

Freestone Central Appraisal District
Directors Meeting

Minutes of June 11, 2025

Regular Meeting # 550

The Freestone Central Appraisal District Board of Directors met at the appraisal office located at 218 North Mount, Fairfield, Texas. Board members present were Craig Dunlap, Jerry Don Sanders, Stanton Brown, Lovie Whyte, and Sid Fryer. Representing the appraisal district was Don Awalt, Chief Appraiser; Jason Moore, Deputy Chief Appraiser; Carol Clark, Administrative Assistant.

Mr. Dunlap called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.

Mr. Dunlap established proof of the posting of public notice of the meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meeting Act from the affidavit attached to the foot of the posted agenda.

Mr. Dunlap then declared a quorum of members present.

Consideration and action were taken on the minutes of the meeting held on May 14, 2025. Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Sanders seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The board then considered the district's monthly financial report for May 2025. Mr. Awalt pointed out the payment of \$63,250.00 made to Pritchard and Abbott for the mineral contract; payments were also made for folding, stuffing, and mailing the real estate notices and homestead letters. Mailing notices with Pritchard & Abbott is much cheaper as they have bulk rates. There is a payment of \$2,139.68 towards Card Service Center for the purchase of two computers. Payments were made to the ARB to complete their required training.

The Budget vs. Actual showed that Mapping Services was over budget with Eagleview flying over the lake to photograph the Freestone Lake & Golf (FLG). Equipment Purchase was also over budget due to purchase of the two computers. Mr. Sanders made a motion to approve the financial report for May 2025, with a second by Mr. Fryer. Motion carried.

The board then considered the 2025 Budget Amendments. Mr. Awalt reminded the board that during the workshop that was held last month he reviewed funds to be encumbered from 2024. The amount to be encumbered or credited back to the entities was \$105,186.00. Following the last meeting a copy of the amendments was sent to the entities. With there being no resolutions submitted by the entities the board would be able to take action. Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the 2025 budget amendments. A second was made by Mr. Fryer. The motion carried.

Mr. Awalt proceeded to present the workshop for the proposed 2026 Operating Budget. Employee salaries have the largest increase; there are increases by percentage just \$2,000.00 flat increase plus salaries for two more employees. There is an increase of \$3,500.00 for Mr. Moore as deputy chief appraiser. Bosque County Appraisal District sent their salary information for comparison; the districts salaries are highlighted in yellow. There are two positions that are currently open but one candidate was hired this morning prior to the meeting and will assume an appraiser's assistant position on June 23, 2025. Another employee may retire at the end of July but in the event of any changes their salary is still included in the budget. Auto allowance and communication allowance had not changed; longevity remains at \$7.50 per service month. Mr. Awalt and Ms. Owens have both capped at the maximum of \$1,800.00.

Retirement is based on the employee's salary at 13.89 percent but the district has elected to pay 15 percent to keep down funded liabilities. There will be no lump sum payments included in the budget in 2026. Texas Association of Counties (TAC) is budgeted at 6 percent as the actual rates are not available at this time.

A 20 percent raise was budgeted for the Board of Directors raising their meeting expense fee from \$25.00 to \$30.00. The Ag Advisory Board has a budget of \$200.00 to pay for breakfast at Sam's Restaurant.

Postage has decreased from \$28,000.00 to \$23,150.00 as the district is not required to mail Truth In Taxation (TNT) postcards and will have funds remaining at the end of the year. Public notices has also decreased as there will be no advertising for TNT. The board has already approved the district to only advertise in the Freestone County Times. The ARB have opted to use monitors instead of paper copies during ARB hearings which has lowered the cost in printing.

Software maintenance has increased by \$1,135.00 due to additional fees from QuickBooks. There is an annual fee of \$800.00 for payroll, a monthly fee of \$98.00 per employee, and an annual fee of \$1,000.00 for desktop subscription as QuickBooks no longer provides software for purchase. The Trend Macro antivirus software fee is \$850.00.

Mapping services has a difference of \$9,089.00 to include additional payments to Eagleview Pictometry for flights over the county every two years and the lake every year. There is an increase of \$12,000.00 for the mineral contract for Pritchard & Abbott, and \$7,200.00 towards service agreements. Pritchard & Abbott does the online hosting for the district' at \$12,950.00; the server is off site with BIS at \$5,400.00. Linebarger is contracted to do the homestead program for \$29,000.00 which is cheaper than hiring additional staff.


Travel and training has decreased as there will not be anyone attending the Texas Association of Appraisal Districts (TAAD) conference and there is no legislative update in 2026. Mr. Bottoms will attend the Texas Rural Chief Appraisers (TRCA) conference; Mr. Neely and Ms. Gilley Lee are still attending classes. Mileage rate will increase to \$0.70 the same as the IRS rates, and the meal rate will increase to \$26.00 in line with the federal government per diem rate. Mr. Awalt continued his presentation by reviewing each division changes with a fund balance of \$117,140.00 proposed for 2026 with a difference of \$71,146.00.

After lengthy discussion, Mr. Awalt stated to the board that if they had no further questions he would send a copy of the budget report to the entities as they had thirty days to review the report. Next month the board will be able to approve the proposed operating budget after a public hearing. At this time there was no motion to be made.

Mr. Awalt then read the Taxpayer Liaison Officer's report that was included in the boards packet. Ms. Shepherd assisted Mr. Salazar with his questions regarding land leases.

Mr. Awalt had nothing to report other than the amount of protests that were filed. There were over 900 real estate protests and 13 mineral protests.

There being no further business, Mr. Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m.



Chairman



Secretary