

Freestone Central Appraisal District  
Directors Meeting

Minutes of April 8, 2026

Regular Meeting # 560

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, Daniel Ralstin, Stanton Brown, Sid Fryer, and Lovie Whyte. 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 5:35 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 March 11, 2026. Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Whyte seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The board then considered the district's monthly financial report for March, 2026. A payment of \$1,542.95 was made to Marshall & Swift for the Commercial Estimator. A payment was made towards travel and training on the district's credit card; Ms. Clark attended the conference for Texas Association of Counties, the district's health insurance provider. Mr. Awalt and Mr. Moore attended the TAAD conference. Mr. Awalt pointed out the list of lawsuits that had payments for April, which included NHL Freestone Lakehouse which has now been settled. He added that the bill list were regular bills, and that there was nothing out of the ordinary. Reviewing the Budget vs Actual, Mr. Awalt stated that the district had spent a little under a quarter of the budget. Ms. Whyte made a motion to approve the financial report for March 2026, with a second by Mr. Brown. Motion carried.

The board then considered the Investment Officer's Quarterly Report. Mr. Awalt started his presentation stating that the report was for the quarter ending March 31, 2026. The beginning balance in the general fund account was \$776,561. There was a deposit of \$413,2130, \$506,683 in withdrawals, and \$763 in interest earned. The ending balance was \$683,854. The payroll account had a beginning balance of \$49,419, \$246,777 in deposits, \$293,981 of withdrawals, and an ending balance of \$2,215. This is a non interest bearing account, and had no interest earned.

The pledged securities from January to March had \$250,000 of FDIC Coverage. The district's funds were safe in the depository, as they were over pledged for the quarter. After brief discussion, Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the Investment Officer's Quarterly Report. There was a second by Mr. Dunlap. The motion carried.

At 5:43 p.m. Mr. Dunlap announced that the board was entering executive session to consider personnel matters. At this time, Mr. Awalt, Mr. Moore, and Ms. Clark exited the boardroom.

At 6:21 p.m. the board returned to open session, with Mr. Awalt, Mr. Moore, and Ms. Clark returning to the boardroom. The board then considered the matters discussed in Executive Session. Mr. Dunlap made a motion for Mr. Awalt to create an exit survey format to be presented at a future meeting. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The board considered Administration Policy Updates and Corrections. Mr. Awalt reminded the board that the sentences that were underlined and highlighted in yellow were added to the policy; anything that was struck out was removed. Mr. Awalt briefly reviewed each section giving an explanation for the change or for the additional verbiage. He also explained that he wanted to be sure that the policy was legally compliant and included the various legal authorities as listed in Section 1.10. The 'At-Will Employment' was added as there was no verbiage stating that the employees are hire at will, and that there is nothing in the policy that creates a contract of employment or a guarantee of continued

employment. The district has the right to terminate employment at any time, with or without cause or notice, subject only to applicable law.

The staff working hours was added to Section 1.50 *Attendance*. Also added was a statement that working hours may be changed at the discretion of the Chief Appraiser, as the time of year and workload dictates.

Mr. Ralstin pointed out that the blue box at the bottom of the page which is also included in the same section. He asked if the employee break periods were a privilege or by law; he then suggested that the verbiage be written in standard form or be removed. After brief discussion, Mr. Awalt recommended to the board that the box be removed.

The verbiage for Equal Employment Opportunity was moved, and additional verbiage was added to include a list of legally protected status that could be discriminatory, harassment, or retaliation. The list included race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40+), disability, genetic information, and veteran status.

Mr. Awalt pointed out Section 2.5 *Loyalty* which was changed to *Professionalism*, adding that the district's employee and official is expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and comply with State laws, codes of ethics, and rules adopted by oversight agencies. They must also comply with Administrative Policies adopted by the Board of Directors and administered by the Chief Appraiser.

Section 2.90 *Employment and Employability* was expanded to include more details on being legally authorized to work in the United States. Individuals are required to comply with the IRCA and IIRIRA, and complete Form 1-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, on their first day of employment. Within three days, the district will review the 1-9 form and documents submitted with the form, then process the individual through the federal government's E-Verify program in accordance with the federal guidelines.

Employees returning after military service will be re-employed to the position, seniority, status, and pay rates as though their employment had not been interrupted as outlined in the USERRA statute. They must apply within a certain timeframe in order to qualify. After 1 – 30 days of service, they must report to work the next workday. After the end of service duty, they must apply within fourteen days if the amount of service days were between 31 – 180 days of service. After 181 + days of service, they must apply within ninety days, after the end of service.

Eligible employees and their qualified beneficiaries have an opportunity to elect temporary continuation of group health coverage at their own expense when coverage would otherwise terminate due to certain qualifying events. An employee can elect to receive COBRA for 18 months if they voluntarily or were involuntarily terminated, or after reduced hours. An employee may qualify for 36 months of COBRA due to the death of a covered member, divorce or legal separation from covered employee, qualifying for Medicare, or a loss of dependent child status under the plan.

The district will provide reasonable accommodation to an employee who is incapacitated for their regular assignment. A medical certification may be required confirming the employee's ability to return to work. A health care provider designated by the district may conduct a job-related fitness-for-duty examination when the employee's ability to safely perform essential job functions are in question, or that the employee may pose a direct threat to themselves. Disability leave will be granted or limited if continuing leave and may be limited if continuing the leave would cause undue hardship on the operation of the district. Disability leave will be applied in compliance with the ADA.

Section 5.5 *Maternity* was changed to *Pregnancy and Parental Leave*. Employees may use accrued sick leave for pregnancy-related medical conditions, childbirth recovery, or other medical needs certified by a physician for maternity purposes.

Mr. Awalt continued his presentation of the changes to the policy by reviewing *Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)*. The eligibility is determined based on federal criteria, including length of service, hours worked, and whether 50 employees are employed within 75 miles. A new employee must complete six months of service to take vacation time, unless approval was made prior to being hired if a vacation has already been booked and paid for; or for extenuating circumstances. Vacation time must be granted at the discretion of the Chief Appraiser if more than a week, if there will be no undue burden for other employees or the district. Employees are also encouraged to schedule vacation time, at least 30 days in advance. Employees with longer service will typically be given preference when time conflicts arise when scheduling vacation time.

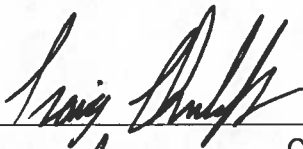
Employees who serve in the uniformed services will not be denied employment, reemployment, retention, promotion, or any other benefit based on their military service or obligation. Permanent employees who are active or reserve service members are entitled to two weeks leave of absence annually with full pay, less than the amount received for said duty. Military leave will be granted for up to five cumulative years of service as required under USERRA, excluding involuntary activation or periodic training. Employees may use accrued leave but are not required to do so. Employees must provide notice before taking leave, if possible or prevented by military necessity.

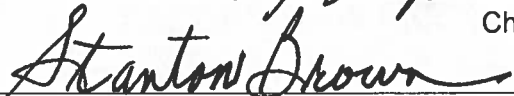
Compensatory time is encourage to be used within a reasonable timeframe after it is earned during the same pay period. Mr. Awalt explained that during 'protest season' the employees are unable to use their earned compensatory shortly after it has been earned due to the amount of scheduled hearing days. An employee who has resigned or terminated with remaining accrued compensatory time will be paid out in full based on their last regular hourly rate or an average of the last three, whichever is higher; payment may be made bi-weekly until paid in full by joint agreement with the employer and the employee.

Mr. Awalt concluded his presentation with Section 6 *Absenteeism*. New verbiage was added to say that excessive absenteeism is defined as three or more spells of un-excused absences or tardiness in a ninety-day period. This provision will be applied in compliance with applicable leave laws, including FMLA and ADA. Disciplinary decisions may vary based on the totality of circumstances. At this time, without further comments or questions from the board, Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the Administrative Policy Sections 1 – 6 with updates and corrections. Mr. Fryer seconded the motion. The motion carried.

With no report submitted by the Taxpayer Liaison Officer for the board to review, Mr. Awalt reported that Appraisal Notices on 23,000 parcels will be mailed out on April 15. Mr. Awalt also added that he will attend Public Fund Investment training next week; he is required to complete 10 hours or training annually.

There being no further business, Mr. Dunlap made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 p.m. Mr. Fryer seconded the motion. The motion carried.

  
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Chairman

  
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Secretary  
Board Member