

Williamson Central Appraisal District

Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes of July 9, 2020

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

This meeting was conducted via a Ring Central videoconference.

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 Office, reported on the status of his contact with property owners. It was reported that all current issues had been resolved.

Update on Appraisal Review Board

Rouse also provided an update regarding the Appraisal Review Board (ARB) member appointments. He reported that, due to the current pandemic, reaching the judge had been a little more difficult; but that these issues were being handled.

Gaddes discussed written communication he had received from a property owner concerning an ARB decision regarding a late protest. Gaddes indicated that he had responded with a written letter indicating that his office does not have authority over ARB decisions. Lankford clarified that the correspondence received had a postmarked date of May 18th; therefore, the protest had been denied due to it being received after the May 15th deadline. He informed the Board that when determining a deadline, the postmark of the envelope is the indicator of whether the document was received timely. It was also discussed that the Tax Assessor-Collector cannot address specific appraisal district business; however, the tax code does allow for him to share documents with the Chief Appraiser.

2021 Budget Workshop

Employee Insurance Presentation

Lankford announced that Debra Spellings and Letty De La Garza, the District's insurance consultants with Benefits 360, were present virtually. Spellings mentioned that the District's benefit program was up for renewal and that she had researched the marketplace. United Health Care (UHC), the District's current provider, was initially asking for a nine percent increase.

Spellings informed the Board that a proposal was also obtained from Humana which was much more competitive. After negotiations, UHC had offered a rate pass for the District's renewal. The insurance benefits with UHC, who has been the District's provider for several years, will be the same as they have been for the last couple of years. It was also discussed that the out-of-pocket maximums were looking to be decreased; however, the premium increase was not worth the cost.

Spellings informed the Board that the District's dental insurance had also been provided by UHC and that a rate pass had been given for this insurance as well. She indicated that Humana had given a slightly lower rate, but she recommended staying with UHC for the District's dental insurance.

Spellings recommended renewing with UHC for the District's vision insurance to avoid disruption. She indicated that short-term disability was administered by Sun Life and long-term was provided through Lincoln Financial Group. There had been no increase associated with either of these insurances.

Entity Budget Overview Meetings

Lankford reminded the members that following the approval of the proposed budget in June, the District begins meeting with the top twelve taxing units by size and contribution to the budget. He indicated that this year, due to the pandemic, these meetings would be conducted virtually. Lankford reviewed the budget overview presentation.

2021 Budget Review

Lankford discussed the updated entity salary survey information. He informed the Board that the District generally does not send a final budget number that is above the proposed number sent to the taxing units. He also indicated that with the insurance rate pass, which was discussed earlier in the meeting, this brought the District's total budget number down to where a three percent raise for staff for 2021 brings a total amount of \$9,885,500. This number is below the proposed number sent to the entities in June. Lankford announced that the group health insurance was the only change in the budget since the Board's last meeting.

Employee Insurance

Hisle made a motion to accept the recommendation by Benefits 360, the District's insurance consultant, to continue with the current insurance provider, United Health Care. UHC has offered the District a rate pass for their medical, dental and vision insurances. He also moved to continue utilizing Sun Life for the District's short-term disability and Lincoln Financial for long-term disability. Lux seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Resource Software International Ltd. (RSI) Cloud Reporting Services Agreement

Lankford discussed cloud reporting statistics for the District's phone system.

Hisle made a motion to approve the agreement with Resource Software International for the District's cloud reporting concerning communication management for a total price of \$684. Lux seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Designation of WCAD Public Information Officer

Lankford announced that the District's Public Services Manager, Pam Metcalfe, who also serves as the Public Information Officer, would be retiring soon. He indicated that he was requesting to temporarily assign these duties to Jessica Miller, the District's Assistant Director of Operations, who had taken the public information training. Lankford indicated that this item would be brought back to the Board at a later date.

Hisle made a motion to temporarily assign Jessica Miller, the Assistant Director of Operations, as the District's Public Information Officer. Lux seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Status Update

Emergency Funds Approval

Lankford announced that since the Board's last meeting, \$1,673.29 in emergency funds had been spent due to the Coronavirus. He indicated that this was for a variety of items including, signs for the parking lot, plexiglass and some supplies for the public entering the building. The status of staff working from home was discussed. Lankford indicated that in the future the District would be looking into allowing staff to work from home on a rotating basis.

Honeycutt 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 \$1,673.29. Hisle seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Consider approval of minutes of the Board of Directors for the regular meeting – June 11, 2020.

Lux moved for approval of the minutes as presented. Hisle seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Monthly Financials

The May 2020 financials and expenditures were reviewed and filed for audit.

Chief Appraiser's Report

Property Owner Surveys

Lankford reminded Board members that, up until recently, the District was only conducting virtual hearings and meeting with agents. He informed them that property owners choosing virtual hearings were provided a link to the property owner survey upon completion of their hearing and that paper survey cards would be provided for in-person hearings.

Lankford reviewed the process for property owners who meet virtually with an appraiser / the ARB. Continuing to provide virtual hearings in coming years was discussed and is being investigated according to Lankford. Gaddes mentioned the possibility of including a tutorial video on the District's website outlining this process.

Protest Season Update

Lankford provided a protest season update indicating that the District had 93.6% of its properties that were currently not under protest. He announced that by early next week this number would increase to 95%; that certification processing would take place and documents would be sent to the taxing units by the following week. He applauded District staff for such a huge accomplishment, certifying timely as in prior years, in the year of a pandemic. Honeycutt mentioned how proud he was of the District's staff for their achievement.

Senate Bill 2 and the fact that it allows for appraisal districts to certify with a written estimate to each of the taxing units was discussed. Although this law was put in place for other reasons, which Gaddes expounded on, Lankford announced that it would be helpful in response to the pandemic. He indicated that this would place an enormous amount of pressure on the chief appraiser to provide accurate estimates. Gaddes expressed his appreciation for the District providing an actual appraisal roll as opposed to an estimate indicating that this was one less issue to overcome during such a different year.

Tax Rate Website

Lankford displayed the tax rate website and explained that beginning next year the tax estimate, which is listed on the back of the appraisal notice, would be removed and replaced by a tax rate website. He announced that a postcard listing this website would be sent this year. This postcard shows contact information for each individual taxing unit.

Lankford announced that the postcard, which by law must be mailed by August 7th, would be sent on August 5th. He also indicated that the 2020 information would be live on the tax rate website as of August 7th. He indicated that this postcard would be sent to each individual property owner as well as each agent on record at the District.

Chief Appraiser Evaluation & Compensation Reminder

Lankford reminded the Board that the time of year had come to discuss the Chief Appraiser evaluation and compensation. He reviewed the process that the Board had put in place. Lankford asked that members notify him of any requested changes to the evaluation form.

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.

Board Agenda Additions for Future Meeting

There were no specific items discussed for future meetings.

Board Announcements

Lankford indicated that Chadwell had requested additional information regarding the District's worker's compensation / life insurance program pertaining to if there were ever a death while on duty. Lankford confirmed that the Texas Association of Counties handles the District's workers compensation program.

The Board had previously set the following meeting date:

Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. Lankford reminded members of the importance of this final budget meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Respectfully,



Charles Chadwell, Chairman



Donald Hisle, Secretary