

Williamson Central Appraisal District

Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes of October 10, 2019

Charles Chadwell, Chairman, called the regular meeting of the Williamson Central Appraisal District Board of Directors to order Thursday, October 10, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. Board members present: Charles Chadwell, Donald Hisle, Rufus Honeycutt and Larry Gaddes. Harry Gibbs was absent. Jon Jewett arrived later in the meeting. Quorum declared.

Breast Cancer Awareness Photo

The Board recessed at 9:01 a.m. to meet with appraisal district staff for a photo in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. They reconvened at 9:05 a.m.

Pledges of Allegiance

Receipt of Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Taxpayer Liaison Officer's Report

Report on Property Owner Contacts

Charley Rouse, the District's Taxpayer Liaison Officer (TLO), was present to report on the status of his contact with property owners. Rouse reported that, although he had not received any calls from property owners, he did have a few Appraisal Review Board (ARB) items that are being worked through. He announced that he had spoken with the Administrative Law Judge who was looking into these issues.

Jewett arrived at 9:10 a.m.

Update on Appointment of ARB by Administrative Law Judge

Rouse reported on the appointment of the ARB by the Administrative Law Judge. It was announced that there were 13 available ARB positions and 14 applicants. Lankford indicated that he would provide Rouse with a packet of information regarding the applicant requirements; which, it was indicated, had been communicated with the candidates.

Consider approval of minutes of the Board of Directors for the regular meeting – September 5, 2019.

Honeycutt moved for approval of the September 5, 2019 regular meeting minutes as presented. Hisle seconded. The motion carried.

Consideration of Monthly Financials

The August 2019 financials and expenditures were reviewed and filed for audit.

Employee Insurance Reimbursement

Lankford reminded the Board of previous discussions regarding employee insurance and a possible reimbursement program for those employees who spend above the \$5,000 out-of-pocket maximum. The District's insurance consultant, Debra Spellings, was asked to investigate further. Lankford reviewed the insurance numbers concerning employee usage and indicated that, if the Board did decide to proceed, they might consider including a maximum. He discussed the possible increase in liability to the District. Discussion followed.

Lankford reminded the Board of the benefit card that is provided to each employee which staff members use to pay approved expenses. The Board discussed looking into this issue again next year.

No motion made. The insurance reimbursement will remain as is for this year.

Town Hall Meeting

Lankford reminded the Board that they had previously discussed conducting another Town Hall Meeting in the spring. Representative Bucy had offered to speak at this meeting. The Board had also discussed the possibility of having a Town Hall Meeting in the fall prior to tax bills being mailed. It was mentioned that, due to the lack of time, if the Board decided to proceed it could be planned for next year; an insert could be placed in with the tax bills. Gaddes announced that most homeowner's taxes are paid through their mortgage companies.

Gaddes mentioned that he was impressed with the turnout at the last Town Hall Meeting. The Board was reminded that this meeting was advertised on social media and on both the County as well as the appraisal district websites. The Board discussed incorporating the questions from the last Town Hall Meeting into the presentation.

No motion was made. It was mentioned that details would be provided in a future Board Meeting. The Board indicated that they would plan for this Town Hall Meeting to occur in the spring and Representative Bucy's office would organize and secure a location. The District will work with Bucy's office regarding advertising.

Board Training Retreat

Lankford reminded the Board members of the previous training session that Debbie Wheeler had organized for existing members on their policies and procedures. He offered to coordinate this training again. Lankford indicated that the training would outline Board roles and responsibilities, per the Texas Property Tax Code. This would be similar to what is discussed at the annual TAAD (Texas Association of Appraisal Districts) Conference. Jewett requested the highlights be provided of each item. It was mentioned that this training could be conducted at the end of a shorter regular Board Meeting; having the training after the TAAD Conference was also mentioned.

No motion was made.

Chief Appraiser's Report

Chief Appraiser Evaluation

Lankford announced the binder of information regarding his evaluation, including explanations for each item, had been distributed to the members. He indicated that the evaluation and salary determination would be placed on the November Board Meeting agenda. The Board decided they would conduct a separate meeting, to occur at the tax office, to discuss Lankford's evaluation.

Chief Appraiser Compensation

A salary survey had been forwarded to other appraisal districts. Gaddes worked to gather this information and provide a comparison. He indicated that the same comparable items that have been used for several years were used again this year. He also checked the Comptroller's website for data.

Lankford reminded the Board that the Comptroller survey does not include the amount of work done by the appraisal district; things such as the number of new improvements, new homes and protests. He indicated that it also does not take into account the number of property deeds and exemptions, which are some of the major labor drivers for appraisal districts. Some appraisal districts do not have near the amount of work of Williamson County.

Lankford asked that the Board consider either making the adjustment or removing those districts that had a large difference in comparability. He indicated that he would share his spreadsheet of information with the members. Lankford reviewed the areas of comparability.

2020 Planning Session & WCAD Goals

Lankford was happy to report that the District's 2019 goals were completed timely. He also indicated that, during their annual planning meeting, the District's management team had announced their goals for 2020. He reviewed these goals.

#1 MRA ~ Phase 3 – Lankford announced that MRA had been started in the Teravista neighborhood; where the District had used regular analysis to come up with sales comparisons. He indicated that next year, this would be expanded to Round Rock East and Hutto. This year it would expand to Georgetown East, Leander and Round Rock West. He indicated that the appraisal staff would use this analysis when showing the comparison grid to defend property values. The District is looking into sending appraisal notices with the sales comparison on the notice. Lankford announced that this would be a multi-year goal.

#2 Online Update - Lankford indicated that Zoho was a software that handles the District's online chat function but also has a knowledge base. While chatting, it will provide information on the items the person is questioning. He indicated that the District would also like to have the ability, on the website, for owners to see where the comparable properties are showing on the map. The District has been trying to encourage property owners to protest online and are working to make this process more user-friendly.

#3 Revamp the 41.461 Process – Lankford announced that when a tax agent or a property owner files a protest, they have the right to obtain the information that the District will use at the ARB hearing. He mentioned a change in legislation this year that revises the wording from what the appraisal districts “plans to introduce” to what they “will introduce” at the ARB. They also added that this does not include rebuttal evidence. We anticipate that this will increase the amount of work on these requests.

Staff Advancement Plan – Lankford announced that the Staff Advancement Plan would not be included as a goal for 2020; however, it would be something the District would be further investigating.

Just Appraised

Lankford discussed the Just Appraised software which scrapes data from the County Clerks property deeds and gathers information from ours and then pairs this information together. The District would like to be able to mass upload these items to keep them from having to be manually entered. Lankford estimated that 60-70% of the deeds filed could be uploaded. He indicated that once a return-on-investment was calculated, he would provide this information to the Board.

Orion Performance Update

Lankford announced that the District had been looking into the speed of its mass appraisal software (Orion) and that it had exhausted all internal remedies to assist with this speed. He indicated that a 30% increase in speed had been noticed. Tyler Technologies (the District’s software vendor) will need to rewrite the database in order for speed to be increased.

Server Room Fire Suppression / HVAC

Lankford announced that the new HVAC system was installed and is operational. The fire suppression, however, is not yet in working order. A vacuum seal will need to be performed on the room. Lankford hoped that, by the next Board Meeting, the new, much more efficient, system would be ready.

2020 TAAD Conference

Lankford announced that the 2020 Texas Association of Appraisal Districts (TAAD) Conference was scheduled to take place in Dallas on February 23-26, 2020. He invited the Board members to attend and indicated that the agenda would be shared once it was available. He asked that the members notify him if they would like to attend.

Board of Directors Election Update

Lankford provided an update on the Board of Directors election. He announced that nominations by the taxing units were due by October 15th. He was happy to report that all current Board members had been nominated. Lankford indicated that he had conducted several presentations to the taxing units regarding the Board election.

Lawsuit, Arbitration and SOAH Reports

Lankford reviewed the lawsuit and arbitration reports. There were no State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) on which to report.

WCAD Christmas Party

Lankford announced that the District's annual Christmas party was scheduled for Saturday, December 7, 2019 at Uncle Buck's in Round Rock. The party is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. He invited the Board members to attend.

Board Agenda Additions for Future Meeting

There were no agenda additions discussed.

Board Announcements

There were no Board announcements.

The Board set their next meeting dates as follows:

Chief Appraiser Evaluation Meeting: November 6, 2019 at 1 p.m. at the tax office

Regular Meeting: Thursday, November 21, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at the appraisal district

The meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m.

Respectfully,



Charles Chadwell, Chairman



Donald Hisle, Secretary