

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE:           EXTENSION SERVICE**

**DATE:                   JULY 30, 2008**

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<b>COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>
SUPERVISORS    THOMAS	REPRESENTING CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:
MERLINO	JAMES SEELEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
GIRARD	CINDY DAVIS, FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR
SIMMES	FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
STRAINER	HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND
	FISCAL SERVICES
	JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
	JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Thomas called the meeting of the Extension Service Committee to order at 10:32 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2007 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to James Seeley, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension, who introduced Cindy Davis, Financial Administrator for Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Mr. Seeley presented the Proposed 2009 Financial Plan B and Budget Worksheet which were distributed to Committee members. A copy of same is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Seeley stated that Plan A was not acceptable as it included a 5% salary increase and requests to increase several part-time positions to full-time. Therefore, he said, Plan B was being presented which included only a 3% salary increase, reflecting a more earnest attempt to contain costs.

Commencing with the review of the Proposed 2009 Budget, Mr. Seeley stated the highlights and accomplishments of Cornell's programs. The primary goal, he said, had been to improve programs based on community needs and increase participation in offerings such as the Bike Safety Program given in area schools; Parenting programs with more public recognition in the press and the Eat Smart New York Program, which, he noted, would be aired on WMHT TV.

Mr. Seeley apprised that the 2009 Extension Service (A.8750) budget request was \$476,375, as compared to 2008 appropriations of \$462,500, an increase of \$13,875.

Reviewing major changes, Mr. Seeley addressed Support staff upgrades and changes which included increasing the Financial Administrator from .8 to 1.0 FTE (Full Time Employment), increasing one Administrative Assistant from .63 to 1.0 FTE, and eliminating the second .63 Administrative Assistant position, which resulted in a net loss of .2 FTE in support staff, as one retiree position would not be filled.

He reported other major changes which included upgrades to technology, communications and printed materials, collaboration with surrounding counties to develop programs and funding streams, and development of working relationships with other County Departments such as Soil & Water, and the Department of Parks, Recreation & Railroad.

Mr. Seeley expounded that one of the salary justifications included increasing the Financial Administrator to full-time and he asserted that this position would have increased responsibilities including grant coordination and records management. He added that the increase to full-time for the Administrative Assistant would include more programmatic work along with the daily office tasks.

Regarding operating expenses, Mr. Seeley maintained the goal would be to contain costs. Other goals, he stated, would be for increased employee development and mandatory Cornell training for professional staff. Mr. Seeley added that because the 4-H Ride Program would be uninsured for 2009, he planned to use the \$2,500 allocation toward 4-H Youth Leadership Programs.

Mr. Seeley apprised that a direct (fiscal) benefit of Cornell Cooperative Extension was the fact that fringe benefits were paid for by Cornell University, at a rate of approximately 45.5 %.

Another Program goal, he said, was to maximize opportunities for grants and contracts. He said he was recently apprised of a \$13,000 special Legislative Grant from Senator Little's office, which would be used to develop agricultural tourism programs in Warren County.

Concluding his presentation, Mr. Seeley advised that he and Ms. Davis would answer any questions from the Committee regarding the Budget request.

Mr. Payne inquired about revenues for 2008 in comparison to what was budgeted for 2009 and Ms. Davis responded that the numbers were on track.

Mr. Seeley stated that their educator was seeking every opportunity for grant funding and had recently received a \$2,000 grant from the Ben Snow Trust Foundation for the 4H programs.

Mr. Payne noted \$64,000 in transfers from fund balances and inquired about their status. Ms. Davis replied that the fund balance was substantial with approximately \$150,000 reserved in various designated accounts and nearly \$60,000 in the general fund balance, which was approximately equal to one month of operating expenses. She added that she hoped to maintain these figures.

Mr. Girard asked if the Cornell Cooperative Education Budget operated separately from the County Budget and Ms. Davis replied affirmatively. Responding to a second question, Ms. Davis said she did not know the surplus figure for 2008; however, she noted, the Program had never experienced a deficit.

Mr. Thomas asked if expenses for the Skye Farm Camp at Schroon River was included in the Budget request and Ms. Davis replied in the negative. Mr. Seeley apprised that over 100 children from Warren County were enrolled in the Skye Farm Program this year, which was a one week overnight camp. He said that Anne Kokosa, Family & Consumer Science Issues Leader, had selected the participants, a process which had included reviewing recommendations from school personnel, with consideration given for financial need, to determine overall ability to benefit.

Referring to page four of the 2009 Proposed Budget Worksheet, Mr. Girard asked for an explanation of the significant difference in figures for Salary and Wages/Association in 2007 as compared to 2008. Ms. Davis explained that the program was understaffed in 2007, and the Executive Director had retired in December of 2006. The 2008 figure reflected an Executive Director on staff and a higher number of staff overall, with regular salary increases, she added.

Mr. Thomas summarized that the Association had undergone a reorganization last year and had added staff. He commended Mr. Seeley for diligently pursuing grant funding as those efforts were not fully carried out in the past. Mr. Seeley stated that he planned to attend grant writing workshops and would also encourage his staff to attend. Mr. Strainer noted a valuable grant writing training course was to be held on August 6, 2008 at Skidmore College.

Mr. Girard asked Mr. Seeley if he was becoming acclimated to his new position and Mr. Seeley replied affirmatively. He added that in addition to restructuring and reorganizing the office, job descriptions had been changed and a new organizational chart completed. Mr. Seeley commended the outstanding staff, educators, and support staff working in connection with the program for their efforts.

Ms. Davis noted the 4-H Fair would be held on Saturday, August 2nd.

Mr. Seeley reported that the 2009 Youth Program 4-H Camp (A.7310) budget request was \$34,500 as compared to 2008 appropriations of \$31,500, an increase of \$3,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Ms. Simmes and carried unanimously to approve the 2009 Budget requests for both Extension Service (A.8750) and the Youth Program 4-H Camp (A.7310) and forward same to the Budget Committee for consideration. *Copies of the Budget Summary Sheets are on file with the minutes.*

As there was no further business to come before the Extension Service Committee, on motion made by Mr. Strainer and seconded by Mr. Girard, Mr. Thomas adjourned the meeting at 10:54 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist