

Williamson Central Appraisal District

Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes of June 10, 2021

Charles Chadwell, Chairman, called the regular meeting of the Williamson Central Appraisal District Board of Directors to order Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. Board members present; Charles Chadwell, Harry Gibbs, Donald Hisle, Jon Lux and Lora Weber. Larry Gaddes was absent. 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

There were no public comments. Chadwell introduced Marshall Sprigg who had attended several Round Rock school board meetings. Chadwell also mentioned the idea of including estimated timeframes for items on the Board agenda.

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. Rouse expressed appreciation to District staff and their very quick response times.

Texas County & District Retirement System Presentation

Tim Krause, with Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS), the District's retirement provider, was present to address the Board members. Krause announced that the forecast for rates was showing decreased returns and would remain below historical norms. He also indicated that the inflation assumption had also been decreased to 2.5% which impacts payroll growth.

Krause indicated that with the balance skewed most employers would see increases in their required contribution rates for 2022. He announced that the District had taken control of this plan and provided a higher elected rate for a number of years; this accelerates funding and provides stability. Krause announced that the District would have until December to make plan changes. He also indicated that in 2017 the Board had decided to provide a cost-of-living increase for its retirees. Lankford reminded the members that they had decided at their last meeting to prefund a 1% COLA for retirees this year. Discussion followed.

Krause informed the Board that the TCDRS Conference would be held virtually this year.

Lankford reminded the Board that the District does not pay into Social Security and therefore employees do not get that benefit. The retirement plan details were provided.

2022 Budget Workshop

2022 Budget Review

Lankford reviewed changes made to the District's 2022 budget since the Board's last meeting. He announced that the Board must approve the proposed budget in order to send to the taxing units for their review period. The budget must be finalized before September 15th. Lankford announced that, per the Board's request, the two percent merit option had been added for consideration. He reviewed the survey of the taxing unit merit increases and indicated that he prefers to mirror what the entities are providing. He also mentioned that when the final budget is sent to the entities in September, his preference is to send a budget number at or less than the one that was proposed.

Lankford discussed Senate Bill 63 and the fact that it is no longer requiring to separate the formal and informal appraisal notice meetings; this change had reduced the need for additional staff and benefits and in doing so reduced the budget. He indicated that between the legislative change and sending the comparable property information to owners with their notice, he did not see the need to have as many employees as were originally proposed. Lankford reviewed these numbers.

Lankford discussed buying down the budget by \$300,000. He reviewed the budget numbers and some areas he was able to decrease since the Board's last meeting, including the Appraisal Review Board budget because of the change discussed earlier in the meeting.

Lankford announced his recommendation of approving the District's budget with a three percent merit increase for a total budget amount of \$10,321,300. He indicated that this amount includes the salary separated out for the Chief Appraiser. Lankford reminded the Board that this would require them to decide on his salary amount. He also reminded the members that his salary information is already being provided to the taxing units. Lux felt it made sense to align the Chief Appraiser's salary adjustment with all District staff and felt this would be more appropriate than including this as a separate line item. Information regarding District salaries and benefits, which is also provided to all taxing units, was distributed to the Board members. The Board decided the Chief Appraiser salary line item would be removed and instead this amount would be included with the other staff salaries.

Lankford informed the Board that he, the District's Deputy Chief Appraiser Chris Connelly and Kimberly Gamboa, the District's Business HR Manager, meet with the top twelve taxing units by size to review the budget, Property Value Study and Methods and Assistance Program (MAP) Review. At these meetings direct feedback is provided.

Consider approval of minutes of the Board of Directors for the regular meeting – May 13, 2021.

Hisle made a motion to approve the May 13, 2021 minutes as presented with the amendment of updating Danielle Weston's title. Weber seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Monthly Financials

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

Texas County & District Retirement System

Hisle made a motion to approve paying the Texas County & District Retirement System elected higher rate of 19% and provide a 1% COLA for retirees that will be prefunded in the amount of \$150,292. Gibbs seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Proposed 2022 Budget

Hisle moved to approve the 2022 Williamson Central Appraisal District proposed budget in the amount of \$10,321,300 to include a 3% merit increase. Weber seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Capitol Appraisal Group Contract

Lankford requested the Board's approval of the contract with Capitol Appraisal Group to provide appraisal and valuation services for the District's utilities, pipelines, and large industrial accounts. He announced that the contract provided was simply an update for the current year and that the contract amount had not changed from previous years.

Hisle made a motion to approve the Capitol Appraisal Group Contract for 2022-2023 as presented for a total price of \$78,000 per year. Gibbs seconded. Discussion followed. The motion carried unanimously.

Updates to Board of Directors Policy

Video & Live Broadcasting of Board Meetings & Posting on Website

Lankford discussed an excerpt from the Board's current policy indicating that changes to this policy would be necessary if the Board decided to proceed with live broadcasting of its meetings or including Board member email addresses and/or Board material packets on the District's website. He also mentioned that a change would be needed to the Board's Public Access Policy. Lankford reminded the members of the law which limits their interaction with the public on certain subjects and indicated that most contact to a Board comes through the Taxpayer Liaison Officer (TLO). He also reminded the Board that the District's TLO reports on his contact with property owners at each Board meeting.

Lankford pointed out an excerpt in the Board's policy regarding official minutes from Board meetings being held by the Chief Appraiser and that this portion of their policy would need to be updated as well if changes were made. He informed the Board that currently both the Board of Director agendas and the approved minutes are provided to the public through the District's website. The Board discussed the idea of providing additional details to the public of their meetings. Discussion followed. Chadwell expressed interest in video and live broadcasting of Board meetings. Both Gibbs and Lux felt, although this is important for cities and schools, it may not be necessary for the appraisal district. The District's great strides towards transparency were mentioned. Discussion followed. Rouse mentioned that a number of the calls he receives as the District's Taxpayer Liaison Officer involve property owners not understanding the process between the appraisal district and the tax office. Lankford mentioned that to address this issue, the District had created informative videos and placed them on its website. Discussion followed.

The Board decided against video and live broadcasting of Board meetings at this time.

Board Member Email Addresses on Website

The Board also decided against including Board member email addresses on the District's website at this time.

Board Packet Posting on Website

Lux recommended placing the Board information packet on the District's website. Lankford indicated that changes would be made to the Board's general policies and procedures. The Board asked Lankford to look into what should be included in the online Board packet and report back to them.

Lux made a motion to make a change to the Board's general policies and procedures and include the Board's information packet on the District's website. Hisle seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Lux, Hisle and Chadwell voted for. Gibbs and Weber voted against. The motion carried 3-2.

Chief Appraiser Evaluation & Compensation Process

Executive Session began at 10:41 a.m. and ended at 11:05 a.m.

The Board recessed from 11:05 a.m. to 11:07 a.m. when they returned to open session.

Consideration and possible action on items discussed in Executive Session

Chief Appraiser Evaluation & Compensation Process

Chadwell announced that currently no changes were being proposed to the Chief Appraiser evaluation and compensation process. Obtaining an outside advisor to conduct a market analysis was mentioned. This item will be discussed at the July and September Board Meetings. The Board asked Lankford to advise on the appropriate timeframe for the evaluation. No motion was made.

Chief Appraiser's Report

Protest Season Update

Lankford displayed a graph showing the protest value change rate and median property value. He expressed the benefits of providing property owners the comparable properties used in the valuation of their homes and the advantage of valuing with the comp grid. Lankford shared how this had increased the accuracy of appraisals. He announced that the District now looks at individual valuation instead of choosing the median value.

Lankford indicated that the District's percentage of owner appeals was decreasing even though value increases, this year up 18%, are usually associated with increased protest numbers. He announced that the District's property owner show rate was also decreasing.

Lankford announced that the District had an incredible year and expressed the true impact of valuing using the grid. He recognized Chris Connelly, Charles Vasquez, the District's multiple regression analysis technical expert, and a gentleman the District had hired with a PHD in statistics, for their efforts in helping this to come together. Lankford expressed the benefits for the district of the tax rate website, removing the taxes from the notice and the placement of more emphasis on the taxing units in the process.

Legislative Updates

Lankford mentioned current legislation and asked that the Board members let him know if they had any questions. He discussed specifically Senate Bill 63 and House Bill 988. He indicated that a legislative update would occur in the coming month.

WCAD Initiatives

Lankford discussed the automation of the District's evidence packets for property owners who request this information prior to their hearing. He announced that Tyler Technologies, the District's appraisal software vendor, had assisted with this project as part of the District's budget for software development.

WCAD Google Reviews

Lankford announced that the District was currently showing to have 118 Google reviews with 4.3 stars. He indicated that he could not find another local government office with a better rating. Lankford expressed his appreciation to the District's Customer Service staff for the great job they have done and excellent customer service they provided.

Property Owner Surveys

Lankford declared the property owner survey results to be overwhelmingly positive. He indicated that these surveys address the performance of the District's customer service and appraisal personnel. He announced that around 75% of people indicate they visit the District office to protest their property taxes which shows the misunderstanding the public has about the system.

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.

Update on Coronavirus Vaccine for Staff

Lankford announced that the number of District staff who received the Coronavirus vaccine had climbed to 50% and that these people were taking advantage of the paid time off or stipend. He announced that the District did not see any issues with certifying the appraisal roll timely.

Board Election Reminder

Lankford reminded the members of the upcoming Board election. He announced that vote calculations were due out to the taxing units by September 1st, written resolutions for nominees were due back before October 15th and ballots would be sent before October 30th.

Lankford indicated that one House Bill may change the timing for certain taxing units to provide their resolutions to the appraisal district. He reminded the members to speak with their nominating taxing unit to let them know if they are willing to serve on the District's Board of Directors for the coming election cycle. He announced that voting resolutions were due back to the District before December 15th and that the declarations of candidates would be sent by December 31st. Lankford reminded members that the election of Board officers takes place at the January meeting.

Board Agenda Additions for Future Meeting

- Chadwell asked that Board members forward an email to him and/or to Lankford should they wish to add any items to future Board meeting agendas.

Board Announcements

There were no Board announcements.

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

Thursday, July 8, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.
Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

Respectfully,



Charles Chadwell, Chairman



Donald L. Hisle, Secretary