

Williamson Central Appraisal District

Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes of November 9, 2011

Harry Gibbs, chairman, called the regular meeting of the Williamson Central Appraisal District Board of Directors to order Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at 9:04 a.m. Board members present: Harry Gibbs, Brig Mireles, Robert Tagge, Deborah Hunt and Richard Templeton. Quorum declared.

Receipt of Public Comments

Cheryl Delaney, the Finance Director at the City of Round Rock, along with Misty Gray and Monique Adams were in attendance to recognize Robert Tagge for his years of service on the Williamson Central Appraisal District's Board of Directors along with his service on the District's Appraisal Review Board. Delaney complimented Tagge in regards to the way in which he represented the City of Round Rock and for the hours spent serving on these Boards'. Tagge was presented with a plaque which Delaney read aloud. Tagge commented, indicating that it was a pleasure to represent the city as well as the school district.

Property owner, Paulo Pinto was present to express issues with the appraisal district. He expressed his disappointment to the Board regarding the increase in his property's appraised value. Pinto felt dismissed when speaking with two different appraisers on two different occasions. Along with the issues he's had with individual appraisers, Pinto also felt that the entire appraisal process is in need of revising. Pinto expressed his appreciation to the Board for hearing him today and asked that District employees receive additional training.

Lankford informed the Board that he had corresponded with Pinto, addressing his concerns. The District has concentrated on training personnel on customer service. This is evident in the property owner surveys that have been received; we have a 90-95% satisfaction rate with appraisers and public services personnel. Lankford indicated that unfortunately, there are situations for which we cannot make adjustments. Age depreciation on property is addressed any time we value a home to help in reducing the value.

Lankford informed everyone that the District does look at each issue that Pinto expressed and adjustments are made as needed. Lankford did discuss this issue further with these two particular appraisers and sent another appraiser to review this property. The appraisal that was provided by Pinto was also reviewed. Lankford feels that the value on the property is correct. He indicated that the District strives for employees to give better customer service than Pinto described.

Gibbs thanked Pinto for speaking at the meeting today and indicated that, as a Board, customer service is encouraged. The District strives to make the appraisal process as painless and transparent as possible.

Consider approval of minutes of the Board of Directors for the regular meeting – October 12, 2011.

Tagge moved for approval of the minutes as presented. Mireles seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Monthly Financials and Quarterly Investment Report

Lankford noted the forms and printing portion of the ARB budget did not originally include the advertisement that is used for hiring the ARB.

Hunt asked for clarification regarding the approved disbursement to Lone Star Appraisals and Realty. Lankford indicated that this expense was in relation to a deposition. He reported that overall the District is well under budget in the professional services category. Less money is being spent in litigation than ever before.

September 2011 financials and expenditures were reviewed and filed for audit. The quarterly investment report was also reviewed and filed.

Appraisal Review Board Evaluation Report

Executive session began at 9:24 a.m. and ended at 10:10 a.m.

The meeting recessed at 10:10 a.m. and resumed at 10:19 a.m.

Gibbs left the meeting.

Consideration and possible action on items discussed in executive session

Tagge asked that the District invite the following ARB members to the next Board meeting: Doug Whitlow, Thomas Lemon, and Allen Doiron. An executive session item will be added to the agenda.

No action was taken as a result of executive session.

Apex Sketch Software Purchase

Jay Graber with Apex Software was present to discuss the District's possible purchase of property sketch software. Graber distributed a packet of information to the Board members, which he reviewed. He mentioned that both desktop as well as mobile options were reviewed with this software and demonstrated the sketch software to the Board. We have also looked into using an iPad tablet. Graber indicated he would provide sketching software for whichever system the District decides will meet their needs. Lankford indicated that the District has been very impressed with level of communication and information given from Graber, and that this software is one of the leaders in the state.

Lankford reviewed the goal of the project; to enable an efficient, cost saving, digital sketch process which reduces paper flow and redundancy. A number of field devices have been tested. Orion and Apex can integrate their software's together. Lankford compared Orion Mouse Sketch and Apex Software and pointed out the advantages and benefits with using Apex. He reviewed the current process versus the Apex process. He also reviewed the cost level and the savings that would occur if switching to this software. Lankford showed examples of the current process of parcel handling and compared it to the Apex/field device parcel handling.

Lankford explained the process of incorporating the Apex software. He reviewed the yearly cost savings and the return on investment. Graber reviewed cost information for the different software options.

Lankford informed the Board that in January the District will decide which device it will use. He explained that mobile routing has increased the District's production by 100% in the Personal Property department by using the iPad. The development taking place on the iPad far exceeds the development on the window based devices.

Lankford reminded the Board members that they had set aside reserve monies specifically for the CAMA system and therefore, making this purchase would not affect the budget for our entities. He also mentioned that the maintenance costs could be taken from a Tyler product that is no longer necessary, and therefore this budget would not increase either. Templeton inquired if the District had reviewed other similar software options. Lankford indicated that a total of three options were explored, however the other options would have problems with integration. He also informed the Board that the District has been researching this item for over a year.

Templeton moved to authorize the Chief Appraiser to use CAMA reserve monies from the budget to purchase Apex software and the conversion of sketches. The amount is not to exceed \$13,000 for the initial purchase. Software maintenance for year one is not to exceed \$5,200. The sketch conversion is not to exceed ten cents per sketch for all accounts to be converted. Tagge seconded. The motion carried.

Board Policy Update

Colleen McElroy, the District's Administrative Assistant presented proposed changes to the Board of Director's Policy.

One area of change discussed had to do with the term "taxpayers" versus "property owners", in keeping with the idea of differentiating between the appraisal district and the property tax office. Mireles expressed his preference of keeping the wording as "taxpayers". Tagge would prefer to leave as "property owners".

Hunt inquired about the wording regarding members of the ARB who violate any ARB policies that are contained within the Boards' Policy. The Policy states that these members will be subject to review and action by the Board of Directors. Lankford indicated that the wording was taken from the Texas Property Tax Code.

Hunt moved for approval of the Policy as presented. Tagge seconded. The motion carried 3-1-0 with Hunt, Tagge and Templeton voting for. Mireles opposed. Zero members abstained.

Authorize Chief Appraiser to Accept Proposals on or Renew Current Auditor

Lankford reminded the Board that last year the District had conducted a request for proposal process to choose an auditor. The auditing firm that was chosen was Belt Harris Pechacek, LLLP. Lankford expressed the District's opinion that this firm did a very thorough job. He inquired with the Board members if they would prefer to renew the contract with this current auditor for another year or go out for bid.

Hunt moved to extend the contract of the current auditor for another year. Tagge seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

TCDRS Retirement Lump Sum Contribution

Lankford reminded the Board that each year TCDRS offers the District the option of making an optional contribution to the District's account in order to buy down unfunded liability. He informed the Board that this is a line item in the budget and there will be additional funds at the end of the year. This item was added to the agenda, just in case the Board decided they would like to do so. The Board took no action.

Chief Appraiser's Report

Legislative Update

Lynn Powell, the District's Director of Administration, reviewed one of the District's most impactful legislative changes contained in HB252 regarding residential property homestead exemption requirements. This bill was enacted and took effect on September 1st of this year. Powell reviewed the changes that will occur due to this bill. Our mass homestead mail out will be sent in January where we will include information regarding this issue.

Mireles inquired about existing exemptions. Powell indicated that these exemptions would be grandfathered and no further action would be necessary.

Lankford expressed his appreciation to Hunt and indicated that the District had worked with Larry Gaddes, the Chief Deputy Tax Assessor/ Collector and Hunt to make this a seamless process.

Agricultural Special Valuation During Drought

Tagge had requested additional information regarding how the District handles agricultural special valuation during times of drought. James Griner, the District's Residential Appraisal Manager, read a portion of the Texas Property Tax Code regarding this issue.

The District's policy has been to request property owners to email information on the intention of the use of these properties, to indicate whether or not they intend to return to agricultural use. The drought has mainly affected livestock areas. The District directs property owners to the Williamson County Ag Extension Agent to discuss the removal of animals from the land.

Griner indicated that the District is contacting these property owners. If agricultural use is removed from the property, the property owner will receive a letter indicating this removal. They then have two chances to remedy. Griner indicated that an agricultural audit is done every year.

Notice of Appraised Value Estimated Taxes

Lankford informed the board that a call was received from property owner, William Oberkamp. Oberkamp was upset regarding his estimated tax calculation on his property. His estimated amount of taxes varied extensively from his actual tax bill.

Lankford spoke to Oberkampf regarding this issue and also contacted the District's software vendor, Tyler Technologies. Brian McGrath at Tyler Technologies indicated that this is a very rare circumstance. This home was built in the middle of the year. Due to the exemption, the way the calculation was done it used the lot value from the prior year instead of the value with an improvement. This issue has affected only a small number of properties. In speaking with McGrath, Tyler is working on correcting these calculations to address this rare circumstance.

Oberkampf asked that Lankford address this situation with the Board. Lankford read the letter to the Board members (on file at the District). The process is being changed to address this rare circumstance and this will be a part of the District's quality control procedures.

MAP Review Update

Lankford indicated that the MAP Review Update was placed on the Boards' agenda in hopes that the final report would have been received in time for this month's meeting. Unfortunately this was not the case. This item will be added once the report is received.

Board Election Update

Lankford reported that the final nominations have been received from the entities and six candidates have been nominated for the Board of Directors election; three additional other than Mireles, Hunt and Gibbs. Rufus Honeycutt, Cecilia Crowley, and Mike Pickard were also nominated. He informed the Board that the ballots are due back from the entities by December 15th and our final results are due out by the end of December.

Orion User Group Meeting

Lankford reminded the Board of the Texas Orion User Group meeting that the District hosted last year. This meeting, which was the first, was run by the users and was very successful. It changed the development for Orion for the coming year. Lankford informed the Board that the District was planning another one of these meetings on December 1st at the District office. He also mentioned that possibly in the future, we might look at incorporating a second day regarding collections. The District could host this meeting here at our office as well.

2012 TAAD Conference

Lankford reported on the upcoming TAAD Conference which will be held in Houston. The dates have been set for February 26-29, 2012 at the Marriott Westchase. Lankford asked that the Board members mark their calendars and let him know if they would like to attend.

WCAD Christmas Celebration

Lankford reminded the Board members the WCAD Christmas party will take place on December 9th at 6:30 p.m.

Project Management Training

Lankford informed the Board that Sue Brieland, who came highly recommended by the Travis County Tax Office, came in to present valuable tools for District personnel to use when managing projects.

Arbitration Report

Lankford reviewed the arbitration report.

Lawsuit Report

Lankford reported to the Board that he would like to bring a few completed lawsuits and explain some of the costs associated with these to them at a future meeting. He asked that this discussion be postponed until the two new Board members come aboard in January. He indicated, with the permission of the Board, the District will hold off on this report until the January or February time frame.

Lankford reviewed the current lawsuit report.

Timing of Cost Per Parcel Report

Lankford informed the Board that the District had surveyed other appraisal districts regarding their real parcel counts. He indicated, again, with the Boards' permission, that the District would like to postpone discussion on this item until the January/February timeframe to present to the Board members.

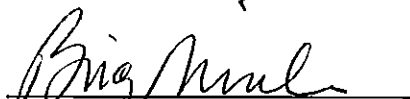
Board Agenda Additions for Future Meeting


The Board members asked that an executive session item be added to the next Board agenda regarding the Appraisal Review Board appointments.

The Board had previously set their December Board meeting for December 15, 2011 at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

Respectfully,


Brig Mireles, Vice Chairman


Robert W. Jaggé, Secretary