

AMC Extension Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 29, 2006
7:15 A.M.
Wabasha I and II
Radisson Hotel, St. Paul, MN.

Commissioners Present: Bruce Kubicek, Nancy Schouweiler, Loren Tusa, Dick Larson, Charlie Woehler, John Baerg, Tom Anderson, Lenore Johnson, Marcia Ward, Dick Mattson, Victoria Reinhardt, Velma Oakland, Bob Gustafson, John Baker, David Benson, Lenore Johnson, Sharon Bring, Keith Nelson, Stephanie Miranowski, Dennis Hegberg, Marcia Ward

Guests: Bev Durgan, Jeanne Markell, Dave Werner, Lee Raeth, Tom Klein
AMC Liaison: Toni Smith

Meeting Called To Order:

Commissioner Kubicek, AMC Extension Committee chair called the meeting to order and asked for any additions to the agenda.

Commissioner Gustafson moved and Commissioner Larson seconded motion to accept the minutes from the February 1, 2006 AMC Extension Committee meeting held in St. Cloud, MN.
Motion Passed.

MOA Discussion:

Commissioner Kubicek called on Commissioner Reinhardt to introduce the discussion about the inflationary adjustment to the new MOA between Minnesota Counties and the University of Minnesota Extension Service. She outlined key points from the February 1, 2006 AMC Extension committee discussion about the MOA and then she called on Tom Klein, University of Minnesota finance officer to outline the 2007 proposal.

Tom Klein's Comments:

Principles adhered to in the proposal:

- The underlying information that measures the inflationary increase should be easily tracked and monitored by all parties
- The inflationary increase should not benefit either party, that is, the increase should cover increased costs and not result in a "profit" for either party or a shifting of costs from one party to the other.
- Both parties will do their best to control costs in a manner that is consistent with accomplishing the work and working within the MOA
- The inflation factor should be used statewide. There are precedents in statewide agreements with AFSCME and the trades.

Inflation Factors Considered:

They researched various agreements and inflation indicators looking for an inflation indicator that could be used for 2007 and in future years. These are the potential factors that were looked at. (Summarized in the spreadsheet handout)

- Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- County property values and levy rates for 2004 and 2005
- Statewide AFSCME contract increases and individual county agreements with employees. (i.e. Pine, Traverse, Stearns, Jackson, Goodhue)
- Individual county wage and salary increases as reported in board minutes and underlying documents (i.e. McLeod, Scott, Nobles, Martin, Fillmore, Cottonwood, Steele, Wadena, etc)
- Stanton Group Compensation Survey for 2003, 2004 and 2005 that included U of M, St. Louis County, Olmsted County, Washington County, Anoka County, Scott County and various municipalities in the metro area
- University of Minnesota compensation changes 2003, 2004 and 2005 and the projected 2006-07 increase.

Recommendation

It is difficult to make a straight comparison across groups and point to a directly comparable group for local extension educators. Several factors are often used in adjusting compensation including steps, Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) and changes in fringe benefits that may be paid by the employer or the employee.

Based on this review of different compensation increases, an inflation factor of three percent (3.0%) is recommended for 2007. This is within the range of settlements across various groups in Minnesota and is the projected increase for comparable U of M employees in 2006-2007.

Commissioner Reinhardt moved to accept 3% increase for the 2007 MOA. Commissioner Shouweiler seconded motion. **MOA motion passed** after group discussion on:

- What counties were giving in inflationary increases and discussion about COLA and step systems that increase the final number. The varying levels of increases around the state were discussed by commissioners.
- Questions around other contracts at the U – what are they settling for? (2.8 to 3.5% - There are 18 different trades that reach agreement with the University)
- Discussion about how the 3% is the average on employee increases. Not everyone will get 3%. It is based upon merit. Clarification that this is a contract with the University and all MOA's will have an increase of 3%. There will not be negotiation with counties on varying increases.

Open Dialogue:

Commissioner Kubicek asked the committee members to spend the next 40 minutes sharing their perspectives on Extension issues that were of the greatest concern to them. Following are comments from Commissioners:

- Ongoing challenge for their committee to look at regional programs and have board members understand what they are getting besides local programming.
- Happy to see in the minutes from the last meeting that commissioners talked about the increased need for cultural diversity programming. Strong need to tailor programs to meet the needs of an increasing diverse population in both rural and urban areas of MN.

- Extension committee members need to attend more programs.....some of the programs they have never seen. Discussion then evolved into how Extension program showcases may assist committee members in understanding the breadth of Extension programs.
- Concern over the home study group lessons in NW MN. Dean Bev Durgan stated that she was aware that there were some difficulties and she was putting a small group together to set up what will be offered next year. “We will have videos for these lessons done this summer and we will not advertise the programs if we do not have them available in the regional offices.”
- A commissioner attended the metro Extension program sampler and thought they were great. “It’s really interesting to see what is out there in programming.” You may want to consider video taping the showcases and then exchanging them with county committees.
- Commissioner Larson thanked Commissioner Mattson for going through the effort of bringing a map of MN with all the applicants for the AMC 4-H Youth Leadership award. The group gave Commissioner Mattson a round of applause and asked that the map be on display at the evening banquet.
- Commissioner Ward stated that they were doing a community survey to see what people want from Extension. This will help them understand how they will staff locally.
- Jeanne Markell talked about how Extension is looking for additional funders. Part of the goal with the showcases is to invite potential partners who may see a link for future partnerships.
- There are problems with some of our committees not being too enthusiastic. We need a diverse group that is more enthusiastic.
- “Annie’s Project” in NW MN conducted by Bill Craig was quite an eye opener. Very helpful.
- “We have an excellent Extension committee who drive distances for the meeting. I have a concern from a recent meeting. We were looking at the impact of the food and nutrition program. We have 2 to 2 ½ NEA’s and they only touched 1000 children. In our county we need to increase that number. We have many kids in need. We need to target our resources and build cooperative agreements with schools.” Another commissioner commented, “How do we convince USDA that this program is needed by more than low income people.” Tom Klein commented that the program is targeted at food stamp eligible people but others may participate if the target audience is being served. “If statistics don’t show that we are meeting primary audience first we run into trouble with USDA.” Dean Bev Durgan stated that they are working to expand partnerships. University of MN professor, Dr. Al Levine has received a grant for obesity education and Dr. Durgan is meeting with him today to look at how they may collaborate with Extension and CFANS- College of Food, Agriculture and National Resources. One of the challenges is that colleges don’t think about youth as an audience.
- Quality as well as numbers with nutrition education is important. The NEA’s spend quite a bit of time with clients before they can be counted in their numbers.
- Is the food and nutrition program tied to the school lunch programs? I believe that 80% of the kids in some schools in my district qualify for the school lunch program. Need to partner and get those numbers up.
- The NEA’s in our area work with medical centers and dentists. It is a good place to showcase their work.

- Day at the Capitol was held recently and 60 people attended the workshop on “Public Value” and then the next day they visited legislators. Commissioner Kubicek recommended that the public value workshop would be a good topic for a future meeting.
- One Commissioner stated that his committee went out and asked people about Extension and only one person knew about it.....we need to let more people know about the good programs. Dean Durgan stated that there is an issue with branding.....do you brand Extension or University of Minnesota. She asked the group to share their thoughts about the issue. There may be people who know of the program but they affiliate it with the University but not University of MN Extension Service.
- Older folks talk about Extension and they don’t always associate it with the University.
- Extension needs to look at the U marketing plan....how can Extension help recruit MN kids to go to school in MN.....in our area of the state along the Mississippi River we are losing kids to WI. schools.....we should keep them in MN.

AMC 4-H Community Youth Leadership Awards:

Toni Smith reported on the judging process for the awards. Commissioner Mattson showed the map he made marking all applicants across the state. Two clubs will receive awards at the banquet. Polk County Willing Workers for their barn moving project and Dakota County for their senior center chair project. Toni encouraged committee members to welcome the club participants because it can be a bit overwhelming to walk into the Radisson banquet area with 300 commissioners.

Dick Larson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by John Baker. Motion passed – meeting adjourned.

Minutes by Toni Smith
Extension Liaison to AMC