

McPherson County Zoning Board and Board of Adjustment
Minutes of Proceedings
January 20th, 2026

Call to Order

The McPherson County Zoning Board was called to order by Chairman Mike Mardian at 9:58 A.M. in the Commissioner's Chambers. Members present included George Hulscher, Logan Heupel, Dan Mettler, and Mike Lapka. Also present was Hunter Heinrich from Zoning Administration, several people from the public, and people on Zoom including Ben Rees representing Leola Data Center.

Agenda

Dan Mettler moved, and George Hulscher seconded to approve the agenda. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes

Dan Mettler moved, and Logan Heupel seconded to approve the December 2nd, 2025, meeting minutes as published. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Conflicts of Interest

No Conflicts of Interest were mentioned.

Public Comments

Ben Rees from Leola Data Center was present by Zoom. He gave a short update and said they were finishing working on studies and thought to have a permit submitted by as early as next month.

Board Reorganization

Chairman Mardian relinquished the Chair to the Zoning Board to the Zoning Administrator for the purpose of reorganizing the board for the year 2026.

The Zoning Administrator called for nominations for chairman. George Hulscher made a motion and Dan Mettler seconded to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Mike Mardian as chairman. Logan Heupel, Dan Mettler, George Hulscher, and Mike Lapka 'Aye'. Mike Mardian 'Nay'. Motion Carried.

The Zoning Administrator called for nominations for Vice-Chairman. George Hulscher made a motion and Dan Mettler seconded to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Logan Heupel as Vice-Chairman. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

The Zoning Administrator relinquished the Chair position to Chairman Mardian.

Board of Adjustment

Logan Heupel moved, and George Hulscher seconded to go into the Board of Adjustments at 10:06 A.M. All voted in favor. Motion Carried.

Variance hearing was held on 26-V-01 for Sid Feickert who wants to put a house and garage less than 150 ft from the right of way line. Clarification was brought up regarding center of road vs. right of way. Sid Feickert was present to discuss the variance and mentioned how his driveway is not privately owned. George Hulscher made a motion and Logan Heupel seconded to approve 26-V-01. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Dan Mettler moved and Mike Lapka seconded to move out of the Board of Adjustment at 10:11 AM. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

New Business

Discussion on the Data Center Ordinance was held. Front yard and buffer yard were discussed. Mike Lapka would like to see the minimum for front yard structures and equipment to be 150' from the property boundary instead of 50' in the ordinance. Contamination prevention was discussed as well as closed loop cooling systems with non-toxic coolants. Marion Kallas made a comment about containment walls. A Tax Revenue Study was talked about, which would evaluate the potential economic impact of Data Center facilities. Linda Schauer made a comment regarding Wind Towers. An EMF Exposure Study for Data Centers was also discussed which talked about the levels of electromagnetic radiation. An Energy Consumption Study which would include power demands, infrastructure requirements, and costs were discussed. At the end of the discussion, Ben Rees was asked for any additional comments by Chairman Mardian. Mike Lapka asked if the Leola Data Center has any kind of drainage plan. Ben Rees mentioned that he would talk with Bill Connors for more specifics. George Hulscher made a comment about possible state laws in the legislature and if it would have any effect on the Data Center.

Building Permits

Building Permits 25-38 – 26-02 were discussed. 25-38 - American Towers LLC – Modify Existing Cell Tower; 25-39 - Dale Orth – Sunroom Addition on House; 25-40 - Michael Mettler – Pole Barn; 26-01 – AJ Whited – Shop, House remodel, Decks; 26-02 – Sean Frerk – Siding, windows, patio doors.

The next meeting will tentatively be on April 21st, 2026.

Adjournment

Logan Heupel moved, and Dan Mettler seconded to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:52 A.M.

Hunter Heinrich
Zoning Administrator

Mike Mardian
Chairman of the Zoning Board