

Floyd County Board of Supervisors Meeting
December 2, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

The Floyd County Board of Supervisors met in the Swartzrock Building at Floyd County Fairgrounds. Supervisors Boyd Campbell, Gloria Carr, and Frank Rottinghaus were in attendance.

Campbell introduced State House Representative Charley Thomson and State Senator Sandy Salmon and allowed them the floor.

Carr/Rottinghaus moved to approve the agenda. Motion carried 3-0.

Campbell welcomed attendees, outlined the three-minute time limit, emphasized that comments must address the amendment under discussion, and asked speakers to avoid repeating previously shared information.

John Robbins, NIACOG Senior Planner, introduced the Clean-up amendment recommended by the mediation work group. This amendment cleans up verbiage, grammar, and formatting. Carr/Rottinghaus moved to approve. Motion carried 3-0.

Robbins introduced the Airport Manager Review amendment recommended by mediation. This amendment changes the title of Northeast Iowa Regional Airport (NEIRA) Chairman to Airport Manager and requires the NEIRA Manager to review applications for wind turbines, recommendations must be based on Iowa Code's definition of "airport hazard". Rottinghaus/Carr moved to approve. Motion carried 3-0.

Robbins introduced the Period of Review amendment proposed by Carr. This amendment updates the title of NEIRA Chairman to Manager. Carr/Rottinghaus moved to approve. Motion carried 3-0.

Robbins introduced the Anti-Icing Detection System amendment recommended by mediation. This amendment requires all wind turbines to have sensors that automatically shut down turbines when ice is detected. Rottinghaus/Carr moved to approve. Motion carried 3-0.

Robbins introduced the Future Owner Acknowledgement amendment recommended by mediation. This amendment mandates that any future owner of a C-WECS project acknowledge in writing that they are bound by the ordinance and permit terms. Carr/Rottinghaus moved to approve. Motion carried 3-0.

Robbins introduced the C-WECS Maximum Total Height amendment recommended by mediation. This amendment increases maximum turbine height from 450 feet to 600 feet. Roxann Bjelica, Cala McGregor, and Kathy Carter all expressed they were in opposition of this amendment. Rottinghaus/Carr moved to approve. Motion carried 2-1, Campbell opposed.

Robbins introduced the Occupied Building Definition amendment recommended by mediation. This amendment removes RV/travel-trailer parks, livestock sheds, and agricultural buildings (including machine sheds and grain bins) from the definition and adds cabins and occupied mobile homes to the definition. Carr/Rottinghaus moved to approve. Motion carried 3-0.

Robbins introduced the Wildlife Monitoring & Mitigation Plan amendment recommended by mediation. This amendment requires a plan to minimize impacts on birds and bats, including baseline studies and post-construction monitoring. Carr/Rottinghaus moved to approve. Motion carried 3-0.

Carr proposed the Liability Insurance amendment, requires \$20M liability coverage per occurrence and aggregate, with Floyd County listed as additional insured; current certificates provided annually. Carr proposed the Liability Insurance amendment to add 'current' and 'annual' with respect to certificates of liability coverage provided and disregard proposed amendment language adding the county named as additional insured due to the county not having interest, such as the property owner who has leased land to the turbine company. Deb Campbell, Tom Bjelica and Scott Larson questioned who would be liable if there were an incident, who owns the wind turbine, and would the county be sued. Liz Enabnit stated that earth movement is not a covered peril so a claim of damage would be up to the landowner to prove and may need to sue whoever caused the damage. Todd Prichard, County Attorney, explained that the ordinance is regulating the activity and therefore not liable for the activity. Rottinghaus/Carr moved to approve adding the words 'current' and 'annually' to the amendment. Motion carried 3-0.

Robbins introduced the Remove Commercial Battery Storage Provisions amendment recommended by meditation and proposed by Campbell. Sam Deverell, Charles City Fire Chief, raised concerns about battery storage and requested that when a future ordinance comes up regarding batteries, he would like fire departments to be a part of the conversation. Carr/Campbell moved to strike all references to battery storage for both CBESS (commercial battery energy storage system) and SBESS (small battery energy storage system) references. Motion carried 2-1. Rottinghaus opposed.

Robbins introduced the C-WECS Financial security for decommissioning recommended by mediation. This amendment requires financial security equal to 110% of estimated decommissioning costs, updated every five years and secured with the county. Carr/Rottinghaus moved to approve. Motion carried 3-0.

The Maximum Sound Levels amendment recommended by mediation and proposed by Carr increases the noise limit from 40 dBA to 50 dBA at the nearest dwelling. Steve McGregor, Roxanne Bjelica, Scott Larson, Dustin Straube, Jim Jorgensen, Tina Marth, Tiffany Firstenberg, Cala McGregor, and Derek Straube spoke in opposition. Carr read several emails from residents in opposition as well. Campbell criticized his own compromise during mediation, calling it capricious and in bad faith, and stated that increasing the limit from 40 to 50 was wrong and detrimental. Carr/Rottinghaus moved to approve. Motion carried 2-1, Campbell opposed.

Robbins introduced the Hazard Safety and Third-Party Certification amendment proposed by Campbell. This amendment eliminates fire suppression requirements and shifts focus to structural safety. It requires turbines to meet IEC Standard 61400 and mandates a geotechnical evaluation by an independent engineer to confirm compliance, address karst features, ensure foundation stability, and assess vibration impacts within 1.5 miles of each turbine. Steve McGregor asked that the amendment be separated, Fire Suppression systems and Karst Topography. Deverall encouraged the board to not remove fire suppression. The Board took a brief recess to review fire suppression standards. Carr noted that the zoning commission did not initially recommend fire suppression; it was added later. She believes compliance may be governed by state or federal regulations rather than local requirements. Prichard recommended separating the question, but noted that the board first needed to address the current motion. Campbell moved to withdraw his motion, but Carr, the seconder, refused; the motion remained. Candi Brandau Larson, Laura Cunningham, and Rhonda Groshens spoke of karst topography and environmental studies and are in support of the amendment. Pat Merfeld suggested the gross weight of turbines in an article was overstated by the amount of dirt removed for a turbine; Scott Larson argued this did not account for vibrations, and Steve McGregor added that turbine blades are never perfectly balanced, meaning vibrations will always occur. Carr stated she spoke with both wind companies about the soil testing process, which includes drilling 30-50 feet in multiple areas, and one company reported they can do the testing or outsource it and the other reported they always use a third party. Campbell/Carr moved to approve. Motion failed 1-2, Carr & Rottinghaus opposed.

Robbins introduced the Hazard Safety + Third Party Certification – Address Karst amendment proposed by Carr and Rottinghaus. This amendment removes fire suppression requirements and requires turbines to meet IEC Standard 61400 and mandates a geotechnical evaluation by an independent engineer to confirm compliance and address karst features for foundation stability. The Board will revisit fire suppression at the next reading. Carr/Rottinghaus moved to approve. Motion carried 2-1, Campbell opposed.

Robbins introduced the Setback & Setback Waivers Amendment proposed by Campbell, which increases turbine setbacks to 1,200 feet from non-participating property lines, 2,250 feet from dwellings, 1,000 feet from sinkholes, and 4.5 times turbine height from public parks. Additional requirements include 1 mile from bald eagle nests, 3 times turbine height from feed operations, 1.5 miles from city limits and existing sinkholes, and 1,500 feet from cemeteries. The amendment also permits waivers of 1,800 feet from dwellings and 1,000 feet from feed operations. Campbell explained that he had conceded 250 feet during mediation but now believes that was a mistake due to limited understanding of sinkholes. He referenced the Highway 218 road project failure and cited a Karst study, stressing the importance of protecting lives, wells, and drinking water. Campbell requested a motion to adjourn, but none was made. Several speakers, including Kathy Carter, Cala McGregor, Scott McGregor, Hannah Steirt, Scott Larson, Jim Jorgensen, Derek Straube, Jayden Jorgensen, Candi Brandau Larson, Wayne Lacoste, and Roxann Bjelica, spoke in favor of greater setbacks. Campbell/Carr moved to approve. Motion failed 1-2, with Carr and Rottinghaus opposed.

Campbell moved to adjourn, died for lack of second.

Robbins introduced the Setback & Setback Waivers Amendment proposed by Carr, which reduces turbine setbacks to 900 feet from non-participating property lines, 1,850 feet from dwellings and feed operations, 750 feet from sinkholes, 0.5 miles from public parks, 1 mile from bald eagle nests, 2 miles from city limits, 900 feet from cemeteries, and 1.5 miles from existing sinkholes. The amendment also allows waivers of 1,000 feet from dwellings and feed operations. Dustin Straube questioned why the amendment increases setbacks from city limits while decreasing setbacks from dwellings. Roxann Bjelica, Doug Groshens, and Cala McGregor spoke against the amendment, advocating for larger setbacks. Carr/Rottinghaus moved to approve. Motion carried 2-1, with Campbell opposed.

Robbins introduced the Site Plan Requirements Amendment proposed by Campbell, which required detailed site plans, engineering certifications, environmental studies, and increased setback distances—specifically 2,250 feet from dwellings and occupied buildings, including RV and travel trailer parks, and 4.5 times the turbine height from all wildlife management areas, conservation areas, and publicly owned parks. Campbell/Carr moved to approve. Motion failed 1-2, with Carr and Rottinghaus opposed.

Robbins introduced the Site Plan Requirements Amendment proposed by Carr, which required detailed site plans, engineering certifications, and environmental studies, but set smaller setbacks—0.5 miles from dwellings and

occupied buildings, including RV and travel trailer parks, as well as all wildlife management areas, conservation areas, and publicly owned parks. Rottinghaus and Carr moved to approve. Candi Brandau Larson asked about removing Section B4 regarding BESS, since a prior amendment eliminated BESS from the ordinance. Rottinghaus and Carr then moved to amend the motion by removing Section B4. The amendment carried 3-0, and the amended motion also carried 3-0.

Robbins introduced the Turbine Cap amendment proposed by Campbell of 90 total turbines. Campbell/Carr moved to approve. Motion failed 1-2. Carr & Rottinghaus opposed.

Robbins introduced the Turbine Cap amendment proposed by Carr of no cap on wind turbines. Scott Larson spoke in opposition to no cap on the number of turbines in the county. Carr/Rottinghaus moved to approve. Motion carried 2-1, Campbell opposed.

Carr/Rottinghaus moved to set the next reading on December 16 at 6 pm with the location to be determined. Motion carried 3-0.

Prichard asked if more amendments were expected. Carr noted the only possible item was a local fire suppression amendment and stated it be submitted a week before the next reading.

Rottinghaus/Carr moved to adjourn. Motion carried 3-0.

ATTEST:

Morrigan Montagne
Floyd County Auditor

Boyd Campbell, Chair
Floyd County Board of Supervisors