

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT – Harlan, Iowa – APRIL 8, 2026

The Board of Adjustment of the City of Harlan met pursuant to the law and the rules of said Board in special session in the Council Chambers at City Hall at 12:00P.M. on the 8th day of April 2026.

Chairperson Grimsley called the meeting to order, and the following members were:

Present: Mike Burroughs, Mike Christensen, Ruthanne Grimsley, Doug Hammer

Absent: Julie Olson

Present Electronically: None

Also Present: Board Secretary, Maya Kenkel; City Administrator, Gervas Mgonja; Deputy City Clerk, Susan Brammann; Code Enforcement Officer, Chris Bylund

The Chairperson presented the agenda. It was moved by Burroughs and seconded by Hammer that the agenda be approved. Roll call vote: AYES: Burroughs, Christensen, Hammer, Grimsley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Chairperson Grimsley asked that any conflicts of interest be stated. None stated.

It was moved by Christensen and seconded by Hammer to approve the minutes from the 02/11/2026 meeting. Roll call vote: AYES: Burroughs, Christensen, Hammer, Grimsley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Chairperson Grimsley announced that this was the date, time, and place for the public hearing regarding:

- a. CASE BA2026-002 –Application by Amadou Clédor Diop DBA Cleaning Solutions Services, LLC at 1005 Baldwin St. for a home business application in an R-3 Zoning District.

Motion to open meeting by Burroughs and seconded by Christensen. Roll call vote: AYES: Christensen, Hammer, Grimsley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Motion to suspend meeting by Hammer and seconded by Burroughs. Roll call vote: AYES: Christensen, Hammer, Grimsley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Motion to unsuspend meeting by Hammer and seconded by Burroughs. Roll call vote: AYES: Christensen, Hammer, Grimsley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Applicant –

The applicant was present to describe his business and experience. He explained that it is a commercial cleaning business. The business operated in other states before he moved to Harlan in 2023. He does regular cleanings or large clean ups to get buildings back on the market. Keast and Immanuel Lutheran Church have used his services. He clarified that his “outdoor” storage is in the form of his attached garage. He confirmed that most products ship directly to the work site, and there is nothing flammable stored in the garage. Additionally, the applicant will be starting a car detailing business out of the home.

Neighbors – Mike Jones was present to express concerns with running the detailing business from the alley. He noted that neighbor Julie Olson and himself have garage access through the alley only, and he advised that former tenants would park cars in the alley blocking the residents’ access. Chairperson Grimsley noted the email from Board Member and neighbor, Julie Olson, expressing the same concerns.

Code Enforcement – Chris Bylund, Code Enforcement, and Gervas Mgonja, City Administrator, were present to note that residents must keep city alleys free and clear of obstructions, so temporary parking in the alley is not permitted.

Applicant’s rebuttal – The applicant clarified that the detailing business would be by appointment only and would be one car at a time. He confirmed there would be no line of cars waiting for service. He noted that most details will require a full day’s work.

It was moved by Christensen and seconded by Hammer to close the public hearing. Roll call vote: AYES: Burroughs, Christensen, Hammer, Grimsley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

It was moved by Christensen and seconded by Burroughs to approve the application. Roll call vote: AYES: Burroughs, Christensen, Hammer, Grimsley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Other Business:

- a) No variance –
Resulting from case BA2026-001, it was discussed what the proper course of action should be when a presented case does not constitute a variance needing Board approval. Code Enforcement,

Chris Bylund, was present to explain the building inspector's reasoning for denying the building permit. The Board clarified that separate kitchens in that case would affect the decision. After discussion, it was determined that the Board may close the meeting with no action. They also noted that it would be appropriate to review the case and have questions or discussion prior to the meeting.

- b) Meeting time options –
The viability of moving from the standard 12:00 noon meeting time was discussed. It was noted by Chairperson Grimsley that the meetings have been historically held at this time unless accommodation for the applicant was necessary. The Board advised that both the current and proposed afternoon times would work in their schedules. City Administrator, Gervas Mgonja, noted the availability of a regular Zoom option. The Board noted the obstacles of regular 4:00 PM meetings on city staff. Recording Secretary, Maya Kenkel, noted that the RAGBRAI Committees use Council Chambers in the afternoon multiple times per week. Chairperson Grimsley stated that members who regularly cannot attend the meetings may need to reconsider their position on the Board.
- c) Recusal –
It was clarified by Chairperson Grimsley and echoed by the Board that recusal from a hearing does not inhibit a member from voting on other business or matters during a meeting.
- d) Detached garages –
It was asked by Bylund if a detached garage with living quarters would need to come before the Board for a variance. It was determined that an instance of adding mother-in-law quarters to an existing property would necessitate a variance.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Maya Kenkel

Maya Kenkel, Secretary

Ruthanne Grimsley, Chairperson

These minutes are as recorded by the Secretary and are subject to Board approval at the next called meeting.