gaalswyk - Abstained
Julie Grossman - Yes
Sen. Gustafson - Abstained
Paul Hansen - Yes
Rep. Rick Hansen - Yes
Michelle Kamenov - Yes
Rep. Bryan Lawrence - Yes
Jeff Lindeman - Yes
Sen. Aric Putnam - Yes
Eric Sawatzke - Abstained
Amy Smith - Abstained
Julie Tesch – Yes

Motion prevailed.

2025-2026 (FY26) Operating Budget Approval

Dornink reviewed the proposed 2025-2026 (FY26) operating budget. CFANS will cover the increased cost to salary, however the budget was cut overall by approximately 1.5% (about \$3,700). Most of the remaining categories remain similar to the previous fiscal year's budget.

Sawatzke moved to approve the 2025-2026 budget as presented. Gaalswyk seconded.

Roll-Call Vote:

Rep. Paul Anderson - Yes
Patrice Bailey - Yes
Sen. Gary Dahms - Yes
Nikki Flaaen - Yes
Terry Gaalswyk - Yes

Julie Grossman - Yes
Sen. Gustafson - Abstained
Paul Hansen - Yes
Rep. Rick Hansen - Yes
Michelle Kamenov - Yes
Rep. Bryan Lawrence - Yes
Jeff Lindeman - Yes
Sen. Aric Putnam - Yes
Eric Sawatzke - Yes
Amy Smith - Yes
Julie Tesch - Yes

Motion prevailed.

Executive Director Report

Dornink thanked everyone for attending, including hosts Mike Miron and Forest Lake Area High School. She welcomed new legislative board members Rep. Rick Hansen, Rep. Bryan Lawrence, and returning member Rep. Paul Anderson. Other new members include Julie Tesch representing the FFA Foundation and governor appointees Jeff Lindeman and Paul Hansen. Dornink recognized departing board members Nikki Flaaen and Dr. Amy Smith for their service. Amber Seibert and Dr. Mike Martin will be joining the board in their places.

Highlights since the last meeting included presenting about the 2030 AFNR Blueprint at several events, such as the Minnesota School Board Association and the Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators (MAAE)'s AgTech conferences. It was a busy legislative session with Dornink testifying in both the House and Senate Agriculture committees. MAELC co-hosted AFNR Education Day and helped facilitate the FFA Ag Policy Experience (APEX) conference and FFA Day at the Capitol. Dornink was also selected for the inaugural National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) Influence Program, which focuses on leadership and advocacy. As part of this program, Dornink attended the Association for Career and Technical Education National Policy Seminar in Washington, DC and will attend virtual meetings before the program culminates at the NAAE Annual Conference in December.

Minnesota renewed its commitment to participate in the State Teach Ag Results (STAR) program; MAELC serves as the chair. STAR is a statewide committee dedicated to addressing the agriculture teacher shortage and focuses on recruitment and retention strategies. Agricultural educators were recognized with gifts for first-year teachers, student teachers, and cooperating instructors. The STAR team also coordinated the Midwest Regional Future Agri-Science Teacher (FAST) Symposium for future teachers and hosted the Change Lives: Teach Ag workshop as well as the Agricultural Education signing event held at the FFA State Convention. The Agricultural Education internship, now in its eleventh year, is underway with six students participating this summer. A new Minnesota Teach Ag website (teachagmn.org) was launched in February and MAELC staff continue to work with the Teach Ag communications team, VantagePoint.

MAELC, as the facilitator of Team AgEd, held an in-person meeting in March at the University of Minnesota. The group, which focuses on key issues within agricultural education, concluded its year-long discussion on Teacher Burnout. As a project from this focus, two "VIP Experience" workshops were held at the FFA State Convention to help administrators and school staff better support their AFNR programs. Team AgEd's new targeted focus area for 2025-2026 will be funding. MAELC also presented the 2030 AFNR Education Blueprint, and

members discussed which areas they were most excited about and where they could contribute.

Upcoming events and initiatives include Dornink serving on the University of Minnesota AgEd Faculty Search Committee, working on the Secretary of State's Annual Reporting, and updating board and staff handbooks.

2030 AFNR Education Blueprint Discussion

Dornink reported that MAELC staff have been promoting the 2030 AFNR Education Blueprint to various stakeholder groups. The next steps include staff creating an internal implementation plan and continuing to engage with stakeholders to advance the blueprint's goals. Board members then broke into sector-specific groups, providing written notes that will be used for future implementation planning.

Other Business/Announcements

The next board meeting will be held virtually in September 2025. Upcoming dates of events and activities were highlighted (included on the back of agenda).

Senator Putnam adjourned the meeting at 2:28 p.m.