

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
AMES CONFERENCE BOARD**

AMES, IOWA

SEPTEMBER 27, 2022

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CONFERENCE BOARD

The Special Meeting of the Ames Conference Board was called to order by Chairman John Haila at 5:31 pm on September 27, 2022. Present from the Ames City Council were Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Gloria Betcher, Tim Gartin, Anita Rollins, and Rachel Junck. Lisa Heddens, Linda Murken, and Latifah Faisal represented the Story County Board of Supervisors. Allen Bierbaum represented the Ames Community Board of Directors and Joe Anderson the Nevada School Board of Directors. The Gilbert and United Community School Boards of Directors were not represented.

MINUTES OF APRIL 5, 2022: Moved by Murken, seconded by Corrieri, to approve the Minutes of the April 5, 2022, meeting of the Ames Conference Board. Vote on Motion 3-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

UPDATE FROM SHARI PLAGGE, CITY ASSESSOR, ON THE PROGRESS OF THE OFFICE: Plagge introduced herself and gave a brief summary of what she had to present.

CONFERENCE BOARD PROCEDURES: Plagge explained that per the Iowa Code that the Assessor's Office is the Clerk for the Conference Board, and going forward, a member of the Assessor's Office would be taking minutes and posting agendas. She further indicated that all past and future Conference Board agendas and minutes would now be found under the Conference Board on the City Assessor's web page on the City of Ames website.

She also clarified some procedural processes on what a quorum is and making motions during the meeting. There are 3 voting units, one unit consisting of all members of the Ames City Council, the second unit consists of all members of the Story County Board of Supervisors and the third unit consist of the members of the school board within the City of Ames. A quorum for the unit is a minimum of 2 people from that unit and a quorum to hold a meeting is a minimum of 2 units present.

She further explained that if only one member of the voting unit were present, they could participate in the meeting but would not be able to vote. Voting must be by unit and motions and seconds must be made by difference units.

Haila asked Supervisor Heddens if this would address her previously stated concern regarding Conference Board information being separated from City Council information and easier to find and she said that it did.

STAFFING: Plagge told the Board that two temps had been hired to work through the data conversion process. She also explained that the Assessor's Office was in the process of hiring a Deputy Assessor and in October, recruitment for the vacant Assessment Tech position will be started. She stated that she didn't foresee the temp staff being present beyond March of next year.

When asked, Plagge summarized that there were four positions filled, and two to still be filled, not counting herself. She also indicated that she has implemented a process of cross training staff, and that will help her decide how to divide up work and have more people able to do more things in the office. As an example, she used the Assessor's Office now running the Conference Board meetings, as it had previously been done by the City Clerk.

DATA CONVERSION AND ENTRY: Plagge then called up slides on the projector to show some examples of the challenges being met during the data conversion process and how they transferred into

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CAMAvision. Her first example was as bay window of about 10 square feet as arc on a house ballooning to something bigger than the rest of the house itself. Her second example was of a house that had many segments and when transferred was largely illegible and had to be cleaned up before appraisers could go out into the field and use these sketches for work purposes.

She then explained some other processes that needed to be done to clean up data such as linking the sketch to pricing tables and grading (going from 7 to 32 possible grades) need to be completed.

She stated that land pricing would be the goal for next year, and that each land parcel would need to be visually inspected. Plagge then stated that with the reviewed conversion data and the land priced by square foot for this year is a good base to begin with. She estimated that it would take 4 to 6 years to complete the process of updating the information with the current staff.

Council Member Rollins asked which parts of the city would be determined to be a priority for visitation, and Plagge responded that it would depend on sales ratios, with those furthest out of tolerance being given priority.

Council Member Betcher asked about land and dwelling pricing, stating that she thought that the current process of taking the total value and splitting it at 25% land and 75% dwelling was based upon advice from the Department of Revenue. Plagge explained that the prior allocation of 25/75 is a different method to determine value but was not following the state cost manual, and that while it wasn't wrong, the method she was implementing would be according to the state cost manual.

Haila pointed out that the Assessor's Office had been given an extension to be in compliance with the state manual, and had until January 1, 2024, to do so. This was confirmed by Plagge.

Director Bierbaum asked if Plagge felt that she had the staff and the resources to do the job that needed to be done, and if there was anything that she felt she needed from the Conference Board to help her do so. Plagge stated that she can't really make a recommendation until the information was cleaner, and it would depend on how many properties would need to be visited immediately. She stated that she may have a recommendation for more staff after the data was cleaned up. She also stated that doing this in house was faster than waiting on an outside vendor such as Vanguard, since they are booked out for several years.

TAX APPEALS: Plagge stated that there were 18 tax appeals that are still open, further explaining that if an appeal were still in process, appellants would appeal the next year as well. She stated that the majority of 2022 cases were holdovers from 2021. She also indicated that there was one case that was not a protest of value but a protest of the process that she hoped would be able to be taken care of quickly.

OFFICE POLICIES: Plagge stated that she is reviewing and reworking office policies to keep them in line with Iowa Code and city policy. She stated that she would have recommendations for the next Conference Board meeting. She also indicated that she had instituted a dress code for in office vs. out of office work.

OTHER INFORMATION: Plagge explained that there is going to be a large increase in assessed values based on the market. She stated that while preliminary in nature, Ames could see an increase of 20-25% for 2023, but there is still work to do to determine the exact increase. She also stated that the increase in value was just the first step, with rollback coming from the state and each taxing entity determining what their budgetary needs would be. She stated that the state rollback was to prevent a

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massive increase in taxes, and to protect taxpayers from large value fluctuations such as were potentially coming.

SIX MONTH PERFORMANCE REVIEW: Plagge stated that she had signed up for courses for commercial property to improve her education. She stated that she felt it was not worthwhile to pursue a general appraiser designation as that would require too much time outside the office working for someone else, around 2,000 hours in total. She stated that she felt that education was important for both herself and her staff, and that she was on the Education Committee for the Iowa State Association of Assessors.

Haila stated that he felt the mini board could meet with Plagge for her six month review, and that she had requested it.

OTHER BUSINESS: Haila stated that Plagge had mentioned going to the different governing bodies to inform them about the Assessor's Office role and estimating tax revenue changes. He stated he had not heard of previous Assessors doing so. Plagge stated that she felt by attending meetings, it would enable those governing bodies to make informed decisions and that she had done so in her previous role as Wright County Assessor.

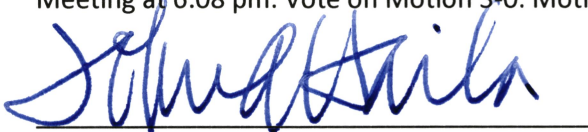
Bierbaum asked when these visits would happen, and Plagge stated that she would look to do so in January and February. She also stated she was willing to go to other groups and organizations to inform them about what was happening in the area, such as a Kiwanis Club or Rotary Group.

Council Member Gartin asked Plagge about enabling the ability to search by name on the City Assessor's Beacon Site. Plagge stated that she would look into it and would need to have a discussion with the Story County Assessor because the site was shared with them.

NEW BUSINESS: No new business was brought forward.

CONFERENCE BOARD COMMENTS: Council Member Betcher and Supervisor Murken both thanked Plagge for having a report ready and being so clear. No other comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Betcher, seconded by Faisal, to adjourn the Ames Conference Board Meeting at 6:08 pm. Vote on Motion 3-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.



John A. Haila, Conference Board Chairman



Shari Plagge, Clerk of the Conference Board