

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE AMES CONFERENCE BOARD

AMES, IOWA

APRIL 14, 2026

REGULAR MEETING OF THE AMES CONFERENCE BOARD

The Regular Meeting of the Ames Conference Board was called to order by Chairman John Haila at 5:30 p.m. on April 14, 2026. Present from the Ames City Council were Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Rachel Junck, and Anita Rollins. Latifah Faisal and Lisa Heddens represented the Story County Board of Supervisors. Sabrina Shields-Cook represented the Ames Community School District Board of Directors. Josh Bennett joined digitally and represented the Gilbert Community School District Board of Directors. The Nevada Community School District Board of Directors and United Community School District Board of Directors were not represented. Also present were Shari Plagge, City of Ames Assessor, and Kenneth Baker, Deputy Assessor as Recording Clerk.

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 24, 2026: Moved by Betcher, seconded by Shields-Cook, to approve the Minutes of February 24, 2026 meeting of the Ames Conference Board. Vote on motion 3-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE AMES CITY ASSESSOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FY 2026-2027: Plagge stated that the proposed budget was published on April 1st in the Ames Tribune, fulfilling notification requirements.

The opportunity was presented for members of the public to speak on the budget. There were no comments.

Moved by Heddens, seconded by Junck, to approve Ames City Assessor's proposed budget for FY 2026-2027. Vote on motion 3-0. Motion carried unanimously. The budget is attached and on the Iowa Department of Management's website. Budget and salaries for the assessor and deputies are set by the Conference Board per Iowa Code §441.16; assessor is \$162,571 and chief deputy assessor at \$130,056 with the total budget of \$1,647,627.

BOARD OF REVIEW VACANCY: Plagge stated that she had spoken with three people interested in filling the vacant seat on the Ames Board of Review, but that she only received one application, which was provided to the Conference Board via email.

Mayor Haila stated he had asked several realtors if they were interested in the position, but they declined. He emphasized it has been difficult to find members for the Board of Review because of the required qualifications.

Moved by Beatty-Hansen, seconded by Shields-Cook, to appoint Steven Smart to the Ames Board of Review. Vote on motion 3-0. Motion carried unanimously.

TERM AND APPOINTMENT OF AMES CITY ASSESSOR: Plagge explained that during the process of verifying her continuing education with the Iowa Department of Revenue, there was some confusion regarding when Plagge's current term as assessor expires. The

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records held by Plagge indicated that her term would end at the end of 2026, while the records held by the Department indicated that her term would not expire until the end of 2027. Plagge stated that she had researched the relevant City of Ames ordinances, but she was unable to find when the office of City Assessor had transitioned from a 4-year term to a 6-year term, as required by Iowa Code.

Plagge stated that the Department was asking the Conference Board to direct the Ames City Council to consider creating a new ordinance clarifying that the City Assessor serves a six-year term and that the next term begins on January 1st, 2027.

Moved by Betcher, seconded by Shields-Cook, to refer to Ames City Council the matter of term length and appointment date for the City Assessor. Vote on motion 3-0. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Haila reminded the Conference Board that Plagge's current term expires at the end of 2026 and that an assessor must be reappointed between 90 and 180 days before the end of their term.

Mayor Haila stated that he had discussed with Plagge whether there were any metrics that would be relevant for reviewing the performance of the Assessor's Office. Mayor Haila proposed that Plagge list relevant metrics and provide information on ideal and actual performance of the Assessor's Office based on these metrics. He added that he proposed July 28th, 2026 at 5:30pm as the next date for a Conference Board meeting to review these metrics and consider reappointment.

Heddens and Mayor Haila clarified confusion around the term length, appointment date, and reappointment date for the City Assessor.

Faisal expressed her hesitation to have a department provide and determine the metrics by which they would be judged. She asked if it would be possible for an outside party to review these metrics.

Plagge stated she could ask the Iowa Department of Revenue of the Executive Board of the Iowa State Association of Assessors to review these metrics.

There was further discussion regarding the timeline for assessor reappointment.

Moved by Beatty-Hansen, seconded by Faisal, to set July 28, 2026 at 5:30pm as the date for a Conference Board meeting to consider reappointment of Plagge as City Assessor. Vote on motion 3-0. Motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Plagge stated that she would address the three questions she received during the prior Conference Board meeting.

In response to a question from Betcher regarding the number and value of exemptions in Ames, Plagge provided a table showing the parcel count and value exempted for each type

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of credit and/or exemption administered by her office. She stated that this information was also available in the Assessor's Abstract of Assessment which is submitted each year to the Iowa Department of Revenue. She also clarified that the 445 school, municipal, state, and university-owned properties listed on the table did not show valuations because her appraisers are still developing appropriate values for these properties. Betcher stated that she did not have additional questions, but that she appreciated the information provided by the Assessor.

Plagge also responded to prior question from Betcher regarding which party would be responsible for the legal fees in assessment appeal cases. Plagge provided the relevant sections of Iowa Code to show which party is responsible for appeal costs in Board of Review, Property Assessment Appeal Board, and District Court cases. She clarified that each party typically pays their own appeal costs, but that she would investigate opportunities to recover appeal costs, particularly if appeal volume continues to be heavy.

Plagge then addressed Gartin's prior question regarding the possibility of adding name search functionality to the Assessor's Beacon site. She outlined the cost of separating the City Assessor's Beacon site from the existing site, which is shared with Story County. Plagge then discussed the advantages (public convenience) and disadvantages (privacy concerns, possible litigation, availability of records from other sites) of enabling name search. She stated that she would ultimately be against name search due to the possibility of litigation.

Gartin responded that most jurisdictions in Iowa do have name search enabled, and that the convenience to the public shouldn't be minimized. He stated that he appreciated the privacy concerns, but doesn't understand why other counties would have name search enabled if this was a major issue.

Mayor Haila asked whether name search could be added to the existing site. Plagge stated that this was technically feasible, but that the Story County Assessor was opposed to name search.

Faisal stated that she recognizes the convenience that name search would provide, but that she favors privacy for those protected by law, such as law enforcement officers and abuse survivors.

Gartin stated that he is ultimately against a new, separate Beacon site for the City Assessor due to the associated cost, but that he believes the Story County Assessor is doing a disservice to the public by disabling name search functionality.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Shield-Cooks, to direct the City Assessor to continue to share a Beacon site with the Story County Assessor. Vote on motion 3-0. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS: No new business was brought forward.

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ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Heddens, seconded by Betcher, to adjourn the Ames Conference Board meeting at 5:58pm. Vote on motion 3-0. Motion carried unanimously.