

# COMAL APPRAISAL DISTRICT

900 S. SEGUIN AVENUE  
NEW BRAUNFELS, TX 78130  
JEFFREY J. BOOKER, RPA  
CHIEF APPRAISER

## December 13, 2023 Meeting Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the Comal Appraisal District met at the appraisal district office located at 900 S. Seguin Avenue, New Braunfels, Texas.

Board Members present were John Tyler, Eric Couch, Kristen Hoyt, Nancy Pappas, Bob Slupik and Douglas Miller II. Quorum was present.

Staff Members present were Dora Campos, Michelle Sifuentes, Christine Zygmunt, Lena Broussard, Sami Paradeaux, Tanner Jones, Ryan Dow, Brandon Voight, Michelle Klecan, Jeffrey Booker and Pam Krause.

Others in attendance were John Cox, Kurt Andersen-Vie, Brian DeVries, Brenda Davis and Christine Seidel

Mr. Tyler called the meeting to order at 5:33pm by stating, "This meeting is being held in open session in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code and business as conducted by the Board will be done so in open session."

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American and Texas flags were recited. Michelle Klecan led the prayer.

### **1 - CITIZENS COMMUNICATIONS**

No one wished to speak.

### **2 - TAX CODE SECTION 6.15 COMMUNICATION**

Nothing to share at this meeting.

### **3 - DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Eric Couch, seconded by Douglas Miller II; to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 11, 2023 as presented. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands.

### **4 - RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING BOARD MEMBER – Nancy Pappas**

Mr. Tyler presented Ms. Pappas with a plaque recognizing and thanking her for 10 years of service on the Board of Directors. Ms. Pappas thanked the district for all that they had done and for sticking it out through the good and bad years. She said that it's hard to believe that it's been 10 years.

### **5 - PRESENTATION OF FOXHOLE AWARD RECIPIENT FOR 2023**

Chief Appraiser, Jeffrey Booker, read the qualifications of the Foxhole Award Recipient and shared that it took the managers four meetings to come to a final decision. The Foxhole Award winner for 2023 was Dora Campos. Dora shared that this next February, she will have been with the district for 23 years.

### **6 - PRESENTATION BY ARB CHAIRMAN OF THE 2023 PROTEST SEASON**

Mr. Cox reviewed the updated statistics of the ARB protests. There are 3,513 protests that have yet to be heard. The ARB reached 96% and was able to officially turn the records back to the CAD. He also shared that today was the 120<sup>th</sup> day that the ARB has met in this calendar year!

### **7 - TAXPAYER LIAISON OFFICER REPORT**

Mr. Andersen-Vie shared that the Community Outreach event that was scheduled for November 2023 is being moved to mid-January 2024 due to the holidays. He stated that no formal complaints had been received. There was one Limited Binding Arbitration but it had been dismissed due to a failure to follow proper procedures. He presented the timeline and steps of the new general election process. He introduced Brenda Davis and Brian DeVries since they are moving from being auxiliary ARB members to regular ARB members. The ARB has received four applications and Hector Rios has already been appointed by the judge and will start in January. The Chairman, Mr. Tyler, recognized the positive comment cards that Jeremy Brehm has received. But he also expressed concern about the number of no-shows for the ARB hearings.

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## **8 - CHIEF APPRAISER'S REPORT**

- A. Report on Chief Appraiser Eligibility
  - a. Chief Appraiser Eligibility Form has been submitted to the Comptroller and we have an email confirming that it was received.
- B. Update on soliciting bids from legal firms
  - a. We are working on the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for soliciting bids from legal firms and hope to have a decision made by February 2024.
- C. Update on BOD Elections for 2024-2025
  - a. We have received ballots from all but two of the entities that have votes. Since there are only five members on the ballot, they will all be voted in after December 15, 2023.
  - b. We are taking all of the appropriate steps to begin the general election process and meet the necessary deadlines for the three newly elected positions.
- D. 2024 Meeting Schedule
  - a. Presented the proposed 2024 Meeting Dates and explained why some of them could not move.
- E. Next meeting – January 10, 2024
  - a. The next meeting date was changed from January 9 to January 10, 2024 due to board member availability.

There was some discussion held about potentially needing to expand the boardroom space to allow for a larger board of directors and to have ample room for taxpayers to attend meetings as well.

## **9 - DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVE 2024 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE**

The 2024 Holiday Schedule (which mimics the County holiday schedule) was approved as presented. Kristen Hoyt pointed out that there are two Federal Holidays not recognized on the County holiday schedule ~ Juneteenth (Jun 19) and Columbus Day (Oct 14). The Tax Office will be closed for training on those two days.

A motion was made by Bob Slupik; seconded by Nancy Pappas; to approve the Holiday Schedule for 2024 as presented. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands.

## **10 - DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT AND ADDITIONAL POSITIONS ON THE AG ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR 2024 AND 2025**

The district recommends that the Board of Directors to authorize the re-appointment of the current Ag Advisory members, Craig Elbel, Jerry Voges and Keith Weidner, as well as adding four positions to be assigned to the Ag Advisory Committee. In making the initial appointments, the Chief Appraiser will designate two of the four members who will serve a term of one-year as needed to comply with staggered terms.

A motion was made by Douglas Miller II; seconded by Bob Slupik; to approve to re-appoint Craig Elbel, Jerry Voges and Keith Weidner for the two-year term for 2024 and 2025 ending on December 31, 2025, and appoint four additional members, Robert Beach and Kyle Koepp to serve a two-year term for 2024 and 2025 ending on December 31, 2025 and Kameron Koepp and Jason Woody to serve a one-year term ending December 31, 2024 to the Ag Advisory Committee. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands.

## **11 - PRESENTATION OF THE NOTICE OF DEADLINE TO FILE AN APPLICATION FOR PLACE ON THE BALLOT**

The Notice of the Deadline to file an Application for Place on the Ballot has been signed by Judge Krause, posted on the county website before the December 18, 2023 due date which is 30 days before applicants can start filing. This form and the application are posted on the CAD website as well.

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## **12 - DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVE ORDER FOR GENERAL ELECTION FOR OTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS**

The Order for General Election for Other Political Subdivisions was approved and signed by all members of the Board of Directors and has been submitted to the Elections office ahead of the March 5, 2024 due date which is 60 days before the May 4, 2024 election.

A motion was made by Nancy Pappas; seconded by Eric Couch; to approve the Order for General Election as presented. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands.

## **13 - DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVE CONTRACT FOR LEGAL REPRESENTATION**

The board of directors approved signing a contract with the law firm that we are currently working with. There is a clause in there that either party can give 30 days notice to terminate the agreement at any time.

A motion was made by Bob Slupik; seconded by Douglas Miller II; to approve the Contract for Legal Representation with Low, Swinney, Evans & James PLLC as presented. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands.

## **14 - DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVE THE PROPOSED 2024 SALARY SCHEDULE CHANGES**

The CAD conducted a salary survey around the city, the county and surrounding appraisal districts (Hays, Guadalupe and Kendall) and determined that the Office Assistant and Customer Services positions were underpaid in comparison. Guadalupe Appraisal District has similar concerns and is hiring a professional company to conduct their survey. The BOD discussed and then approved the 3% COLA increase and the 3% step qualifying increase for all positions. Customer Service and Office Assistant positions received an additional 9% increase to bring the wages in line with similar positions. A motion was made by Kristen Hoyt; seconded by Bob Slupik; to approve the 2024 updated Salary Schedule as presented. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands.

## **15 - FINANCIAL REPORT**

Ryan reviewed the P&L explaining that we anticipate postage going over budget due to additional mailings that need to go out this month. Copies are over as well as ARB expenses, due to the longer hearing season. Questions were asked about the arbitration vs legal expenses. ARB Arbitration expenses are coded as such since they are a result of a disagreement with an ARB ruling. We do not use Legal Services when dealing with Arbitration since arbitrations are handled in house.

The reserve accounts contain about \$416,000 in the investments accounts and the Treasury Bill has been re-invested. There is over \$900,000 left in the 2023 budget with \$776,000 of that due to vacant employee positions. We're looking at returning around \$900,000 back to the entities which should be done within 150 days after the first of the year.

## **16 - DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVE LINE-ITEM TRANSFERS TO 2023 BUDGET**

The BOD approved re-allocating funds from Employee Expense (which had a surplus) to Postage, Copier and the Appraisal Review Board which were each over budget.

A motion was made by Douglas Miller II; seconded by Bob Slupik; to approve the line item transfers to the 2023 budget as presented. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands.

## **17 - CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION: THE BOARD MAY RETIRE TO EXECUTIVE SESSION ANYTIME DURING THE MEETING AS AUTHORIZED IN CHAPTER 551 OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE**

The Board retired into Executive Session with Mr. Tyler stating, "The Board of Directors on December 13, 2023, beginning at 7:41 p.m. convened in Executive Session in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Open Meetings Act."

The Board ends its executive session at 8:50 p.m. on December 13, 2023 and immediately reconvened into Regular Session.

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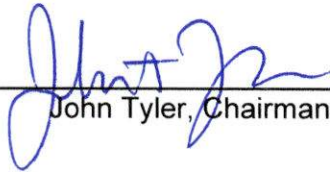
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**18 - DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: APPROVE CHIEF APPRAISER SALARY FOR 2024**

A motion was made by Bob Slupik; seconded by Eric Couch, to approve the new Chief Appraiser salary of \$117,600.00 for 2024. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands.

**19 - ADJOURN MEETING**

A motion was made by Douglas Miller II; seconded by Eric Couch; to approve to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands.



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John Tyler, Chairman



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Eric Couch, Secretary