

Williamson Central Appraisal District

Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes of January 12, 2012

Harry Gibbs, chairman, called the regular meeting of the Williamson Central Appraisal District Board of Directors to order Thursday, January 12, 2012 at 9:04 a.m. Board members present: Harry Gibbs, Deborah Hunt, Cecilia Crowley and Rufus Honeycutt. Quorum declared. Gibbs welcomed new members, Cecilia Crowley and Rufus Honeycutt, to the meeting.

Representative Charles Schwertner administered the oath of office to the newly elected Board of Directors members for 2012-2013; Harry Gibbs, Deborah Hunt, Cecilia Crowley and Rufus Honeycutt.

Election of Officers

Gibbs announced that he would serve as acting chair to open the meeting. The floor was opened for nominations for officers.

Hunt nominated Harry Gibbs as chairman. Honeycutt seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Gibbs nominated Deborah Hunt as vice chair. Honeycutt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Honeycutt nominated Cecilia Crowley as secretary. Hunt seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Receipt of Public Comments

No public comments. Gibbs complimented District staff overall on a job well done.

Consider approval of minutes of the Board of Directors for the regular meeting – December 15, 2011.

Hunt moved for approval of the minutes as presented. Honeycutt seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Monthly Financials

November 2011 financials and expenditures were reviewed.

Hunt inquired about the expense for attorney firm, Armstrong & Armstrong. Lankford explained that property owner; Scott Hamilton had filed a lawsuit against the Appraisal Review Board. The District has attempted settlement.

After Crowley inquired about budget amendments, Lankford indicated that if using monies from one budget category for another will not affect the taxing units by increasing their allocation, the District amends the budget; otherwise notification would be sent to the taxing units. He reported that, due to the controls that are in place, the budget looks good for the year end. We recently separated the ARB budget from the District budget.

November 2011 financials and expenditures were filed for audit.

Vacancy on Board of Directors

Lankford informed the Board members that former member, Brig Mireles, would not be a member for the 2012-13 term and therefore the Board would have a vacancy.

Lankford reviewed procedures for filling a vacancy on the Board. He informed the Board that they would vote on the nominees received from the taxing units. He also indicated that it would take 45 days from the time entities receive notification to obtain nominees and another five days to get the information to the Board. It appears that at the March Board meeting the members would vote on the vacancy and the new member would hopefully take office in April.

Honeycutt requested to revise the wording in the letter to the entities to more strongly encourage them to provide resume information on their nominations. Hunt requested a punctuation addition as well.

Honeycutt moved for approval of the letter with the changes indicated above. Crowley seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Voting Delegate for TAAD Conference

Lankford explained, for the benefit of the new members, regarding Texas Association of Appraisal Districts (TAAD). Each year the voting delegate and alternate for the annual TAAD Conference is selected by the Board.

Honeycutt nominated Alvin Lankford as the voting delegate for the Williamson Central Appraisal District for TAAD's annual conference meeting. Crowley seconded.

Gibbs indicated that he would be unable to attend this TAAD Conference and extended an invitation to the new Board members. New members will be provided an agenda for the Conference.

Honeycutt nominated Deborah Hunt as the delegate alternate. Crowley seconded. Both motions carried unanimously.

Technology Reserve Purchase of Signature Pads

Lankford reported that when the District has surplus funds, the Board decides what to do with these funds. The Board sometimes buys down the budget or moves monies to reserve accounts. Lankford reviewed the District's reserve funds. He reported having a \$150,000 balance in the technology reserve account. One of the District's goals for this year is to continue to go paperless and become more efficient. The first step in the paperless process is during the inquiry period; a time when people can come in without an appointment and visit with an appraiser.

Lankford reviewed the inquiry process flow chart with the Board members and informed them that we are attempting to streamline this process. He discussed the purchase of signature pads, which would be used to sign off on property owner valuations; among other things. This new process would save the District around \$1,500 in the first year. Although we will need about 38 signature pads, we would recommend purchasing 40 pads in order to have a few for reserve. The \$4,840 spent on these would help with our goal of going paperless.

Lankford reported that the software and yearly updates for these pads are free and our appraisal system accepts this product. We have tested and feel that this is the best device to meet our needs. Dave Matheny, Appraisal Director, explained advantages of this particular product.

Hunt moved for approval of the purchase of signature pads. Honeycutt seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Appraisal Review Board Member Appointment

Lankford mentioned that it was brought to the District's attention by the Appraisal Review Board (ARB) selection committee that one of ARB members selected is disqualified due to working for another taxing unit. The Committee was very impressed with another applicant, James Hedges, who they also interviewed. He was not chosen due to the geographic balance for which the ARB strives. Glenda Lloyd, the District's Entry/ARB Operations Manager, encouraged Hedges to apply for future years, and explained to him that this was simply a geographic issue. Gibbs inquired about Hedges willingness to serve, to which Lloyd indicated she felt he would be willing.

Hunt recommended appointing James Hedges to fill the ARB vacancy. Honeycutt seconded.

There was further discussion. Honeycutt inquired if the District makes an effort to also mix the geographic within the ARB panels. It was explained that typically the ARB rotates panel members which is the responsibility of the ARB Chairman. Therefore, no members are always in the same panel room. Panel members are mixed due to experience or non-experience, however, this could be recommended by the Board to the ARB. This could be discussed with the ARB Chairman. Lloyd has not seen this as an issue in the past. Gibbs indicated that the Board has tried to balance the ARB geographically.

The motion carried unanimously.

Gibbs asked that those staff members in attendance at today's meeting introduce themselves. Lynn Powell, Director of Administrative Services, Kimberly Gamboa, Business Services Manager, Pam Orr, Director of Operations, Glenda Lloyd, Entry/ARB Operations Manager, Jennifer Austin, Director of Appraisal Operations, Dave Matheny, Director of Appraisal Analysis/Special Projects, and Chris Connelly, Deputy Chief Appraiser introduced themselves.

Chief Appraiser's Report

MAP Review Update

Lankford informed the Board members that the MAP (Methods and Procedures) Review update was placed on the Board agenda in hopes that a report would be received prior to today's meeting.

Lankford explained, for the new members benefit, that the Comptroller's office does an audit each year to make sure appraisal districts are performing properly. They either conduct a Property Value Study or a MAP Review each year. This is a very important part of the process. The MAP Review is an audit of our procedures. Although we have not received the report, we have received word that we have exceeded in all categories. This item will be discussed at a future meeting.

2012 WCAD Goals

Lankford reviewed the 2012 goals

Field Devices – Lankford reported that the District is beginning to use devices like the iPad or tablet in order to try to go paperless and streamline its processes. The appraiser, while in the field, would do the entry to shortcut the process. We are trying to accomplish this goal this year.

Starting in August of 2012, we will try to have all residential appraisers in the field with a device. We are also defining interaction with Apex to draw homes and input into our appraisal system. We are updating all field procedures using a device. We are hoping to use devices on all field checks to check properties. We will utilize the GIS functionality in the field to route and monitor location and progress. All field procedures will be updated to include device usage.

Queue System – Lankford reported that the District plans to add multiple properties in one queue item; create a web based interface and add the length of time the property owner is with an employee for management purposes. The ability to selectively choose a property owner (if necessary) is also a goal for the District. A workflow will be re-designed to accommodate these changes.

Disaster Recovery Plan – Lankford reported that the District does not currently have a disaster recovery plan; however, we feel this is an important goal on which we are currently working.

Online Homestead Forms – The District is working towards making forms that can be filled and submitted directly on the website.

More paperless environment – Lankford reported that the more paperless environment goal was discussed earlier in the meeting during the signature pad device consideration.

Crowley inquired if the District participated in offsite storage. Lankford indicated that backups are kept offsite in safe deposit boxes. The District will formalize the plan to know exactly what will happen if these issues arise.

Ag Advisory Committee

Lankford informed the Board that the Ag Advisory Committee is a group of citizens who advise the District on how things are progressing in the agricultural community. James Griner, the Residential Appraisal Manager which includes Ag, was present. Griner provided the Board members with the names of the individuals who were willing to serve on the District's Ag Advisory Committee.

The Tax Code indicates that this Board is only required to meet once yearly; however Griner would like to continue meeting twice. Griner reported having varying representation throughout the county and reviewed the background of the members.

Lankford informed the Board that this was being brought to them today for any input or suggestions they might have regarding this Committee and indicated that this issue would be brought to the Board each year. This Committee will be discussed at the February meeting.

TAAD Appriser Board Member Email Listing

Lankford reported that the Appriser magazine that arrives from TAAD (Texas Association of Appraisal Districts) for Board members is offered digitally. Each member requested to receive this publication via email.

Arbitration Report

Lankford explained the procedures for using the arbitration process. The current binding arbitrations were reviewed. The cost is \$250 express arbitration or \$500 for regular arbitration. He further explained that depending on the outcome will decide who pays for the arbitration. If the value is found to be closer to the District's value, the property owner pays the fee and vice versa. Lankford informed the Board that the Comptroller's office sets the arbitration.

Lawsuit Report

Lankford reminded the Board that the closer we are to valuation time, the more likely we are to get a lawsuit. He reviewed the Lawsuit Report. He also reviewed the lawsuit procedures for the new Board members. Lankford indicated that, at the February Board meeting, the District would give a demonstration on a couple of lawsuit properties. He informed the Board that lawsuits cost the District between \$200,000 and \$400,000 each year.

Hunt asked for an explanation regarding the Scott Hamilton lawsuit. Lankford and Chris Connelly, the District's Deputy Chief Appraiser, indicated that the property owner had submitted an affidavit instead of appearing for a hearing. The affidavit was signed by his wife. The ARB did not consider the evidence because they felt this to be a conflict of interest. The ARB granted him a hearing. The ARB must have a separate attorney from the appraisal district. The district judge can grant him a hearing.

Board Agenda Additions for Future Meeting

No further agenda items were suggested.

The next regular meeting was set for Thursday, February 16, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

Respectfully,


Harry Gibbs, Chairman


Cecilia Crowley, Secretary