POPE COUNTY
MINNESOTA

MEETING MINUTES
POPE COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
Thursday, November 20th, 2025

The Board of Adjustment convened in regular session on Thursday, November 20th, 2025 at the Pope County Courthouse, 3rd floor Meeting Room.

Members Present: Roger Isdahl (Chairman), John Messenger, Ted Kannegiesser, Mark Halls, Russell Barkeim, and Haylee Wildman.

Other Officials Present: Jessica Hill (Deputy Director/Zoning Administrator) and Leigh Nelson (Senior Administrative Associate), and Paul Wildman (County Commissioner).

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Isdahl at 6:01 p.m.

Additions and Corrections to the Agenda

There were no additions or corrections to the agenda. A motion to accept the agenda as prepared was made by Member Messenger and seconded by Member Barkeim. Motion carried unanimously.

Review minutes of October 23, 2025 Regular Meeting of the BOA

The minutes of the Board of Adjustment meeting that was held on October 23, 2025 were submitted for approval. Motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Member Barkeim and seconded by Member Kannegiesser. Motion carried unanimously.

General Business

Deputy Director Hill addressed those in attendance, providing a brief overview of the Board of Adjustment's role as a quasi-judicial body that hears applications for variances to the Pope County Land Use Controls Ordinance, as well as appeals of administrative decisions.

Tabled/Old Business

None.

New Business

Variance Request #VAR-25-020, **Alyssa Evenson & Brady Lee,** PID #17-0107-000

The applicant is requesting consideration to construct/locate a non-farm residential structure in an Agriculture Protection (A-2) zoning district. The Pope County Land Use Controls Ordinance section 7.3.K. requires a Conditional Use Permit to locate a non-farm residence in the A-2 zoning district. Chair Isdahl read the full Background from the Staff Report.

Deputy Director Hill presented the applicant's request, noting that as the property is in an Agriculture Protection (A-2) zoning district, per Ordinance, only one non-farm residence is permitted, and for this quarter section, the density standard has already been met. The area that the Applicants are interested in is not considered prime farm land. The Feedlot Officer reported that the nearest feedlot is over 4,000 feet from this area of the property. There were no Township comments to report, and Staff does not object to the approval of this Variance application.

Chair Isdahl invited the Applicants, Alyssa Evenson & Brady Lee, to add any information & answer questions. Ms. Evenson provided information on their interest in the property, and that they would like to build a "shouse" on two acres. Member Halls asked if there was a minimum acreage that they needed to request a non-farm residence. Deputy Director Hill responded that in the A-2 zoning district in Pope County, the minimum lot size is 3 acres, however, there is no minimum area required for a non-farm residence. In this instance, only two acres of the twenty that the Applicants want to purchase is buildable.

Chair Isdahl opened the hearing for public comment. Hearing no comments for or against, the public hearing portion was closed at 6:11 p.m.

The Board site team comprised of Board members, Barkeim, Kannegiesser, and Messenger provided comment about their onsite observations. Member Barkeim said that the spot that they are looking at is a good house spot, and that it's rocky everywhere on the property. The other members of the site team agreed that the house site has a "cool view", is very rocky, and that someone must have set that spot aside for a house years ago.

Member Halls asked if there had ever been a building on that site. Evenson replied no. Lee added that power & cable has already been installed to the property.

Motion:

Chair Isdahl seeks a motion. Member Kannegiesser made motion to approve the variance request. This motion was seconded by Member H. Wildman. With no further discussion, motion carried with Member Halls in opposition, with the findings as follows:

1. **Variance request consistent with purposes and intent of the official controls and the comprehensive plan:**

   Finding: The purpose of limiting the number of non-farm residences in an Agriculture Protection zone is for preservation of prime agricultural soils and to reduce conflict with neighboring farming operations. In this instance, the soils are not particularly suited for crop farming. Additionally, the nearest registered livestock operation is over 4,000 feet away. The Comprehensive Plan does indicate a growing concern regarding population decline in rural areas and a desire for development of non-farm homesteads in the rural areas.

2. **Use of property/structure is a reasonable use:**

   Finding: A rural residence is a common desire and a permittable use in Pope County.

3. **Character of locality and detriment to neighboring properties:**

   Finding: Granting the variance will not change the character of the locality or be a detriment to the neighboring properties, as the properties to the south of the proposed location are currently in non-farm residential use.

4. **Plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property and not self-created:**

   Finding: The property owner is burdened by limitations prescribed in the Land Use Controls Ordinance. The limitation imposed by the ordinance is for the protection of agricultural operations. That does not appear to be a concern in this instance as this property is not well suited for cropping purposes, nor is it near the identified feedlots in the general vicinity, therefore it is not likely to impact future feedlot development or expansion. The property owner can meet all other identified performance standards.

No other business.

Adjournment

Motion by Member Kannegiesser to adjourn the Board of Adjustment meeting with a second by Member Messenger. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh A. Nelson/Senior Administrative Associate
Pope County Land & Resource Management

Jessica Hill/Deputy Director
Pope County Land & Resource Management