

Minutes -
UMass Extension Board of Public Overseers Meeting – 7/6/2017

Board Members Present: Matt Barron, John Lee, John Lebeaux, Ted Wales, Jody Jellison, Deb Phillips, Karen Heymann

Board Members Absent: Jack Angley, Michael Lueders, Patricia Bigelow, Ed Davidian, Lynn Griesemer

Observers and Guests: Ed Bourgeois, Mary Jane Bacon, Charles McColough

Extension Staff: Kathy Carroll, Dwayne Breger, Andrea Gulezian, Carrie Sears, Joe Shoenfeld, William Miller

1. Ted Wales agreed to serve as Chair in absence of Chair and Vice Chair and called the meeting to order at 9:05.
2. Minutes of previous meeting were reviewed and approved. New member Karen Heymann introduced herself to the Board.
3. Director Jellison provided a written update on news from UMass Extension and reviewed key items. Ted Wales asked about one of the news items, questioning the commercial availability of new technology under development by Professor John Burand with support from CAFE. Matt Barron asked, in response to another item, whether a press advisory had been released on the recent Environmental Service Award by the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions given to the Massachusetts Keystone Project.
4. Director Jellison provided an overview of UMass Extension's current financial status. This included explanation of a distributed organizational chart and spreadsheet showing expenditures by funding stream. USDA Smith-Lever formula funds were discussed with attention to the 25% decline in actual buying power to these funds over 20 years. Matt Barron noted the increased number of farms in Massachusetts in the last two agricultural censuses and inquired whether that had resulted in any increase in funding. Joe Shoenfeld responded with the information that the formula included acreage in farming as a factor but not numbers of farms and thus, since the censuses had not indicated an increase in farmer acreage, no increase in this type of funding. Jody Jellison discussed the loss of buying power from the federal dollars along with the historic loss of county funding and the resultant significant loss in Extension's capacity in Massachusetts.

Deb Phillips inquired about potential additional sources of revenue. In response, Jody Jellison indicated that other Extension services in other states that have their own line item in the state budget tend to get more funding that can support core capacity. The substitute here has been grants and contracts which, while very important, has to be balanced against ongoing core priorities. Ms. Phillips suggested that health insurance companies may offer potential for funding since they recognize the value of healthy eating.

Ted Wales stated that the state may be short-sighted in not funding outreach that can help citizens become better stewards of the state. Mr. Wales also voiced his discouragement at the status of the Waltham property and the continuing lack of funding authorized in the 2014 Environmental Bond. Mr. Barron asked what the status of that funding was and was told by Dr. Jellison that there is no news. Mr. Wales told the group that if the new proposed facility at Waltham existed, Extension would have a bigger state presence and would help Extension generate interest and funding. He asserted that Extension is not as visible as it ought to be.

5. Extension staff and faculty presented program news from initiatives in animal science, nutrition education, agriculture and commercial horticulture, clean energy, on-farm food safety and the 4-H summer academies.
6. The Board and staff conducting a wide-ranging conversation. It ranged from the work of UMass Amherst Auxiliary Services, to a possible visit by our congressional delegation. It also returned to concerns about the Waltham project. Dr. Jellison told the Board that while the University supports the project, the funding for the project does not exist without an allocation from the state based on the Bond. She also indicated that were the project to be funded and move ahead, that staffing and operational costs for the new facility would also be challenging. Karen Heymann indicated the difficulty of one administration funding a Bond item from a previous administration. In response to a concern, Joe Shoenfeld indicated that the property could not be sold but if not used by UMass would transfer to the City of Waltham, per the terms of the original bequest. Jody Jellison also responded that we are proud of the vital community organizations currently utilizing the site and indicated that they are passionate advocates for continued use.
7. Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.