

Williamson Central Appraisal District

Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes of September 10, 2020

Charles Chadwell, Chairman, called the regular meeting of the Williamson Central Appraisal District Board of Directors to order Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. Board members present Charles Chadwell, Harry Gibbs, Donald Hisle, Rufus Honeycutt, Jon Lux and Larry Gaddes. Quorum declared.

Pledges of Allegiance

Receipt of Public Comments

There were no public comments.

New Manager Introductions

Lankford introduced two new members of the District's management staff. He announced that Johnny Robins, who was originally hired into a consulting management position, had assisted with rewriting procedures in the Land Appraisal department this year. Robins is being promoted to the Assistant Director of Appraisal.

Lankford also introduced Jamie Radke who had been hired as the new Public Services Manager. He announced that Radke had come from a restaurant management background. Robins and Radke were congratulated.

Taxpayer Liaison Officer's Report

Report on Property Owner Contacts

Charley Rouse, the District's Taxpayer Liaison Officer, reported on the status of his contact with property owners. Rouse mentioned one owner who had been assisted by Aaron Stenulson, the District's Land Appraisal Manager. He expressed his appreciation to Stenulson for his work in resolving this issue.

Rouse discussed several other calls he had received. He voiced his appreciation to District staff for their prompt response on issues.

Update on Appraisal Review Board Application Process

Rouse also provided an update regarding the Appraisal Review Board (ARB) application process. He announced that the updated ARB application had been provided to the judge for review. It was indicated that the District had placed a new advertisement for the ARB in the Community Impact newspaper as well as on the neighborhood hub, Nextdoor, to communicate the District's need for ARB applicants.

2021 Budget Workshop

Entity Budget Overview Meetings

Lankford, along with Deputy Chief Chris Connelly and Kimberly Gamboa, the District's Business/HR Manager visited with several of the District's largest entities regarding the District's budget. He announced that the 2021 budget had been very well received by the taxing units. Lankford indicated that during his meetings, he had mentioned the idea of the District possibly discussing a 3% merit salary increase.

2021 Budget Review

Lankford announced that he had removed QLess, the queuing software that had previously been presented to the Board, from the maintenance contracts budget category. This queuing software, which the District had begun utilizing during the Coronavirus pandemic, ended up proving to be very inflexible and therefore the District exercised its right to back out of the contract. Lankford announced that this had brought the total budget down to \$9,847,900 with a 2% merit raise. The 3% merit raise would bring the budget total to \$9,875,300 which is still below the proposed budget amount sent to the entities.

Lankford reviewed the entity salary survey. He indicated that the taxing units were proposing between a 2-3% raise. He expressed the excellent job done by staff in timely certifying the appraisal roll with the added challenge of the Coronavirus pandemic. Lankford expressed his recommendation that the District staff receive a 3% merit increase. He indicated that the District's budget must be approved by the Board of Directors by September 14th. Discussion followed.

Chadwell, who voiced his appreciation for what the District had done throughout the current crisis, mentioned that most schools would be needing to make budget cuts.

Public Hearing on 2021 Proposed Budget

Chadwell opened the public hearing on the 2021 proposed budget. The public hearing was closed.

2021-2022 Reappraisal Plan

Lankford announced that Chris Connelly, the District's Deputy Chief Appraiser, handled the reappraisal plan which is reviewed every two years as part of the Property Tax Code requirements.

Connelly reviewed the changes that had been made to the reappraisal plan. Lankford announced that Connelly had been complimented by several individuals at IAAO (International Association of Assessing Officers) regarding the online appeals training he had provided during the IAAO Conference.

Public Hearing on 2021-2022 Reappraisal Plan

Chadwell opened the public hearing on the 2021-2022 reappraisal plan. The public hearing was closed.

Approval of 2021 Budget (Resolution #2020-03)

Hisle made a motion for approval of the 2021 budget as submitted with a 3% merit salary increase for employees for a total budget amount of \$9,875,300. Lux seconded. Discussion followed.

Gibbs inquired about the possibility of buying down the budget with reserve monies and requested an amendment to the motion.

Gibbs amended the motion to approve the 2021 budget with a 3% merit salary increase for employees for a total budget amount of \$9,875,300, utilizing the building reserve account for an additional buydown of \$27,400. Hisle seconded. Discussion followed.

Chadwell, who had expressed his appreciation for the District's hard work, wanted to remind the staff that, although this increase is able to be given this year, this type of increase may not be possible in the future. Gaddes voiced that the performance of the District team and organization was outstanding. He asked Lankford to share with staff that he was greatly appreciative of the work done to certify the roll timely. Lankford indicated that he would convey this message to District staff. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of 2021-2022 Reappraisal Plan (Resolution #2020-04)

Hisle moved for approval of the Reappraisal Plan as submitted. Lux seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The Board thanked Connelly for his work.

Tyler Assessment Connect Proposal

Lankford announced that K.C. McDade, the District's Director of Operations, was present to discuss Tyler Technologies Assessment Connect solution. McDade reminded members of Socrata, another similar product, that was presented to them a few years earlier. The District was invited to participate in an early adopter program; however, Socrata was out of reach financially. Assessment Connect has been tailored and made specific to appraisal districts. This product will allow data to be more discoverable as well as link directly with the District's appraisal software. Data tools and software will be updated and shared automatically across other appraisal districts. McDade announced that property owners would be able to utilize the data portal and download information.

Lankford indicated that the use of the Socrata software was originally going to cost around \$800,000, which local government offices could not afford. It was indicated that, if the District purchased this new software, set up and training would be provided for District staff. The clean-up of the data was discussed. It was also indicated that the data used for this product is constantly being updated by District staff and it would provide for internal and external consumption of data as well as maintain homestead audit information.

TrueRoll is a proactive exemption monitoring platform which would benefit the District by increased revenues and taxation equity, increased data access and automation of manual tasks, in addition to an immediate, significant return on investment.

Lankford announced that Tyler Technologies, who is pairing with TrueRoll would be providing this software at no additional cost. He indicated that if the Board decides to proceed, the proposal will incorporate three years total. The cost would be \$70,015 for the first year, \$50,565 for the second and \$58,100 for the third year. \$188,680 for 3-year total price. Lankford indicated that this amount was not included in the budget for 2021; however, the District has various reserve accounts that could be utilized. Lankford suggested paying the first-year amount of \$70,015 and then budgeting for this expense in future years, when the building will also be paid off. This contact would include all support, training, unlimited access to all data and unlimited education courses.

Hisle moved for approval of the Tyler Assessment Connect proposal as presented. Also utilizing \$70,015 out of the technology reserve account. Gibbs seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Status Update

Emergency Funds Approval

Lankford indicated that the District had additional expenditures related to the Coronavirus this month that needed the Board's approval. He was happy to report that most of these funds had been approved for reimbursement with the County Commissioners Court utilizing the Cares Act funds.

Hisle made a motion to approve the previously spent emergency funds in response to needs brought by the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak. These funds were used to provide supplies for employees and the Appraisal Review Board. The total expenditure was \$10,071.34. Lux seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Chief Appraiser Compensation Process & Timeline

Lankford reminded the Board that the Chief Appraiser evaluation and process would be included on their agenda until their November meeting. Gaddes announced that he had sent a data request to appraisal districts throughout the state on the behalf of the Board. Gaddes requested data regarding their operations and Chief Appraiser salaries. This item will be discussed further at the October Board meeting. No motion was made.

Chief Appraiser Review Questions

Lankford announced that the Chief Appraiser review questions had been revised several years ago. He indicated that they had been provided to the Board in case of any requested changes. The Board discussed the need for setting a meeting date to discuss the Chief Appraiser salary. No changes were requested to the Chief Appraiser review questions and therefore no motion was made.

Employee Holiday Approval

Lankford announced that the District, unlike the County office, likes to have set days off for staff, as opposed to floating holidays. He discussed possible additional holidays for District employees. He mentioned the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and the Tuesday after Labor Day.

Hisle moved to adopt the District's holidays as presented. Lux seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Consent / Possible Action Items

The consent agenda includes non-controversial and routine items that the Board may act on with one single vote. Any Board member may pull any item from the consent agenda in order that the Board discuss and act upon it individually as part of the regular agenda.

Consent Agenda Items:

Approval of Minutes of the Board of Directors for the regular meeting – July 9, 2020

Monthly Financials

Quarterly Investment Report

Quarterly Taxing Unit Payments

Hisle made a motion to approve the consent agenda (items XII. A-D) as presented. Gibbs seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The June and July 2020 financials and expenditures were reviewed and filed for audit.

Chief Appraiser's Report

Tax Rate Website Update

Lankford displayed and discussed the tax rate website. Gaddes announced that the tax office would be handling the export of comments received; forwarding these comments to each individual taxing unit who will then share with their governing bodies before they make decisions on setting tax rates.

Lankford indicated that next year the tax estimate would be removed from the appraisal notice and that location will be replaced with this website information.

Property Owner Surveys

Lankford discussed the two versions of the property owner surveys that were provided to the Board members. The first version pertains to the virtual hearings that were conducted by the District during the pandemic. The second version represents the property owner surveys from those who visited the District's office in-person. Lankford announced that appraisers and Public Services personnel are able to view their individual results and additional training is provided as needed.

Chadwell commented on his appreciation of the great feedback and felt the comments were in line with what was seen in the past.

WCAD Presentation

Lankford indicated that he had done a presentation with Gaddes for Coldwell Banker Real Estate company. During the presentation appraisal values were discussed as well as how the tax system works.

Protest Season Update

Lankford announced that the District had a total of 54,405 appeals; this includes online and non-online. He felt the reduction, compared to the last few years, was due to the District's conservative valuation. He reminded the Board that the District had started with virtual hearings to keep people from having to come to the office during the pandemic. He indicated that the in-person lobby queue data shows a 74% reduction in visitors to the District's lobby. This speaks to the efforts to keep staff and ARB personnel safe during the pandemic.

Lawsuit, Arbitration and SOAH Reports

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

WCAD Christmas Party

Lankford announced that if the District is able to conduct its annual Christmas party for staff, this event is scheduled to take place on Saturday, December 5th. This year this festivity is planned to take place at Lonestar River Boat's in Austin.

Board Agenda Additions for Future Meeting

The executive session for the Chief Appraiser salary discussion will be included on the October Board agenda.

Board Announcements

There were no Board announcements.

The Board set their next meeting dates as follows:

Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.
Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

A separate meeting will be set for the Board members to discuss the Chief Appraiser salary.

The meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully,



Charles Chadwell, Chairman



Donald Hisle, Secretary