

**AUSTIN COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT
BELLVILLE, TEXAS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF JANUARY 18, 2024**

The Board of Directors of the Austin County Appraisal District met on Thursday, January 18, 2024, at the Appraisal District office at 906 East Amelia Street, Bellville, Texas. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Mr. Frank Monk, followed by certification of public notice and of a quorum. Mr. Monk led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Curtis Brenner gave an invocation.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Frank Monk, Mr. Curtis Brenner, Mrs. Dee Anne Lerma, Mr. Justin Richardson, Mr. Arlie Kendrick, Mr. Ryan Reichardt, Mr. Leroy Cerny

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Cecilia Allice

OTHERS PRESENT

Mr. Greg Cook, Mrs. Michelle Mitchell, Ms. Barbie Lunsford, Mrs. Tina Swonke, Mrs. Lois FitzSimon, Mrs. Amanda Wass, Ms. Melanie Garrett, Mrs. Tamara Parrish, Mr. Lester Bernard, Mr. Bruce White, Mr. Greg Stuessel, Mr. Mark Lamp, Mrs. Leslie Schkade, Mr. Hayden Bartley

OATHS OF OFFICE

Mrs. Lunsford administered the oath of office to the board members who were present.

ELECTION OF BOARD OF DIRECTOR OFFICERS

Mr. Brenner made the motion to nominate Mr. Monk as chairman. Mr. Kendrick seconded the motion. Mr. Brenner moved to cease nominations, which was seconded by Mr. Richardson. There were no further nominations. The motion carried with Mr. Monk being elected chairman.

Mr. Brenner made the motion to nominate Mrs. Lerma as vice-chairman. Mr. Kendrick seconded the motion. Mr. Kendrick moved to cease nominations, which was seconded by Mr. Richardson. There were no further nominations. The motion carried with Mrs. Lerma being elected vice-chairman.

Mrs. Lerma made the motion to nominate Mr. Brenner as secretary. Mr. Richardson seconded the motion. Mr. Kendrick moved to cease nominations, which was seconded by Mr. Reichardt. There were no further nominations. The motion carried with Mr. Brenner being elected secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Lerma made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 16, 2023, regular board meeting. Mr. Kendrick seconded the motion and it carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public. Mr. Cook recognized outgoing board member Mr. Mark Lamp and presented him with a plaque of appreciation. Mr. Cook then recognized Mr. Don Griser, who was not present. Mr. Monk thanked both gentlemen on behalf of the board.

APPROVAL OF CURRENT DISBURSEMENTS AND BUDGET COMPARISONS

Mrs. FitzSimon presented the banking information, including check register and budget disbursements for November and December. She reported the bank account balances, pointing out several expenditures, and interest information. Mr. Kendrick made the motion to approve the report. Mrs. Lerma seconded the motion and it carried.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:

PERDUE BRANDON DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTION REPORT, EXCESS PROCEEDS

Mrs. Leslie Schkade with Perdue Brandon Fielder Collins & Mott presented the delinquent tax collection report. She noted that taxes are 95% collected before they are turned over to the attorneys. She then went over the report, highlighting several areas. Mrs. Schkade also gave a report on excess funds that were recently disbursed to the entities. She then introduced Mr. Hayden Bartley, associate attorney with Perdue Brandon.

CONTRACT RENEWAL WITH PERDUE BRANDON FIELDER COLLINS & MOTT

Mr. Cook presented the renewal contract for delinquent tax collections services with Perdue Brandon Fielder Collins and Mott. He stated that there is no expense for these services to the entities or appraisal district. He recommended that the contract be extended. Mrs. Schkade said there were a few minor changes to the wording of the contract that do not affect collections. Mr. Kendrick made the motion to accept the renewal contract with Perdue Brandon Fielder Collins and Mott for delinquent tax collections. Mrs. Lerma seconded the motion and it carried.

APPRAISAL REVIEW BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Mrs. Lunsford informed the board of the District Court Judge's appointments to the Appraisal Review Board. Mr. Lester Bernard, Dr. Weldon Hall and Mr. Don Turner will serve 2-year terms beginning January 1, 2024. Mr. Bernard will serve as chairman for 2024, with Mr. David Franklin serving as secretary. Mr. Monk extended his thanks to Mr. Bernard and the ARB. No action was needed.

VERIFICATION OF SEALY ISD PVS

Mr. Cook presented a letter from the Texas Comptroller's Office stating Sealy ISD is within the scope of confidence to be granted the first year of grace for full state funding.

APPRAISAL DISTRICT 2024-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Mrs. Mitchell presented the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, stating that it is a snapshot of the current year and future goals. She pointed out some of the changes to the plan. Mr. Brenner made the motion to approve the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan. Mrs. Lerma seconded the motion and it carried.

ARB QUARTERLY CHANGES

Mrs. Lunsford presented the 4th quarter supplemental changes to the board. The changes were approved by the ARB on December 9, 2023. No action was needed.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION

Mrs. Lerma gave an overview of the Needs Assessment Committee's recent meeting, which focused on expansion of space, the proposed satellite office in Sealy, staffing and outsourcing of some items. The committee will meet with Master's Touch to review additional enhancements to their services.

INVESTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Cook stated that the appraisal district is required to have an Investment Advisory Committee. Mr. Griser chaired the committee in the past and is no longer on the board. The committee needs three members and a chairperson. Mr. Reichardt volunteered to be on the committee. Mrs. Lerma nominated Mr. Brenner, Mr. Richardson and Mr. Cerny. Mr. Brenner nominated Mr. Reichardt for chairman. Mr. Kendrick made the motion that Mr. Reichardt, Mr. Brenner, Mr. Richardson and Mr. Cerny be appointed to the Investment Advisory Committee, with Mr. Reichardt serving as chairman. Mrs. Lerma seconded the motion and it carried.

LIAISON OFFICER FOR INVESTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Cook informed the board that Mr. Chris Nanez is still willing to serve as the Liaison Officer for the Investment Advisory Committee. Mr. Nanez has been a valuable asset to the district. Mr. Reichardt made the motion to have Mr. Nanez continue as Liaison Officer. Mrs. Lerma seconded the motion and it carried.

INTERNET OPT-OUT FORM

Mrs. Swonke presented an internet opt-out form. This form would be available to property owners wanting their name removed from the appraisal district website but would not exclude their name from public information requests. Currently, the property owner's name would be removed from the property search, but the entire record would be removed from the tax office search, because of programing. Mr. Reichardt made the motion to approve the internet opt-out form. Mrs. Lerma seconded the motion and it carried.

2024 AG GUIDELINES

Mrs. Parrish presented the 2024 Agricultural Guidelines. She highlighted several proposed changes including changes to stocking rates, the addition of wildlife management subdivision wording, etc. Her plan is to have several Ag Advisory Committee meetings each year. Mr. Kendrick made the motion to approve the 2024 Agricultural Guidelines with the changes. Mrs. Lerma seconded the motion and it carried.

2024 ALLOCATIONS

Mr. Cook presented spreadsheets showing the 2024 appraisal and collections budgets allocations for the entities. Due to new legislation, homesteads, etc., the proportions have changed. No action was needed.

DEPOSITORY ENDORSERS

Mrs. Swonke informed the board of the need to update the banking authority with Industry State Bank and First National Bank of Bellville. Mr. Lamp will be removed. Mrs. Lerma nominated Mr. Brenner and Mr. Monk.

Mrs. Swonke also stated the need to remove a former employee from the remote capture / ACH deposit list. An additional collections employee will be added to the list.

Mr. Kendrick made the motion to approve the depository endorsers, Mr. Brenner and Mr. Monk, and to add Mrs. Wendy Dietz to the ACH / remote deposit list. Mrs. Lerma seconded the motion and it carried.

OPEN DISCUSSION

None

CHIEF APPRAISER'S REPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORT

Mr. Cook began his report by introducing new appraisal district employee Ms. Eva Soto. He then reported on the following: January 1 mailings have sent; working on closing out of 2023 budget; implementing 2023 legislative changes effective 2024; SOAH hearing update – no new information; Pictometry fly-over update; GIS update; upcoming ARB portal; appraisers are in the field all over the county; heavy collections season; holding tax bills was the right decision. Because statements went out late, there will be no penalty on 1st quarter allocations. The CAD had security on site several days during the last few days of December. Mr. Monk will be on a panel at the TAAD conference in February. Mr. Cook's report also included his notice chief appraiser eligibility and a value recap for the CAD.

COLLECTION REPORT

Mrs. Swonke presented the collections report which included the following: Some of the big mortgage checks were posted in January; The county is currently 48% collected; Fort Bend County / Brazos ISD litigation has resulted in a refund; tax statements were generated and mailed by Master's Touch, saving the CAD several thousand dollars; the plan is to use Master's Touch to mail notices of appraised value in 2024. Mrs. Swonke discussed Master's Touch processes and available features that benefit the CAD. She and Mrs. FitzSimon will meet with Spindlemedia at the upcoming TAAD Conference to see a demo of the accounting subscription for the collection data. Perdue Brandon will host a Truth in Taxation class which Mrs. Swonke, Ms. Garrett and Ms. Phyllis Derks will attend. The appraisal district office will remain open until 5:00 p.m. several days at the end of January.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Monk adjourned the regular session to go into executive session at 9:45 a.m., pursuant to Texas Government Code, convene in closed session under Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 551. 551.074

RECONVENE REGULAR SESSION

Mr. Monk reconvened the regular session at 10:20 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON ITEMS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no action taken.

NEW BUSINESS

NEXT MEETING

Mr. Monk stated that a meeting will be held Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. The February meeting will be held February 15, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Mr. Kendrick made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Richardson seconded the motion, it carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:23 a.m.



Frank Monk, Chairman



Curtis Brenner, Secretary