



CSU Extension Boulder County  
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
September 9, 2025

Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM via Teams.

**Board Members:**

Present: Hallie Adams, Rob Alexander, Donna Becker, Mary Mulry, and Kirsten Ruiz

Absent: Nick Cappello and Jay Ruggeri Quorum present? Yes

**Boulder County Extension Staff:**

Eric Hammond, Emma Dhimitri were in attendance.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Motion: Donna motioned the minutes of the Extension Advisory Board June 3, 2025, meeting be approved as presented, Kirsten seconded that motion; all were in favor.

**Conversation with Community Health:**

Emma serves as the Community Health Specialist for Boulder County Extension, where she connects public health priorities with community-based education. It involves gathering science-based information on health and well-being and sharing it with the local community through hands-on, educational programs. Acting as a bridge between Public Health, Parks and Open Space, and local organizations, she focuses on supporting underserved families with resources that improve food access, youth mental health, and community connections.

**Program Origins:** Role created following the 2019 Boulder County Community Needs Assessment, which identified the need for nutrition education, food access support, and youth mental health programming (specially for underserved and marginalized communities).

**Current Programming:**

• **Nutrition & Cooking Programs:**

- Running youth programs on reading nutrition labels, cooking basics, cooking for specific diets/needs and making healthy food choices.
- Co-creating meal planning on a budget curriculum to be passed out throughout the state.
- Delivering specialized workshops for parents and recovery communities.
- Partnering with the Boulder County Farmers Markets to lead youth cooking classes and family nights that encourage families on SNAP/WIC to engage with local food resources.
- Largest project is the Preschool Cooking Program within the Farm to Early Childhood Education initiative, now reaching more than 1,000 children each year with hands-on produce tastings. Teacher feedback shows increased confidence in using fresh produce and integrating cooking into curriculum.

- **Outdoor Education & Engagement:**

- Ongoing partnership with Boulder County Parks & Open Space to co-create culturally relevant outdoor programs for underrepresented communities. Serves on the Community Engagement Team.
- After-school programming with Longmont Youth Center blends health, nature, and mindfulness activities.
- Branch Out, an eight-week program that integrates outdoor experiences with journaling and mindfulness to support youth mental health.
- Pilot rock-climbing program introduced with plans for a five-year funded expansion.
- Additional programs include nature journaling for seniors, family hikes, and annual celebration events.
- Other health topics programming includes sex education and being healthy relationships with youth, personal hygiene, eco-anxiety, mindfulness/stress relief, weightlifting, and balance/fall prevention.

- **This work matters:**

- 1550 participants in 2024 at the Longmont Youth Center and in Preschool Cooking programs
- Collaboration with CSU researchers to measure mental health impacts of nature programs and assist local nonprofits with evaluation tools.
- Bridge between Public Health and Parks and Open Space
- Facilitate community and resource connections
- Strengthening health networks across the Front Range and the state

**Discussion Points:**

- Board members praised the scope and impact, describing the reach as “hugely impactful.”
- Questions were raised about teacher receptivity and school participation; Emma emphasized opt-in process through public health channels and importance of flexibility.
- Board members explored volunteer involvement; Emma explained that while volunteers can be helpful, supervision and management create additional workload.
- Program demand exceeds current capacity; a formalized, shareable curriculum is being developed to allow schools to use materials independently.
- Additional staffing or intern support is a key need to sustain and expand program reach.
- Consensus emerged that continued data collection and evaluation are crucial for building the case for additional staffing and funding support.
- Discussion followed on the importance of strengthening the board’s advocacy role for program resources and staff support, especially for community health initiatives.

**Extension Advisory Board Updates:**

- A. Election of new chair. The board held an official vote to confirm Rob Alexander as Chair, which passed unanimously.

**Director’s Update:**

*Parks and Open Space Reorganization*

- Parks and Open Space Director, Therese Glowacki, will retire in December. Agricultural Division Manager, Mike Foster, last day is imminent; recruitment will begin soon.

*Extension program updates*

- Boulder County Fair was successful event with high participation, few conflicts, and positive youth experiences.
- Boulder County CSU Extension webpage will soon transition to a new CSU Learner Front Door format; board feedback will be requested after launch.

- Community and Demonstration Gardens: Issues with overuse of water addressed; enforcement applied consistently, resulting in one plot holder being removed for the next season.

#### *Extension budget*

- County seeking \$13M in cuts out of the General fund for 2026, Extension so far largely unaffected except for reduced food and travel budgets.

### **Open Discussion:**

#### **A. Board Role in Hiring Processes**

- Members debated whether to request involvement in the selection process for the new Parks and Open Space director and agricultural division manager.
- Some members felt the board should advocate for a seat at the table to ensure Extension's needs are represented.
- Others suggested Extension staff are best positioned to provide direct programmatic input.
- Agreement reached to gather more information before making a formal request.

#### **B. Board Recruitment**

- 3 new applicants have applied for a CSU Extension Advisory board seat. Rob interviewed them and recommended that they join the board. Appointments will be at the next County Commissioners' business meeting.
- Discussion included forming a subcommittee to review future applications for open board seats and provide recommendations to county commissioners.
- The board shall consist of at least seven but not more than twelve appointed members. The Director of Extension may appoint up to six members, all other members of the board shall be appointed by the Board of County Commissions (a total of six).

#### **C. Board Functionality and Effectiveness**

- Earlier, a Google document was sent out asking Board members to reflect on board effectiveness and functionality, and some feedback had already been submitted. It was suggested that compiling common themes to support a structured discussion would be helpful for future meetings.

#### **D. Board Purpose and Role in Advocacy**

- Question came up on how the board can effectively advise the County Commissioners and advocate for Extension, emphasizing this as a priority issue.
- Members noted that historically the Board of County Commissioners has rarely requested advice directly from the advisory board. The board must be proactive in identifying relevant issues where their input would be useful.
- The board's greatest opportunity for impact may lie in advocating for Extension staff and their needs. The director has a voice as the liaison to Extension programs and staff and that his insights should guide the board in identifying advocacy opportunities. Also emphasized was the importance of allowing staff to speak for themselves when appropriate.
- Board members discussed that effective advocacy with County Commissioners should be grounded in demonstrating alignment between Extension work and county strategic priorities. Highlighting these connections could strengthen the county's perception of Extension's value and impact.
- The board acknowledged prior success in advocating Boulder County at the state Extension office, noting this had been effective and should continue as a complementary strategy. The statewide Extension leadership is now more open to hearing feedback, creating new opportunities for board advocacy at multiple levels.

E. December Board Meeting

- Dena will create a doodle poll for this meeting.

**Old Business:**

Review of board bylaws and discussion of board functionality and effectiveness were tabled for a future meeting.

**The meeting adjourned**

Minutes prepared by Dena.

[2024-2026 Boulder County Commissioners' Strategic Priorities](#): Economic Security and Social Stability, Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship, and Good Governance.