

MINUTES
LINN COUNTY FOOD SYSTEMS COUNCIL
Thursday, March 28, 2025

The Linn County Food Systems Council meeting was called to order at 1:04 PM at the ISU Extension and Outreach Office, 1770 Boyson Rd, Hiawatha, IA 52233.

PRESENT: Kim Guardado-HACAP
Stephanie Schrader-City of Cedar Rapids
Hailee Sandberg- ISU Extension
Drew Erickson- Rodale Institute
Gina Mobley- New Pioneer
Aaron Tarchinski-Horizons
Emmaly Renshaw- Iowa Valley RC & D
Sarah Blais- NewBo City Market

ABSENT: Emily Qual- At Large
Brittany Rohling- Grand Living
Jacqueline Montoya- LCPH
Karla Hogan- CRCSD
Kelly Ridenour Giruato- United Way
Aaron Brewer-Prairie Woods
Eva Donnelly- ISU Extension
Mike Tertinger- Senior Planner

OTHERS

PRESENT: Andrew Abrogast

STAFF: Amy Speed, Recording Secretary

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Sandberg seconded by Renshaw, to approve the February 27, 2025 minutes. All members present voted yes.

Public Comments:

None

Budget Update:

Speed stated the Council's budget is \$6,822.10, with \$1,359.34 pending to New Pioneer for the Symposium catering for a new total of \$5,462.76. Renshaw will have invoices to submit for \$150.00 for Matthew 25 for breakfast for the Symposium and an additional invoice for the translation costs for the Symposium. Erickson commented that he wants to continue doing the smaller events for impact.

New Business:

2025 Local Food Symposium Wrap-Up:

There were 80 registered for the event. Comments of good food and turnout and that a lot of contacts were made. Renshaw will type up the sticky wall comments and send it out with the link to an exit survey. Most of the Council present agreed that a half-day event was best and Schrader wonders if next year we can record it and put it on the website. Mobley added that the Council should take the information from the sticky wall and use that to focus on speakers for next year to take care of those concerns/questions. Sandberg liked that this event was more technical than last year's, which was more communicative.

Comments were made regarding next year's event. Renshaw thinks the public should pre-register for sessions. Erickson, Renshaw and Guardado focused on starting the planning earlier (October) and also holding the event in February.

2025 Ideas:

5 year Strategic/Policy Plan:

This was tabled until next meeting.

Continue with RFP Proposal?

This was tabled until next meeting.

Committee Assignment/Budget/Timeline:

This was tabled until next meeting.

Celebration of Agriculture Event Wrap-Up:

Erickson spoke about the event. Council members that sat at the table were Erickson, Blais and Ridenour-Giruato (each with a +1) and the other spots were filled with two 4-H students from the community. Good conversation was generated. Blais talked about grants with a student who is trying to cattle farm with new practices. Discussion was had about lack of participation at the table from Council members but Sandberg said it was hard to represent the Council, as her and other members also have a table with their employer so they can't be at both but were at the event. There was talk of sponsoring a special invite table with non-traditional farmers for next year. Guardado asked, "What do we want our role to be as a FSC member?" Andrew McCrea was the Keynote speaker of the event and was well-received.

Another discussion was had asking about nametags or anything branded that the Council could purchase for when they are doing events. Council will discuss with Tertinger.

Old Business:

FARE Grant Update:

No news.

FARE Grant Video Project Update:

Iowa Big is still finishing up.

Committee Updates:

None.

Open Discussion:

Renshaw spoke on the Iowa Food System Coalition and wanted to know if anyone was interested in being a liaison for the policy work portion. Erickson requested the Council to think it over and bring any questions to the next meeting.

Blais spoke of her project that she is involved in with Metro High School and National Geographic. The project is aimed to tell the stories that haven't been told. The group has chosen to work on how food systems work and will be partnering with local non-profit organizations. National Geographic will be funding micro-grants. Schrader asked if they could share their experience with the Council.

Next Meeting:

April 24, 2025- LCPH – Erickson relayed that they will be focusing on the 5-year strategy, grants, education agenda and how to spend the rest of the budget for this fiscal year.

Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 1:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Speed", written over a horizontal line.

Amy Speed, Recording Secretary

Approved,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Drew Erickson", written over a horizontal line.

Drew Erickson, Chair