

Williamson Central Appraisal District

Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes of October 14, 2021

Charles Chadwell, Chairman, called the regular meeting of the Williamson Central Appraisal District Board of Directors to order Thursday, October 14, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. Board members present; Charles Chadwell, Harry Gibbs, Donald Hisle, Jon Lux and Lora Weber. Larry Gaddes arrived a little later in the meeting. Quorum declared.

Some of the District's management staff attended the meeting.

Pledges of Allegiance

Receipt of Public Comments

Carol Frey, the Chair of the Appraisal Review Board, was present but wished to speak later in the meeting during the appropriate agenda item.

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 mentioned that if the attempts to assist an owner do not succeed, he reminds them of their other avenues for resolution, including proceeding to binding arbitration or the court system. Rouse indicated that he receives informational purpose only calls monthly and that he directs property owners to the District's website.

Update on Appointment of Appraisal Review Board by Administrative Law Judge

Rouse also reported on the appointment of the Appraisal Review Board (ARB) by the Administrative Law Judge. He indicated that applications would be delivered to the courthouse and that he did not know yet if the judge would handle the appointment of the ARB by utilizing a committee. Lankford announced that the District had begun gathering ARB applications and requests for positions. He indicated that advertising had occurred in the Community Impact newspaper as well as on the Nextdoor page for Williamson County.

Consider approval of minutes of the Board of Directors for the regular meeting – September 9, 2021.

Chadwell discussed a topic that was considered during the September 9, 2021, Board Meeting regarding virtual attendance of Board members for their meetings. Lankford expressed his understanding that items not listed on the Board's agenda are not able to be considered but can be brought up for a future meeting. It was mentioned that including a virtual attendance number for all Board meetings may be something that could be placed on a future agenda. Discussion followed.

Lux expressed the difficulty with allowing the public to attend virtually would be knowing who was in attendance and felt this could cause issues when the Board entered into executive session. Per the Board's discussion, this item will be placed on their next agenda for further discussion.

Lux made a motion to approve the September 9, 2021, minutes as presented. Hisle seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Monthly Financials

The August 2021 financials and expenditures were reviewed and filed for audit.

Appraisal Review Board Secretary Duties & Pay

Per earlier in the meeting, the ARB Chair, Carol Frey, was in attendance to present a proposal to the Board. Frey reminded the members that the ARB Chair and Secretary are appointed by the county judge. She alerted the Board to the increase in duties for these positions due to the absence of one of the District's previous staff members. Frey indicated that the ARB Secretary handles the hearing recording, meeting minutes, and supplements, among other items. The Secretary also handles the scheduling of the ARB panels as well as coverage for an absent ARB member.

Frey mentioned that as the ARB Chair, she has greater access to the District's appraisal software, etc. for research purposes. This research had previously been done by District staff.

Gaddes arrived at 9:20 a.m.

Frey proposed that the ARB Secretary get an increase of per diem pay by \$15 per day for assistance with the extra duties that have been added to this position. The ARB pay rates were discussed. Lankford announced that not every ARB panel would be utilized every day and that most appraisal districts the size of the District have these duties done by the ARB. He indicated that this additional expense could be handled in the District's current budget since additional days that won't be used had been budgeted.

Lux moved to increase the Appraisal Review Board Secretary per diem pay by \$15 per day. Hisle seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Chief Appraiser's Report

Items from 2021 Planning Session

Information regarding items from the District's 2021 Planning Session were distributed to the Board members. Lankford highlighted these statistics.

Lankford discussed the District's number of new improvements gained over the year and the incredible amount of work that had been accomplished. He discussed the change in the procedure over the years that had increased the District's productivity through the use of technology, and mentioned a video on the District's website showing how houses are measured.

Lankford also discussed the JustAppraised software that is used to scrape data from the County Clerk's website for new property deeds. He mentioned what a huge savings it had provided to the District to have these deeds match. Lankford announced that the District was part of a group of the first in the state to utilize this software. He also mentioned an API solution that allowed the automated entry of this data.

The extensive time savings of the District's new interactive voice response (IVR) system was discussed. Lankford announced that this system has assisted with the District's call volume with no lack of customer service.

Lankford reported that public information requests have been reduced greatly, due to the District being so transparent and the abundant information provided on the District's website, including the open data portal. This portal was discussed further; Lankford indicated that Open Assessment allows the District to utilize Socrata to provide information for the public.

Lankford announced that this was the first year for the District to value with the comparable sales grid. Tax agents did not receive the amount of reduction they had received in prior years because the valuation received in the appraisal notice was the same valuation they reviewed when they appeared for their hearing. Lankford indicated that over time, the agents are not seeing near the reductions they had and therefore are not making near the money. He felt this would make a huge impact in the future. Lankford informed the Board that the District was the first in the state to utilize this method and that it appears to be paying off.

WCAD Initiatives / WCAD Recognition

Lankford displayed the District's website. He mentioned the tax rate website where owners can see estimated taxes with the certified value. Gaddes announced that tax bills are now on the tax office website. Lankford reminded the members of the District's efforts for many years to educate the public and therefore reduce unnecessary phone calls and number of visitors and, in the end, save taxpayer dollars.

Lankford announced that the District had officially obtained 4.5 stars on Google Reviews, which, he mentioned, was by far better than the numbers of other government offices the District's size. He recognized the District's Customer Service staff for their outstanding job of assisting customers.

WCAD Presentations

Lankford announced that he and Gibbs had presented at the Chief Appraiser Institute regarding Board of Director and Chief Appraiser relations. He indicated that this presentation had been very well received and mentioned that during that same conference he had spoken on customer service. He expressed his appreciation to Gibbs.

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. Chadwell requested an update to the lawsuit report to add a coding legend.

Board of Directors Election

Lankford announced that the next step in the Board election process was to receive nominations which are due back by October 15th, then ballots would be sent to the taxing units by the end of the month. He announced that votes would be due back by December 15th.

Chief Appraiser Evaluation Timeline Finalization

Lankford requested clarification from the Board regarding the plan for the Chief Appraiser evaluation timeline. He announced that normally the next step would be to assemble the evaluation packet and then the actual evaluation would take place in November. It was mentioned that Lux, Weber and Chadwell had met with an outside consultant, who has experience with corporate and government entities, regarding the Chief Appraiser compensation.

The consultant fees were discussed. Lankford requested that at the beginning of next year, the consultant look into a complete appraisal district salary study. Lux mentioned that the consultant agreed that the entire organization should be studied. Lux asked that this item be included on the Board's agenda in January of 2022.

Chadwell inquired and Lankford confirmed that the District does have a grievance policy.

The Board decided that they would meet at the tax office to discuss the Chief Appraiser evaluation prior to the regular November Board Meeting.

Board Agenda Additions for Future Meeting

- Chadwell mentioned that as always, if any member had an agenda item to add to the Board Meeting, to notify himself and Lankford.
- Asking the consultant, discussed earlier in the meeting, to look at all positions as a whole is to be discussed at the January Board Meeting.

Board Announcements

- Lankford announced that the District's Christmas party would take place on Friday, December 3rd at Kalahari Resort in Round Rock. He invited all members to attend.
- Lankford also indicated that Board training would be held after the beginning of the year.

The Board discussed the following meeting dates:

Tuesday, November 16, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. – meeting at the tax office to discuss the Chief Appraiser Evaluation

Thursday, November 18, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

Wednesday, December 8, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. – if a December meeting is necessary

Thursday, January 13, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 10:21 a.m.

Respectfully,



Charles Chadwell, Chairman



Donald Hisle, Secretary