

**Beltrami County Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment Meeting
Minutes for Monday, October 27, 2025
County Administration Building – County Board Room
701 Minnesota Avenue NW
Bemidji, Minnesota 56601**

General Business

Members present: Todd Stanley
 Don Hazeman
 Ed Fussy
 Bill Best
 Bruce Poppel
 Doug Underthun
 Craig Gaasvig

Members absent: None

Others Present: Brent Rud, Director, Beltrami County Environmental Services Department
 Greg Larson, Beltrami County Environmental Services Department
 Shannon Schmidt, Beltrami County Environmental Services Department
 Wayne Coulthart, 27450 Chippewa Paws Ln SE, Pennington, MN 56663
 Becky Coulthart, 27450 Chippewa Paws Ln SE, Pennington, MN 56663
 Carol Heimsoth, 7210 Fergeson Ct NE, Bemidji, MN 56601

Chairman called the Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment Meeting to order at 6:00 PM. **Board and staff introduced themselves to members of the audience. Brent reviewed the meeting procedures and process, as well as the agenda, for those in attendance.** The meeting minutes for August 25, 2025, were brought forward for approval. **Bill Best moved to approve the meeting minutes of August 25, 2025. Motion seconded by Bruce Poppel.**

Motion carried and approved.

Board of Adjustment

New Business

Variance Request of: **Carol L Heimsoth**
 7210 Fergeson Ct NE
 Bemidji, MN 56601

Township: Turtle River
Body of Water: Big Bass Lake (4-132) RD

The Purpose of:

The applicant is requesting a variance from the Beltrami County Shoreland Ordinance to place a 168 square foot addition onto an existing 1,040 square foot cabin built in 1959 located within the bluff setback and bluff impact zone of Big Bass Lake, 115' from the OHWL. The proposed addition is on the west and south sides of the house going 6' closer to the bluff than the current structure. Big Bass Lake (4-132) is classified as a recreational development lake which requires a 100' structure setback from the OHWL and a 30' setback from the top of the bluff.

Legal Description:

Tax Parcel 48.00602.00

Lot Two (2), Block Seven (7), Bass Lake Vineyards; Section Nineteen (19), Township One Hundred Forty-Seven (147), Range Thirty-Two (032), Beltrami County, Minnesota.

Greg Larson gave the staff report, discussing lot information and details of the application. The cabin is located 115' from the OHWL, exceeding the required Big Bass Lake structure setback of 100'. Beltrami County Shoreland Management Ordinance also requires a 30' structure setback from the top of the bluff. Greg explained how to determine if something is a bluff and where the top of bluff lies. The entire cabin lies in the 30' bluff structure setback. Maps showing the location of the parcel on GIS mapping and the parcel's topography were viewed. Photos of the lot and cabin from all angles were also viewed. Proposed building plans were reviewed. Parcel is 0.83 acres in size and cabin was built in 1959. No additions to the cabin have been made since it was built. The existing septic system was installed in 2003 and is compliant. There is an existing 10' X 18' covered patio on the front of the house that will be extended sideways to make the new addition. A 6' X 6' area of this new addition will extend beyond the existing west wall of the cabin. Staff recommends approval of the proposed 168 square foot addition with the submittal and approval of a Storm Water Management Plan.

Carol Heimsoth approached the podium. The Board asked what sort of roof would be put over the addition and if the new roof would also cover the existing covered patio area. Carol explained that Howie Zetah is her contractor and that they haven't gone over all the details of construction just yet. She thought that Howie had mentioned a gable type roof for the new addition. Either way, water will be directed away from the lake. The structure will be coming no closer to the lake. A small patio on the front of the cabin may still be possible. Current impervious surface is well under 25%. Shoreland vegetation is good, the bluff is stable, and the contractor will be responsible for managing erosion.

The Board opened the floor for public comment. Emailed comments received were read aloud by Greg Larson.

- Email – **Beltrami County Highway Department:** no issues nor concerns with this variance request.

Finding no further public comment, the Chairman closed the floor for public comment on the Carol Heimsoth variance request.

Findings of Fact

1. Is the variance in harmony with the intent of the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and State Shoreline Management Ordinance rules?
Yes (x) No ()
Why? This cabin was built in 1959, prior to the Shoreland Management Ordinance, and has not changed since that date.
2. Without the variance is the owner deprived of a reasonable use of the property?
Yes (x) No ()
Why? Cabin has limited living space and needs more room to add modern amenities.
3. Is the alleged hardship due to circumstances unique to this property?
Yes (x) No ()
Why? Old lot, old cabin – all predates Shoreland Management Ordinance.
4. Were the circumstances causing the hardship created by someone or something other than the landowner or previous landowners?
Yes (x) No ()
Why? The lot and cabin were created prior to the Shoreland Management Ordinance. Rules for building at that time were not the same as current rules.
5. Will the issuance of the variance maintain the essential character of the locality?
Yes(x) No ()
Why? The structure will be no closer to the lake. Cabin not easily seen from the lake and the new addition is small. Neighboring lots have very similar development.
6. Does the alleged hardship involve more than economic consideration?
Yes (x) No ()
Why? Cabin modernization and more living space were considered.

If all answers are "yes" the criteria for granting the variance request have been met.

Motion by Doug Underthun to approve the variance request of Carol Heimsoth with the following conditions: 1.) Storm Water Management Plan must be submitted and approved by Environmental Services prior to any work starting. Todd Stanley seconded the motion.

Motion unanimously carried and approved.

Chairman then closed the Board of Adjustment Public Hearing on the proposed Variance request of Carol Heimsoth.

Variance Request of:

Wayne E Coulthart
27450 Chippewa Paws Ln SE
Pennington, MN 56663

Township:
Body of Water:

Brook Lake
Cass Lake (4-030) GD

The Purpose of:

The applicants are requesting a variance from the Beltrami County Shoreland Ordinance to remove an existing 1,456 square foot cabin built in 1958 located 28' from Cass Lake to be replaced with a new structure to be built at the same setback of 28' with a 44 square foot addition, no closer to the lake. The applicant is also proposing to increase the maximum height of the structure from 14' to 19'. Cass Lake (4-030) is classified as a general development/Mississippi headwaters lake which requires a 100' structure setback.

Legal Description:

Tax Parcel 08.00175.00

That part of Government Lot Two (2), Section Sixteen (16), Township One Hundred Forty-six (146), Range Thirty (30), described as follows: Commencing at a point on the East line of said Lot Two (2), 440.8 feet South of the NW corner of Lot One (1) said Section Sixteen (16); thence North 57 degrees 28 minutes West 310.82 feet to point of beginning; thence South 57 degrees 28 minutes East 100 feet; thence South 9 feet 58 minutes West 129.68 feet; thence South 24 degrees 57 minutes West 130 feet to the shore of Cass Lake, thence northwesterly along the shoreline to a point which is South 20 degree 58 minutes West from point of beginning; thence North 20 degrees 58 minutes East 267 feet to the point of beginning.

Greg Larson gave the staff report, discussing details of the application. The cabin is located 28' from the OHWL of Cass Lake, which is also classified as a Mississippi Headwaters Lake. Maps showing the location of the parcel on GIS mapping were viewed. Photos of the lot and cabin from all angles were also viewed. Proposed addition of 44 square feet results from changing existing 10' X 16' screen room to a 14' X 14' screen room and moving the fireplace chimney from inside the cabin to the outside. There will be no changes to the structure behind the break in the roof line. Parcel is 0.66 acres in size and cabin was built in 1958. The lot was created in 1901. Variances for home additions to the non-lake side of the cabin were received in 2005 and 2020. The existing septic system is compliant. Lot is currently at 24% impervious surface coverage. Staff recommends approval of the proposed new roof height of 19' on the existing 26' X 28' structure and addition of 44 square feet with the submittal and approval of a Storm Water Management Plan.

Wayne Coulthart approached the podium and explained how these changes will make the cabin more user-friendly. Overall, they will be losing one bedroom, but the remaining bedrooms will be larger. Currently, there is little to no insulation in the original part of the cabin. This cabin used to be part of a resort and never had enough room for a dining room. Parents slept on the couch so each child could have their own 9' X 9' bedroom. Since 2001, owners have been spending five nights a week at the cabin and 2 nights a week with their aging parents in North Dakota. Owners would like to install floor heat. Currently, the cabin sits on a slab with no

footings. The homemade rafters in the old cabin are starting to sag and heave. The new taller structure would include two gable ends for more room and possible loft sleeping area. 38' of the 44 square foot increase is the screen porch. The remaining 6 square feet is for the chimney addition. There would be one tree, or a large part of that same tree, that would have to be removed for this project to proceed. There is a low spot in the back yard where all the neighborhood water runoff collects. Gutters and a Storm Water Management Plan were required for the 2020 variance at this location.

The Board opened the floor for public comment. There were no emailed or mailed comments received.

Finding no public comment, the Chairman closed the floor for public comment on the Wayne Coulthart variance request.

Findings of Fact

1. Is the variance in harmony with the intent of the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and State Shoreline Management Ordinance rules?
Yes (x) No ()
Why? This cabin was built in 1958, prior to the Shoreland Management Ordinance. Very minimal changes are being requested, the existing footprint will be used for the rebuild.
2. Without the variance is the owner deprived of a reasonable use of the property?
Yes (x) No ()
Why? The condition of the original cabin requires action in order to continue use.
3. Is the alleged hardship due to circumstances unique to this property?
Yes (x) No ()
Why? The age of the old original resort cabin requires upgrades.
4. Were the circumstances causing the hardship created by someone or something other than the landowner or previous landowners?
Yes (x) No ()
Why? The original structure was a resort cabin and not intended for year-round use. The cabin is now being used year-round and needs insulation and heat.
5. Will the issuance of the variance maintain the essential character of the locality?
Yes (x) No ()
Why? Structures on nearby lots are at about the same setbacks and of similar size.
6. Does the alleged hardship involve more than economic consideration?
Yes (x) No ()
Why? Cabin modernization and more living space were considerations, not economics.

If all answers are "yes" the criteria for granting the variance request have been met.

Motion by Bruce Poppel to approve the variance request of Wayne Coulthart with the following conditions: 1.) Storm Water Management Plan must be submitted and approved by Environmental Services prior to any work starting. Doug Underthun seconded the motion.

Motion unanimously carried and approved.

Chairman then closed the Board of Adjustment Public Hearing on the proposed Variance request of Wayne Coulthart.

Motion by Bruce Poppel to adjourn the Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment Public Hearing for October 27, 2025. Motion was seconded by Doug Underthun. Motion carried and approved. Chair called the meeting for October 27, 2025, officially adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Brent Rud
Beltrami County ESD Director



Chairman
Beltrami County Planning Commission