

Woodbury County Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: February 23, 2026

Time: 5:00 PM

Location: Board of Supervisors' Meeting Room, Basement, Woodbury County Courthouse, 620 Douglas Street, Sioux City, IA

MEETING AUDIO:

For specific content of this meeting, refer to the recorded video on the Woodbury County Zoning Commission "Committee Page" on the Woodbury County website:

- County Website Link:
 - o https://www.woodburycountyiowa.gov/committees/zoning_commission/
- YouTube Direct Link:
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2gHjWrlH9o>

Attendees

- **Commissioners Present:** Chris Zellmer Zant – Chair, Tom Bride – Vice Chair, Jeff Hanson, Corey Meister, Steve Corey (Remotely)
- **Board of Supervisors Liaison(s):** Kent Carper
- **Staff Present:** Dan Priestley – Zoning Coordinator
- **Public Attendees:** Amanda Goodenow (Remotely)

Call to Order

The Woodbury County Zoning Commission meeting was called to order by Chair Christine Zellmer Zant at approximately 5:00 PM on January 26, 2026. The Chair noted that the meeting would be audio taped, and minutes prepared for all parties. Attendees were asked to turn off cell phones or set them to vibrate and to complete the attendance sheet. The Chair reviewed the Commission's procedures for the meeting, including handling of agenda items, public hearings, staff reports, applicant presentations, public comments (requiring speakers to state name and address at the microphone, avoid repetitious comments, and remain respectful), closing statements, closing of hearings by motion and vote, deliberation, and disclosure of any ex parte communications prior to deliberation.

Roll Call

Chair Christine Zellmer Zant conducted a roll call. Each Commissioner introduced themselves.

Public Comment on Matters Not on the Agenda

No public comments were received on matters not listed on the agenda, either in person or via phone.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the previous meetings on December 22, 2025, and January 26, 2026.

- For the December 22, 2025, minutes: Commissioner Jeff Hanson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tom Bride. The vote was taken, with all in favor saying "aye" (Commissioners Zellmer Zant, Bride, Hanson, and Corey). Commissioner Corey Meister abstained, as he was absent from that meeting. No one opposed. The motion passed with a vote of 4-0-1 (4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 abstention).
- For the January 26, 2026, minutes: Commissioner Corey Meister made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jeff Hanson. The vote was taken, with all in favor saying "aye" (Commissioners Zellmer Zant, Meister, and Hanson). Commissioners Tom Bride and Steve Corey abstained, as they were absent from that meeting. No one opposed. The motion passed with a vote of 3-0-2 (3 ayes, 0 nays, 2 abstentions).

Review of Conditional Use Permit Application: City of Merville Water System Improvement Project, Including Construction of a Water Treatment Plant, a 400,000 Gallon Water Storage Tower

Approximately 70 Feet Above Grade (and Subject to Changes Throughout the Review Process), and Two New Wells on Parcel #894432400024.

Chair Christine Zellmer Zant commenced with the conditional use permit review.

Zoning Coordinator Daniel Priestley presented the staff report on the conditional use permit application for public use on city-owned property, as detailed in the agenda and meeting packet (pages 8-80). The application, submitted by Carleigh Noel (Development Services Coordinator) on behalf of the owner/applicant City of Merville (21 Main Street, P.O. Box 420, Merville, IA 51039; contact: Carleigh Noel at 1725 Storm Lake Avenue North, Storm Lake, IA 50588), requests approval for a water system improvement project including a modern water treatment plant, a 400,000-gallon elevated water storage tower approximately 70 feet above grade (subject to changes), and two new wells. The property consists of combined Lots 3, 4, 5, and 6 in Merville Heights Addition (combined into an approximately 8-acre zoning lot, Parcel #894432400024), located in the Agricultural Estates (AE) Zoning District in Arlington Township (T89N R44W), Section 32. It lies about 1,500 feet south of the City of Merville, on the north side of 160th Street, south of Highway 20, and west of Humboldt Avenue. The project aims to secure a long-term water supply for the community, supporting growth and prosperity. The site was selected for its 8-acre footprint to accommodate all assets, with the Woodbury County Assessor combining the lots into one zoning lot.

Priestley noted this is a Zoning Commission public review meeting (not a formal public hearing; that occurs at the Board of Adjustment on March 2, 2026), for recommending to the Board of Adjustment. Notification included mailed letters to neighbors (twice), legal postings, and Facebook outreach for public input. The property is outside city limits, hence county jurisdiction. Key concerns: Setback discrepancies (subdivision plat from 2004 shows 100-foot setbacks, but zoning ordinance permits based on the combined zoning lot, eliminating internal setbacks and applying AE district standards); historical practice includes disclaimers on permits noting potential stricter subdivision covenants (e.g., "The approval of this permit does not guarantee that your building project meets the requirements of your respective subdivision... It is imperative to abide by subdivision regulations, covenants, easements and planning requirements"). Priestley recommended including this disclaimer in proceedings. The original proprietor (Larry Etlar) provided a supportive statement in the packet, controlling most lots and endorsing the project despite original intent. Other requirements: Obtain all federal, state, and local permits (e.g., grading and right-of-way from County Engineer, who is aware and has coordinated on related pipe work); install and maintain security fencing for public/asset protection. The project fits conditional use criteria as necessary and desirable, located on the town's edge for potential growth, similar to other city water towers (e.g., in Sioux City). Minimal public input received to date; more expected at Board of Adjustment.

Amanda Goodnow of ISG (remote, assisting the City) elaborated on setbacks: The site layout includes 200-foot separation circles around wells from north/west property lines to comply with Iowa Code for public drinking water (avoiding no-spray agreements with farmers for chemical applications); 100-foot separation from wells to the treatment plant (for chemical storage); south edge of plant at exactly 75 feet from property line, optimizing for wellhead protection. No other additions beyond Priestley's report.

Commissioners had no questions. Priestley suggested conveying recommendations to the Board of Adjustment, such as required permits, fencing, and the disclaimer.

Tom Bride made a motion to receive a disclaimer into the record. Jeff Hanson seconded. All in favor voted "aye" (unanimous, 5-0). No opposition. Disclaimer Received: (*DISCLAIMER: Your subdivision community covenants, and plat map may be more restrictive than the local governing body. The approval of this permit does not guarantee that your building project meets the requirements of your subdivision. The issuance of a county building permit signals compliance with the county zoning ordinance but it does not verify compliance with plat conditions, subdivision regulations, easements, and community covenants that may be applicable. It is imperative to abide by the subdivision's regulations, covenants, easements, and platting requirements before proceeding with your building plans. Be sure to call IowaOneCall (811) before you begin your project to locate utilities.*)

Tom Bride made a motion to recommend approval to the Board of Adjustment with conditions: (1) Applicant must obtain all necessary federal, state, and local permits prior to construction, including but not limited to grading and right-of-way permits from Woodbury County if applicable; (2) Security fencing as shown on the site plan must be installed and maintained for the life of the facility; (3) Include the disclaimer provided and received into the record. Corey Meister seconded. No further discussion. All in favor voted "aye" (unanimous, 5-0, including Steve Corey). No oppositions. Priestley noted the Board of Adjustment hearing on March 2, 2026, at 5:00 PM in the same room. The Commissioner Christine Zellmer Zant thanked Goodnow for attending.

No public hearing was opened or closed for this item, as it was a review (not a formal hearing).

Public Comment on Matters Not on the Agenda

No additional public comments were received on matters not listed on the agenda, either in person or via phone.

Staff Update

Dan Priestley provided updates:

- **Open Meetings Law Training:** The legislature passed new training requirements for board members. While existing members are "grandfathered in," Priestley developed an internal training course that he submitted to the IPIB. He is also evaluating Iowa State Extension training opportunities.

Commissioner Comment or Inquiry

No Commissioners offered additional comments or inquiries.

Adjournment

Commissioner Corey Meister moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Steve Corey. The motion passed unanimously with all Commissioners present voting "aye." (3-0) The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:29 PM.