

WICHITA APPRAISAL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 5172 600 Scott Street Wichita Falls, Texas 76307
940-322-2435 940-322-8190 Fax

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

February 14, 2017

Pursuant to notice, a meeting of the Board of Directors ("Board") of the Wichita Appraisal District ("the District") was held in the offices of the District this date at 11:00 a.m. The quorum included Board members Steve Cookingham, Glenn Barham, Mike Avey, Terry Walker, Kenny Haney, Jeff Watts, Max Schlegel, and Steve Fairchild. Also present were Edward Trigg, Chief Appraiser, Lisa Stephens-Musick, Chief Appraiser Designee, Monty Toliver, Residential Supervisor, Denton Keltner, Senior Commercial Appraiser and Sherrin Simpson, Administrative Assistant. Also present was Glen Payton, a citizen who wished to speak under Public Comments. Board members David Ramsey and Tommy Smyth were absent.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m. and it was established that a quorum was present with eight board members. Mr. Cookingham asked Mr. Watts to offer the invocation. Reappointed board members Terry Walker, Mike Avey, Steve Fairchild and Jeff Watts were sworn in prior to the Chair calling the meeting to order.

Election of Officers

Mr. Avey offered a motion to appoint Mr. Cookingham as Board Chair, Max Schlegel as Vice Chair, and Jeff Watts as Secretary. Mr. Fairchild seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0. The 2017 officers are:

Chair: Steve Cookingham
Vice Chair: Max Schlegel
Secretary: Jeff Watts

Public Comment

Mr. Cookingham asked if there were any comments from the public. Mr. Glenn Payton, 819 Wellington Ln, Wichita Falls, 76301, asked to address the board and expressed his dissatisfaction with the District's requirement to reapply every three years for the 100% Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption. He said he feels this is discrimination against veterans who hold a 100% disability rating from the Veteran's Administration and that it does not comply with the Property Tax Code. Mr. Payton asked those in the room if anyone had to reapply for their exemption. Mr. Trigg, Chief Appraiser, raised his hand and stated that his wife has a social security disability and she has to reapply every three years. He also stated that the Property Tax Code authorizes the chief appraiser to request a new application to confirm the person's current qualifications. He said reviewing exemptions periodically is a good business practice as disability percentages may change as well as situations for those disabled, such as death or relocation. Mr. Payton asked if Mr. Trigg could prove that his wife had to reapply for her exemption and wanted to be shown where the policy is written regarding such requirements. Mr. Trigg said he would be glad to provide Mr. Payton with proof of application and a copy of the written procedures. Mr. Trigg asked Chief Appraiser Designee, Lisa Stephens-Musick to address the District's procedures. Ms. Stephens-Musick explained the District's office procedure regarding the exemption in question, as well as other exemptions regarding homestead property. After some discussion on the issue, Mr. Cookingham explained to Mr. Payton that he would need to file a written complaint to the board so that the matter can be placed on a future agenda for consideration by the board of directors.

Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Watts offered a motion, followed by a second from Mr. Haney, to approve the minutes of the December 2016 board meeting as presented. The motion passed 8-0.

Chief Appraiser's Report

- A. Personnel – Mr. Trigg asked Ms. Stephens-Musick to report on employee performance reviews that were completed in January. She said evaluations were conducted by supervisors of departments, but that this year she sat in on some of those reviews. She said she felt doing this provided some insight as part of the transition process. Mr. Trigg reported that attendance was excellent in 2016, with approximately 70% of employees having used only 1 sick day or less. He said attendance awards were presented to employees who had perfect attendance (4 employees), as well as those who used ½ day (3) of sick leave and those who missed 1 day (5).
- B. 2017 Reappraisal Plan Status – Monty Toliver, Residential Supervisor, reported on the status of residential reappraisal. He reviewed some of the processes residential appraisers use in completing the annual reappraisal, explaining that a large portion of approximately 40,000 accounts will be appraised using more automated tools, while another portion of approximately 13,000 properties were selected for more detailed study. He said reappraisal is on target. Denton Keltner reported on the status of land valuations and commercial reappraisal. He indicated there have been changes in sales prices of agricultural land in varying areas of the county which will result in value increases reflected in those areas. Ms. Stephens-Musick reported on the status of business personal property accounts and said that about 800 renditions have been returned at this time, with the bulk of renditions arriving right at the April 15th deadline for filing. Mr. Trigg reported that he expects mineral values to increase approximately 15% to 20% over last year.
- C. Ag Advisory Board Meeting – Denton Keltner told board members that he and Mr. Toliver met with the Ag Advisory Board in January and discussed some of the information gleaned from that meeting regarding lease prices and other issues that impact agricultural land appraisal, which now includes beekeeping.
- D. 2016 Final Methods & Assistance Program Report – Mr. Trigg provided a copy of the report from the Office of the Comptroller and said that the district passed this biennial study with excellence after a review of office policies and procedures. Mr. Trigg stated one of the questions in the review asks "Does the appraisal district follow a procedure or policy for performing periodic review of exempt properties?" He pointed out that the district would not receive full compliance without the procedure in place as objected to by Mr. Payton.
- E. Legislation – Mr. Trigg reported that some big box stores are using "dark" stores (stores that are unoccupied) as comparison properties to appeal their appraised values and have succeeded in some areas of the country in reducing their appraised values significantly. He said a recent arbitration case in Texas ruled against the use of the dark stores theory and there is legislation being proposed to address this theory. Mr. Trigg also mentioned other legislation that could affect appraisal districts.

Discussion & Appointment of Appraisal Review Board (ARB) Officers

Mr. Schlegel offered a motion to appoint Austin Cooper as Chair of the 2017 ARB. Mr. Walker seconded the motion, which passed 8-0. Mr. Schlegel offered a motion to appoint Mac Reid as Secretary of the 2017 ARB. Mr. Walker seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.

Discussion & Approval of Ag Advisory Board

Mr. Watts offered a motion to approve appointment of the Ag Advisory Board to include two-year terms for Sandy Lalk and Keith Meadows, as selected by Chief Appraiser Trigg. Kevin Roberts continues to serve on this board, as he was appointed last year to a two-year term. Mr. Haney seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.

Discussion & Approval of Investment Policy

Mr. Barham offered approval of a motion to approve the 2017 Investment Policy, which has not changed from the 2016 policy. Mr. Walker seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.

Taxpayer Liaison Report

The taxpayer liaison officer reported that there have been no written complaints filed.

Financial Reports

Mr. Fairchild offered a motion to approve the financial reports of December 2016 and January 2017. Mr. Watts seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.

Adjournment

Mr. Cookingham announced that the next Board meeting would be Tuesday, April 11, 2017. He adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.



Jeff Watts, Secretary



Steve Cookingham, Chairman