

Williamson Central Appraisal District

Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes of August 12, 2021

Charles Chadwell, Chairman, called the regular meeting of the Williamson Central Appraisal District Board of Directors to order Thursday, August 12, 2021, at 9:01 a.m. Board members present; Charles Chadwell, Donald Hisle, Jon Lux and Lora Weber. Harry Gibbs and Larry Gaddes attended the meeting virtually. Quorum declared.

This meeting was conducted via a combination of a RingCentral videoconference as well as in person. Some of the District's management staff attended the meeting.

Pledges of Allegiance

Receipt of Public Comments

Susan Morgan, the Chief Financial Officer with the City of Round Rock, was present. Morgan mentioned a survey that was previously submitted where the District had requested feedback from its entities; she wanted to share some of her experiences with the Board members firsthand. She announced the City of Round Rock's continued commitment to transparency especially when it comes to adopting their tax rate. Morgan wanted the Board to understand that quality and trust starts when the appraisal district sends the appraisal notices to property owners and that the accuracy, along with the District's decision to provide the comparable property information, changes the creditability to all the elected officials. She also announced the high level of quality Lankford shows with the Texas Comptroller, and others. Morgan mentioned her appreciation for the Board's work, and the efforts Lankford puts forth. She announced the great support she had received throughout the years from Lankford and the District's staff.

Chadwell announced that both Danielle Weston and Chris Kinman, who were interested in the appraisal district Board of Director process, were present.

2022 Budget Workshop

Entity Budget Overview Meetings

Lankford announced that he, Chris Connelly, the District's Deputy Chief Appraiser and Kimberly Gamboa, the Business Human Resources Manager, meet individually with the District's largest taxing units regarding the District's budget overview. He announced that, although the budget overview is provided to all the District's entities, the top 12 get a personal visit. Lankford reviewed the overview packet pointing out a few important dates. He discussed the annual June 14th deadline for the preliminary budget to be sent to the taxing units. He also mentioned the September 14th deadline for the adoption of the District's final budget.

Lankford announced that even though the District's workload had heightened dramatically, its employee count and budget had not increased at the same rate. He attributed the savings in cost per dollar per total levy to the District's continued use of technology.

Lankford explained how appraisal district comparisons are done and indicated that the parcel count is controlled by each individual district. He indicated that the District measured over 10,000 homes in the prior year due to the growth in Williamson County and reminded the members (as was shown during a previous meeting) that property owner protests had dropped when they should have increased. Lankford also reminded the Board that the District had achieved 95% of properties not under protest, the rate required to certify the appraisal roll, the earliest it ever had on July 2nd. This certification translates to enabling the taxing units to continue their process.

Lankford reviewed some of the District's accomplishments. He announced that, although the District's purpose is to appraise property, many property owners come to the office to discuss property taxes. Lankford indicated that educating the public about the process is being addressed on the District's website through its videos. He announced that the District's Public Services staff have been doing an outstanding job which shows in the District's Google reviews.

Taxpayer Liaison Officer's Report

Report on Property Owner Contacts

Charley Rouse, the District's Taxpayer Liaison Officer, was present to report on the status of his contact with property owners. He announced that each issue is investigated by the appraisal district staff. Rouse expressed his appreciation for the support received and that most issues are addressed within one day.

2022 Budget Review

Lankford announced that the only change to the 2022 proposed budget since the Board's last meeting was pertaining to the District's insurance. He announced that this rate was able to be reduced to a five percent increase. Lankford reminded the members that they had previously approved the proposed budget which had been sent to the entities and that the final budget approval would occur at the September Board Meeting.

Lankford reviewed the entity salary survey updates which were provided to the members.

Consider approval of minutes of the Board of Directors for the regular meeting – June 10, 2021, and July 8, 2021.

Hisle made a motion to approve both the June 10, 2021, and July 8, 2021, minutes as presented. Weber seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Monthly Financials and Quarterly Investment Report

The May and June 2021 financials and expenditures were reviewed and filed for audit. The Quarterly Investment Report was also reviewed.

Website Minutes Search Function

Per a request from a previous meeting, Lankford displayed how the District's website search function operates when searching for items located within the Board Meeting minutes.

Land Use Change Detection Services Agreement with HyperVerge, Inc.

Lankford introduced K.C. McDade, the District's Director of Operations. McDade presented a creative solution, similar to Eagle View which handles the photography, that would detect changes in land use. McDade explained how property imagery is utilized and how this company uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to detect changes in the land. Discussion followed.

Lankford indicated that, since the initial results appear to be promising, the District would most likely look at utilizing this detection every two years. Discussion followed.

Hisle moved to approve the agreement with HyperVerge, Inc. for land change use detection. The total cost of this project at \$0.20 per parcel is \$12,060. Lux seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Chief Appraiser's Report

WCAD Presentations

Lankford mentioned a presentation he had done with Gaddes for Coldwell Banker where they provided a general overview of the functions of both the appraisal district and the tax office. He also announced a recent presentation he had done, during the Legislative Conference, regarding legislative bills that did not pass during the previous session.

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 Recognition

Lankford reviewed several recognition's that the District had received. He indicated that he wanted to share these with the Board, letting them know the acknowledgment the District had received for the change in the way information is provided to those outside the office.

Property Owner Surveys

Lankford announced that final results for the Property Owner Surveys were in for the year. He indicated that 2,100 surveys had been received and that those ranged from a 97-99% satisfaction rating. Lankford announced that appraisers are explaining the process very well. He expressed how proud he was of these results.

Taxing Unit Survey Results

Lankford announced that it had been several years since a taxing unit survey had been conducted. He reminded the Board that the District has three focal points for service; customers, employees, and taxing units. He reported receiving very good results from these surveys which were sent to city managers, finance staff, city council members and other elected officials including county commissioners, superintendents, etc. (some of which do not have direct contact with the District's office). Lankford pointed out a few comments indicating how proud he was of District staff.

Information Risk Management

Lankford reminded the Board that they had started conversations at their last meeting regarding the need to be cautious about sharing certain information. He announced that, between the Director team and he, the District has many years of experience in appraisal district history. Lankford had asked this team to share their experiences regarding tax agents using provided information against appraisal districts and why performing risk management was so important.

Connelly displayed some marketing materials appearing on tax agents' websites. He showed examples of how these agents misinform, distract, and confuse property owners in order to increase their client count. Connelly explained the way mass appraisal, the method the District must use to appraise, is done and how the District is here to obtain the correct value, not the lowest value. He announced that this is a service to property owners.

It was announced that the District was the first to place informational videos on its website showing appraisal district operations. The District is also proud to be the first to provide comparable property information to owners. Aaron Moore, the District's Director of Appraisal, was present to discuss this topic. Moore, who deals one-on-one with agents, indicated that they represent over fifty percent of the District's appeals. He pointed out that some misrepresent information received from the appraisal district. Moore also indicated that, Johnny Robins, the District's Assistant Director of Appraisal, who was not able to attend the meeting, had specific examples. He provided one such example where the agent had used one small piece of misinformation to get the attention of the public. He announced that this also affected the morale of the staff at this particular office.

Jessica Miller, the District's Assistant Director of Operations, indicated that some appraisal progress reports could be used against the District. If the agents were to find out the District's progress towards certification, accounts could be held thereby delaying the certification of the appraisal roll. Lankford announced that having this information available to agents could prohibit the District from doing its job at the level it currently does. McDade mentioned that even leading up to appeals, preliminary value information is not shared until these values are placed on the appraisal notice. He mentioned that this information could be taken out of context and that some of these conversations, although ready to be discussed with Board members, may not be ready to be shared with the public.

Lankford pointed out that the taxing units do not have individuals who make money by making them look bad. He announced this to be just a small sampling of what the District deals with; he did not want the Board to take this as his not being transparent, but just careful.

The Board recessed for a short break and then entered executive session.

Chief Appraiser Evaluation & Compensation Process

Chief Appraiser Performance & Board Communication

Executive Session began at 11:16 a.m. and ended at 11:35 a.m.

The Board returned to open session at 11:38 a.m.

Consideration and possible action on items discussed in Executive Session

Chief Appraiser Evaluation & Compensation Process

It was announced that the Chief Appraiser evaluation and compensation document that was shared with the Board members would be adopted, and a meeting would be set with the City of Round Rock in September. The Board hoped to get preliminary information together regarding the evaluation and compensation prior to a meeting that would be conducted at the tax office.

Lux made a motion to adopt the Chief Appraiser evaluation and compensation document, as of August 12, 2021, as presented. Hisle seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Lankford expressed his appreciation to each of the Board members for their work on this process. Lux mentioned that the Board had wanted to make the process more refined.

Chief Appraiser Performance & Board Communication

The Board decided that any correspondence of substance, or related to a Board agenda item, should be sent not only to the Chief Appraiser, but also to at least one other Board member.

Board Agenda Additions for Future Meeting

- Chadwell asked that an email be sent should members have any items they would like included on Board agendas.

Board Announcements

Chadwell thanked Lankford for posting the Board packet document on the District's website. Lankford announced that items handed out during the Board's meeting would be added to the website following the meeting.

The following meeting date had previously been set by the Board:

Thursday, September 9, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

Lankford expressed the importance of having a quorum of members for the September Board Meeting due to the final budget consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

Respectfully,



Charles Chadwell, Chairman



Harry Gibbs, Vice Chairman