

Williamson Central Appraisal District

Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes of July 17, 2014

Deborah Hunt, acting chairman, called the regular meeting of the Williamson Central Appraisal District Board of Directors to order Thursday, July 17, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. Board members present: Deborah Hunt, Cecilia Crowley, Rufus Honeycutt and Charles Chadwell. Harry Gibbs was absent. Quorum declared.

Receipt of Public Comments

Hunt read aloud a note from an employee of the District expressing appreciation to the Board for continuing insurance coverage with the current provider.

Hunt also mentioned a letter received from property owner, Sheryl Jones, which was mailed to each Board member. Lankford and Hunt had discussed and felt it appropriate that Lankford provide a response regarding the appraisal issues that were expressed in the letter. This response, which was made available to Board members, will be placed in the mail.

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 indicated that all issues had been resolved satisfactorily with the exception of one. One property owner had indicated that the Appraisal Review Board (ARB) members were rude to him. Rouse reported that he had spent many hours speaking with this property owner and that he did not believe there to be a solution to his issues.

Rouse reported receiving very good cooperation from staff at the appraisal district and indicated that he normally responds to complaints within a day and a half of receiving them and believes this to be helpful in providing property owner satisfaction. Lankford reiterated that providing Rouse direct access to District management staff had been very helpful.

Consider approval of minutes of the Board of Directors for the regular meeting – June 6, 2014.

Crowley commented regarding the ARB payment policy portion of the Board Policy. She asked that regarding the compensation portion; the policy be changed to read "...any member absent three years or more would return to the first-year member pay level".

Honeycutt moved for approval of the minutes with the correction stated above. Crowley seconded. Chadwell abstained since he was not present at the June Board meeting. The motion carried 3-1.

Consideration of Monthly Financials

Lankford mentioned a few budget categories that are reaching their budgeted amount. He indicated that he was confident the District would have sufficient funds to cover these costs out of other categories. Lankford expressed recent issues with the District's water well and retention pond and indicated that he would provide estimates in the future regarding repairs. He reviewed some of the original reasons for the decision on purchasing a wet pond versus concrete retention and indicated that the pond was originally intended to be self-sustaining and low maintenance and far less expensive than a concrete retention tank. The May 2014 financials and expenditures were reviewed and filed for audit.

2015 Budget Workshop

Entity Budget Overview Meetings

Kimberly Gamboa, the District's Business Services Manager, distributed both an updated entity salary survey and updated budget pages. Lankford informed the Board that he had received feedback at Entity meetings regarding possible salary increases, which were reflected on the updated survey. He reviewed the District's process for providing employee pay increases.

2015 Budget Review

Lankford informed the Board that he had moved funds from the Computer Capital budget category (8010) for software (*Office 2013 Pro*) into the Computer Licenses budget category (6300). He indicated there to be no change in the overall category and mentioned that later in this meeting; the Board would be discussing the Pictometry agreement. He informed the members that the District had come to the end of this agreement and that the new contract would total about \$10,000 more than what was budgeted.

Technology Short-Lived Items Reserve Expenditure

Lankford apologized to the Board indicating that this item should have been listed as "Technology Reserve Expenditure" on the agenda. A spreadsheet was distributed to the members. Lankford expressed that Microsoft Windows had discontinued some of its support of its products which would force the District to migrate to new software. He asked the Board to consider pulling monies out of the technology reserve to purchase this software.

Chadwell moved to expend \$25,990 from District reserve monies as presented above. Honeycutt seconded. The motion carried.

Technology Reserve Purchase of ESRI Site License

Lankford indicated the District to have very creative people that were able to assemble a package using the free version of the mapping software from ESRI. He explained how ESRI, a GIS mapping system, is used at the District. Lankford distributed information to Board members and indicated that the subscription the District currently uses is free; the new subscription would provide access for 50 users for a total of \$10,000 per year. He reviewed the pros and cons regarding the ESRI license that the District currently has compared to the paid version. Honeycutt inquired about the money savings for the District; to which Lankford felt would very easily extend beyond the \$10,000; the cost of the license.

Honeycutt moved to approve the purchase of the ESRI collector license. Chadwell seconded. The motion carried.

Pictometry Agreement

Lankford reviewed the changes that were made to the Pictometry contract since it was last approved by the Board of Directors. He reminded the members that this contract is up for renewal once every six years, and that the District is in its sixth year. He informed the Board that Pictometry had proposed, for close to the same price, doing away with the sixth year and moving on to a new contract for six more years.

Lankford indicated that where Pictometry had increased expenses in some areas; they had been able to decrease in others. He explained the improvements:

1. The Pictometry information is now available on-line, where previously we would have received it on a hard drive.
2. Pictometry now offers three inch imagery for urban areas, which was six inch previously. They offered twelve inch imagery in rural areas, this is now nine inch.
3. They have also now included Jarrell for three inch imagery; which was not included previously.
4. The District is now allowed early access as soon as the image is ready.

Lankford informed the Board members that the cost for this Pictometry service had increased about \$10,000 per year; which is a fixed cost for six years. He reminded the Board that other entities have expressed their appreciation for the District including this item in the budget. He also reminded the Board that those entities that pay into the District's budget are able to access this information. Hunt mentioned this to be one of the most critical tools in the District's tool box. Lankford indicated that he would modify the budget numbers prior to the September budget discussion.

Honeycutt moved to accept the six-year fixed contract with Pictometry International with an annual cost of \$189,905. Chadwell seconded. The motion carried.

Chief Appraiser Review Questions

Lankford reminded the Board members that they normally conduct his annual evaluation in September. The evaluation questions were included in the Board packet. Hunt inquired with Board members if they had any changes or questions regarding either the Chief Appraiser job description or the questions contained in the performance review. The members reported no changes or questions. Hunt inquired if Lankford had any changes or questions; which he did not, however he reminded members that he would send out the information packet along with the materials for the next Board meeting. No action was taken.

Chief Appraiser's Report

Property Owner Surveys

Lankford was pleased to announce that the scores showing on the property owner surveys were remaining very high. He indicated that staff has done an outstanding job at maintaining an extremely high level of service. Chadwell agreed and indicated that he felt generally speaking that property owners feel like they've been heard and know the process. Chadwell was impressed; especially with the increase in the number of protests.

Certification Update

Lankford displayed the certification progress graph for the members. He indicated that the District had anticipated 25,000 protests and therefore scheduled heavily in order to finish on time. The actual number of protests came in at 22,000. Lankford indicated that scheduling so heavily will help the District achieve its goal of timely certification. He reported that the District would certify its value earlier than it did last year and that the ARB would approve the records later today. Lankford gave credit to District staff for handling the volume of protests that it had this year. Hunt indicated her appreciation to the ARB for the job they did; as well as Glenda Lloyd, the District's ARB Operations Manager, for her work in scheduling the hearings with the ARB.

WCAD Presentations

Lankford informed the Board of a meeting between himself; Hunt and Senator Charles Schwertner where they had discussed equal and uniform new legislation.

Lankford also indicated that he participated in a panel at the TCDRS (Texas County District Retirement System) Conference, along with other administrators from other districts and counties. Discussions took place regarding new legislation among other items.

Lankford informed the Board that he had been conducting budget overview meetings with the entities; a total of twelve entities will be visited. He reported that even though the District is seeing a budget increase of almost ten percent, the entities have been very accepting of this increase.

September Board Meeting Reminder

Lankford reminded the Board members of the meeting that had previously been set for Wednesday, September 10, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. He expressed that this would be the final budget meeting and asked that members check their calendars once again. Honeycutt reminded Lankford that he would not be present.

Arbitration Report

Lankford reviewed the Arbitration report and announced having two new arbitrations thus far for the year.

Lawsuit Report

Lankford reviewed the Lawsuit report and indicated there to be no additional or amended lawsuits for the month. He informed the Board that Sandy Griffin, one of the District's attorneys, would be invited to the Board's September meeting to discuss lawsuits.

Board Agenda Additions for Future Meeting

- Lawsuit update from the District's attorney
- Finalization of 2015 budget

Board Announcements

There were no Board announcements.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully,


Deborah Hunt, Vice Chairman


Cecilia Crowley, Secretary