

**UMass Extension Board of Public Overseers  
UMass Collaborative Service Center**

**Meeting notes  
January 17, 2017**

**Present:**

**Members:** John Lebeaux, Mike Lueders, Ted Wales, Jack Angley, Jody Jellison, Bill King, John Lee

**Guests:**

Mary Jane Bacon, Bill Miller, Joe Shoenfeld, Kathy Carroll, Christine Hatch, Dwayne Breger, River Strong, Charles McColough, Linda Horn, Pat Vittum

**Absent:** Lynn Griesemer, Ed Davidian, Pat Bigelow

Jack Angley called the meeting to order at 9:10.

Jody Jellison shared news from her office. She discussed the new incoming Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, Tricia Serio. She noted that Steve Goodwin has been very helpful and has a strong understanding of the role of outreach in the college portfolio and that she is hopeful that Dean Serio will share his background and also value the contributions of Extension and the many benefits that agriculture bring to the state and to the college. While Serio is expected to make great contributions to the college, Jody also mentioned that she hasn't had experience at a Land Grant university before and will have an educational process to go through. Jody also mentioned that other CNS leaders are stepping down and that this time of transition is also a time of opportunity for Extension. Serio is expected on campus full time in August.

Mike Lueders voiced his assumption that BOPO will need to form a strategy for communication with the new dean and actively reach out and perhaps invite her to attend a meeting.

Jody Jellison explained that she believes the dean's initial focus will likely be on undergraduate education, to which Mike responded that "we don't need to be first as long as we're not left out." Jody responded by telling the Board members that their continuing involvement with all levels of the University is to Extension's advantage. "It would be wonderful if this time next year Dean Serio were to attend a board meeting.

Dr. Jellison updated the Board on the status of the search for a new director of the Cranberry Station. Jody said she is hopeful that we will have someone in place for coming growing season. Commissioner John Lebeaux asked whether a change in organizational structure is reflected in the Cranberry Station director position becoming a direct report to the director of CAFE. Jody responded that reporting lines had been murky and this brings the Cranberry Station closer into the CAFE fold versus residing at the Dean's level.

Jody mentioned the award to Pat Vittum recently made by the U.S. Golf Association for her many years of service to the golf industry. Ted Wales told the group that he considers Pat Vittum to be the reason he has made his career choice, ever since he attended UMass Winter School for turf managers thirty years before. Jody completed her report by discussing the budget cuts on the horizon. The budget cuts to CNS are clear but the impact on Extension is not yet clear though she made clear that even if there are no direct impacts, there certainly will be indirect ones. She voiced her thoughts that it was too early to know how the national political situation will play out and affect funding from USDA-NIFA.

In response to her request for questions, Jack Angley asked Jody whether the delays in the Waltham project are financial or philosophical and asked for a clarification of its status. Jody responded that any action to encourage the state executive branch to release funding for the project resides within the University at the Chancellor's level. At such a high-stakes financial time, prioritization is difficult for a project like this. Angley responded that Waltham is a "great place" for Extension. Jellison agreed that it is a great opportunity but not an inexpensive one.

John Lebeaux told the Board that he has made the Secretary aware of the University interest in moving forward on the project. He seconded the concern with prioritization since the Secretary's level of possible appropriation is much lower than all the things they really want to do. He reported that they remain supportive of concepts, waiting to see.

Dwayne Breger, Director of the Clean Energy Extension, introduced himself to the Board and made, along with River Strong, an introductory presentation on the work and plans of their program.

Christine Hatch, Extension faculty member in Geosciences, updated the Board on the progress of the Riversmart Communities project since her initial presentation to the Board in 2014. She distributed a copy of their book for the Board to review.

Kathy Cunningham and Amy Branham, both community and policy specialists for the Extension Nutrition Education Program, described their work.

Linda Horn, assistant director in the Extension 4-H Youth Development Program, reported on news from that program. She discussed the nature of the skills kids learn in 4-H no matter what the subject matter of their projects such as learning skills for meetings, working with people. Linda also mentioned the new system of program assistants acting as club liaisons, which she reported is becoming helpful helping retaining volunteers. She also described the new "Your Future Starts Now" program in Springfield. Charlie McColough, chair of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts 4-H Foundation, added a few words.

Kathy Carroll presented highlights and answered questions from Extension's agriculture and landscape programs, mentioning the Phosphorous Symposium, Green School, and Vegetable Winter School.

Jody mentioned some of the current work of Extension faculty members. She also described the 2016 Summer Scholars program. John Lee, member of the Board of the Mass. Society for Promoting Agriculture (MSPA), one of the two external funders of the program, talked about the private-public partnership and its benefits. Jody said that the student participants need to understand the outside groups supporting them, that the partnerships with both the Massachusetts Grange and the MSPA are very important.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00.