

Central Appraisal District of Johnson County Board of Directors Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Cross Timbers Branch Meeting Room, Cleburne Conference Center
1501 W. Henderson Street Cleburne, Texas

JCAD Board of Directors

1. Chairperson Tina White - Present
2. Vice Chairperson Peter Svendsen - Present
3. Secretary Jason Marbut - Present
4. Director Larry Trammell - Present
5. Director John Wood - Absent
6. Director Chris Saunders - Present
7. Director Ignacio Hernaiz - Present
8. Director Shane McNeel - Present
9. Scott Porter, Tax Assessor Collector - Absent

JCAD Taxpayer Liaison Officer

Mrs. Amy Lingo

JCAD Staff

Mr. Mitch Fast, Chief Appraiser/Executive Director
Mrs. Brittany Vereen, Director of Appraisal Operations
Mrs. Amy Gill, Director of Support Services

JCAD Legal Counsel

Mr. Matthew Tepper, President & Managing Attorney, MVBA, P.C.

1. Preliminary Business

1.A. Call to Order

Chairperson Tina White called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1.B. Determination of a Quorum

A quorum was determined to be present.

1.C. Statement of Elected/Appointed Officer and Acknowledgement of Duties for the 2026 Board of Directors of the Central Appraisal District of Johnson County

1.D. Oath of Office for the 2026 Board of Directors of the Central Appraisal District of Johnson County

Mr. Shane McNeel signed the Statement of Elected/Appointed Officer and the Acknowledgement of Duties.

Mrs. Amy Gill administered the Oath of Office to Mr. McNeel, and he was sworn in as the newest Director of the Central Appraisal District of Johnson County for Place Number Four (4), with a term expiring December 31, 2027.

1.E. Welcome

1.H. Recognitions

Chairperson White welcomed the guests and any elected officials present at the meeting.

1.F. Invocation

Director Chris Saunders gave the invocation.

1.G. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chairperson Peter Svendsen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Central Appraisal District of Johnson County Board of Directors Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
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1.I. Non-agenda Public Communications

There were no non-agenda communications

2. Action Items

2.A. Consent Agenda

2.A.1. Approve minutes of March 12, 2026, regular meeting

Director Jason Marbut made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2026, regular meeting. Director Chris Saunders seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2.A.2. Approve monthly financial reports

Chairperson White thanked Mr. Mitch Fast, Chief Appraiser/Executive Director, for the level of detail provided in the financial report, particularly the explanations on page 35 regarding line items that were over budget. She specifically referenced overtime wages and the notation indicating that overtime expenses were expected to continue through the end of April. Mr. Fast confirmed that this was still anticipated.

Chairperson White also inquired about the \$2,500 expense paid to the City of Cleburne listed under General Ledger Line 59, Miscellaneous Expenses. Mr. Fast explained that the expense represented the annual 2026 conference room rental fee, which includes use of both the meeting rooms and related equipment.

Chairperson White further asked about the \$50,000 maintenance expense approved in September of the previous year. Mr. Fast explained that the expense was related to the TrueRoll vendor and was recorded separately because the 2026 budget had already been adopted at the time the item required approval. He further stated that the funds were already available within the budget and did not represent an additional expense.

Chairperson White asked Mr. Mitch Fast, Chief Appraiser/Executive Director, to provide additional information regarding the TAAD conference attended by himself and eight staff members. Mr. Fast explained that the conference provides opportunities for Registered Professional Appraisers (RPAs) to earn continuing education credits and includes motivational sessions, legislative updates, and in-depth discussions on issues currently affecting appraisal districts across Texas. He also noted the value of networking with personnel from other appraisal districts throughout the state.

Mr. Fast further explained that the conference includes sessions specifically designed for members of Boards of Directors and encouraged the Board to consider attending future conferences.

Director Jason Marbut agreed with Chairperson White that the financial report was clear and thorough, and made a motion to approve the financial reports for January and February. Director Chris Saunders seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Central Appraisal District of Johnson County Board of Directors Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Cross Timbers Branch Meeting Room, Cleburne Conference Center
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2.B. General Action Items

2.B.1. Review and discuss the 2027 preliminary budget process for the Central Appraisal District of Johnson County and take possible action.

Chairperson White asked Mr. Mitch Fast, Chief Appraiser/Executive Director, to present the preliminary budget. Mr. Fast explained that the preliminary budget must be finalized by the Board of Directors by June 15 and submitted to the taxing jurisdictions, with final adoption required by September 15. He stated that some changes are expected between the preliminary and final versions; however, he anticipates the overall dollar amount will remain relatively similar. He clarified that the purpose of the presentation was not to seek approval of the budget at this time, but rather to provide information so the Board could review the budget, ask questions, and become more familiar with its contents.

Mr. Fast noted that the 2025 financial audit is currently being completed and will provide final expense figures. He then directed the Board's attention to the presentation slides and explained that he used the 2025 general ledger and calculated expenses as the basis for the preliminary budget, while also considering the future needs of the appraisal district. He reviewed budget trends beginning in 2022 to illustrate annual increases.

Mr. Fast stated that he does not see many areas where substantial reductions can be made, as much of the budget is related to personnel costs. However, he noted that certain licenses and maintenance agreements, including LexisNexis and Trepp, could potentially be discontinued.

Director Larry Trammell expressed appreciation for the in-depth approach taken in preparing the 2027 budget. Mr. Fast stated that transparency regarding how the appraisal district spends money is important. He then directed the Board's attention to a graph illustrating trends from 2022 through 2026 in the areas of total budget, employee budget, contracted services, and health benefits. He noted that the smallest increase has been in the employee budget, while the largest increase has been in healthcare benefits, which he stated is a challenge affecting both the public and private sectors.

Mr. Fast reviewed the current healthcare plan and stated that he anticipates an increase in healthcare costs. He explained that he built a 15% increase into the healthcare budget. Director Trammell expressed concern regarding the projected increase, noting that it is necessarily an estimate because budget deadlines occur before agencies provide rate quotes for the following year. Vice Chairperson Svendsen commented that insurance rates have increased across all areas of coverage and stated that a 15% increase did not seem unreasonable given current conditions. He added that there is not much that can be done about those expenses.

Mr. Fast then reviewed the category totals pages and explained that he grouped similar expenses together so changes could be tracked more effectively in future years. He further stated that any line item with a preliminary increase of more than 5% includes a brief explanation of the calculation and reason for the increase. Director Saunders asked whether the budget included any additional

Central Appraisal District of Johnson County Board of Directors Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Cross Timbers Branch Meeting Room, Cleburne Conference Center
1501 W. Henderson Street Cleburne, Texas

technology or related services. Mr. Fast responded that there are not many new contracted services included in the 2027 budget. However, he believes there are beneficial opportunities related to the use of aerial imagery the district is acquiring as part of the sketch verification process. He stated that this technology would assist with state compliance requirements and would serve as a valuable tool for time management and resource allocation. He further noted that the district does not currently have sketch imagery software or a provider. While there is not a specific line item in the 2027 budget for that purpose, he explained that there is a broader technology category that could be utilized if the Board determined it to be a necessary resource.

Chairperson White asked whether CivicPlus was included in the 2027 budget, and Mr. Fast responded that it was listed under board meeting software. Vice Chairperson Svendsen commended Mr. Fast for increasing the training budget. Chairperson White also asked about the new line item for recruitment, testing, and background checks. Mr. Fast explained that prior budgets did not contain a dedicated line item for drug testing and background checks. He stated that he felt it was important to establish one because selecting employees involves more than confirming they do not use drugs; it also requires developing recruitment strategies to identify individuals who would be an asset to the appraisal district. He added that the amount budgeted is not large, but that it is a starting point.

Vice Chairperson Svendsen asked whether the budget included an IT and HR position. Mr. Fast confirmed that the highlighted positions in the budget represented the unfilled positions. Mr. Fast then directed attention to the Estimate of Budget Allocation portion of the presentation. He explained that the district does not yet know what the 2026 tax levy will be, which is the method Johnson County has historically used to calculate quarterly allocations to taxing entities. He also pointed out a recent trend in which school districts have experienced decreases in tax rates while cities and counties have experienced increases. He explained that when school district tax rates decrease, their levy is reduced, which impacts both the budget allocation calculation and the Board voting process. Director Trammell asked a question regarding some of the calculations, and Mr. Fast stated that he would research the matter further and report back to the Board.

Director Trammell also asked whether the nine vacant positions were contributing to overtime usage. Mr. Fast explained that the CAMA conversion has been the primary cause of overtime, along with staffing concerns within the Exemptions Department. Chairperson White asked about the schedule change line item in the salary portion of the budget. Mr. Fast confirmed that the line item applies to appraisers moving from one appraiser level to the next and stated that he believes adjustments could be made to that line item.

Vice Chairperson Svendsen asked Mr. Fast whether he was satisfied with the GSA conversion and whether it would allow the district to bridge the gap between the appraisal district and the tax office. Mr. Fast stated that the conversion remains a work in progress. He explained that the district has been able to work around some issues, but that GSA has not met expectations.

Central Appraisal District of Johnson County Board of Directors Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Cross Timbers Branch Meeting Room, Cleburne Conference Center
1501 W. Henderson Street Cleburne, Texas

Mr. Fast offered to meet with any Board member prior to the next meeting to review the preliminary budget in greater detail and answer questions. No action was taken. Director Trammell requested that the budget be placed on the May agenda for further discussion.

2.B.2. Review and discuss future office building location options and take action as appropriate.

Vice Chairperson Svendsen, Chair of the New CAD Office Subcommittee, reported that the previously considered Henderson location (former WellMed building) is no longer available, as it has been leased. The Board reviewed multiple site and facility options:

Option 1 – N. Anglin (Soul Harvest Church):

Approximately 1.5 acres for \$250,000, with conditions for parking lot improvements and shared church use on Wednesdays and Sundays. Considered cost-effective; however, concern was expressed regarding location off a main thoroughfare.

Option 2 – Nolan River Road:

Approximately 6 acres at \$7 per square foot. Larger than needed but could be subdivided, with discussion of new construction on one portion and selling the remainder.

Option 3 – 120 Bob White Court:

Approximately 1.5 acres at \$6 per square foot. Concerns noted regarding access due to lack of a traffic signal.

Option 4 – Nolan River & Kilpatrick:

Approximately 1.797 acres priced between \$5 and \$6 per square foot, with an adjacent parcel available for additional access or parking. Vice Chairperson Svendsen disclosed ownership of the adjacent parcel and recused himself from discussion of this option.

Option 5 – Workforce Solutions Building (Hyde Park):

Approximately 9,300 square feet available for lease at \$12–\$15 per square foot, with an additional 1,800 square feet anticipated in July 2027 that would be offered to the Board first. Director Trammell requested exploration of a potential purchase option for this location rather than leasing.

Discussion followed regarding whether to pursue land acquisition and construction, leasing, or renovation of the existing facility. Director Trammell emphasized the need to fully evaluate all three options. Vice Chairperson Svendsen noted that there is currently an offer on the existing building. Director Trammell inquired how proceeds from the sale of the existing building would be distributed to the entities. Mr. Tepper responded that the proceeds would be applied as a credit toward the following year's budget allocations.

Central Appraisal District of Johnson County Board of Directors Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Cross Timbers Branch Meeting Room, Cleburne Conference Center
1501 W. Henderson Street Cleburne, Texas

Mr. Tepper advised that any property purchase would require 75% entity approval, and contracts should include a contingency allowing withdrawal if approval is not obtained. He also noted that pursuing a lease followed by construction would require approval twice. Director Trammell stated that a potential option would be to have a developer construct a facility on purchased land, with the appraisal district purchasing the completed project as a package. Mr. Tepper agreed that this approach could be viable if structured appropriately.

Mr. Craig Hundley, a member of the audience, addressed the Board and inquired why the focus had been limited to locations within Cleburne. He suggested considering areas such as Joshua. The Board acknowledged the comment, and Director Trammell agreed that Joshua could serve as a central location. Director Trammell included the possibility of a developer-built facility, as well as expanding the search beyond Cleburne. Joshua was identified as a potential alternative location.

Discussion followed regarding construction costs. Director Hernaiz inquired about the estimated cost per square foot to build, how those costs compare among the options presented, and whether the appraisal district would be required to finance construction. Director Trammell estimated a 12,000 sq. ft. facility could cost approximately \$3 million. Mr. Fast reported the current building fund balance is approximately \$1,131,475, not including any remaining 2025 funds.

Vice Chairperson Svendsen indicated that if the Workforce property is not available for purchase, the Board should move forward with a land option. The subcommittee will also research potential sites in Joshua and report back.

No action was taken.

3. Information / Discussion Items

3.A. Subcommittee Reports

3.A.1. ARB

Director Chris Saunders, Chair of the Appraisal Review Board (ARB) Subcommittee, presented the subcommittee report. Director Saunders reported that he met with Mr. Fast regarding the possibility of assigning exclusive staff to the ARB. Mr. Fast evaluated staffing needs and determined that there is currently insufficient workload to support dedicated full-time positions. He noted that this will be reevaluated as the county continues to grow. Director Saunders reported that he is awaiting a report from the electrician regarding the proposed hearing areas.

Director Saunders informed the Board that an ARB meeting and training is scheduled for April 27. He reminded Board members that attendance must be limited to fewer than a quorum. Mr. Tepper advised that any Board members in attendance would serve as observers only and may not participate in discussions with ARB members during the training.

3.A.2. Budget & Finance

Central Appraisal District of Johnson County Board of Directors Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Cross Timbers Branch Meeting Room, Cleburne Conference Center
1501 W. Henderson Street Cleburne, Texas

Director Larry Trammell, Chair of the Budget & Finance Subcommittee, reported that he had discussed the preliminary budget outlined under General Action Item 2.B.1 with Mr. Mitch Fast, Chief Appraiser/Executive Director. He noted that adjustments may be made in the coming months but expressed confidence in the current proposal. Director Trammell also commended Mr. Fast for the level of detail included in the budget.

3.A.3. Communications

Vice Chairperson Peter Svendsen, Chair of the Communications Subcommittee, reported that the final Organizational Audit Report has been uploaded to the cad website.

3.A.4. New CAD Office

Vice Chairperson Svendsen, Chair of the New CAD Office Subcommittee, stated that he had nothing further to add beyond the discussion held under Item 2.B.2, Review and discuss future office building location options and take action as appropriate.

3.A.5. Policies

Chairperson White, Chair of the Policies Subcommittee, reported that she had reviewed the newly proposed policies and made several revisions. In comparing them to the original policy, she identified certain items that were not included in the new draft, including a section outlining expectations of the Appraisal Review Board (ARB), which she believes should be retained. She stated that she would forward her proposed changes to the other subcommittee members, Director Larry Trammell and Director Ignacio Hernaiz, for further review.

3.A.6. Reappraisal Plan

Director Trammell, Chair of the Reappraisal Plan Subcommittee, reported that at the March 9, 2026 meeting, the Board voted to proceed with a reappraisal. He asked whether this action required any changes to the current reappraisal plan, and Mr. Tepper confirmed that the plan remains in effect as originally adopted. Director Trammell invited other Board members to participate in the subcommittee and noted that all members are encouraged to share their ideas, concerns, and opinions.

Vice Chairperson Svendsen added that he believes the market may not be as strong as commonly perceived, citing unsold D.R. Horton homes as an example.

3.B. Taxpayer Liaison Officer Report

3.B.1. Property Owner Complaints

Mrs. Amy Lingo, Johnson County Taxpayer Liaison Officer, reported that she had approximately 13 contacts with Johnson County taxpayers, the majority of which were related to exemptions and the associated process. She indicated that staffing shortages in the exemptions department, along with the CAMA system conversion, have contributed to delays in applying exemptions. Mrs. Lingo noted that staff have been very responsive to her inquiries and that Mr. Fast has assisted her in

Central Appraisal District of Johnson County Board of Directors Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Cross Timbers Branch Meeting Room, Cleburne Conference Center
1501 W. Henderson Street Cleburne, Texas

understanding the complexity of the tax code as it relates to exemptions. She added that this complexity is also a source of frustration for homeowners.

3.C. Chief Appraiser Report

3.C.1. 2026 Preliminary Value Estimates

Mr. Fast presented the 2026 preliminary value estimates, including a graph reflecting all properties appraised in Johnson County. He reported an approximate 5% increase in market value from 2025 to 2026, noting that this figure is still trending upward. He explained that part of this increase is attributable to the reappraisal of Category E properties, as well as new construction. Mr. Fast clarified that an increase in market value does not necessarily result in a corresponding increase in taxable value. He also stated that the appraisal district has begun reviewing the rural land schedule to promote greater uniformity, with the goal of bringing Category E ratios more in line with Category A, which more closely reflects market value. In response to a question from Director Trammell, Mr. Fast confirmed that new construction contributes to the reported 5% increase. He emphasized that these figures are preliminary and that substantial work remains. He explained that the freeze-adjusted taxable value column is used by taxing entities to apply tax rates and determine levies. Mr. Fast noted that the report includes jurisdictional data and preliminary figures for the Board's review, though he did not go through each in detail. He described the report as a tool to keep the Board informed on the appraisal process and stated that final reappraisal results will be presented at the May Board meeting. He also presented a graph showing growth in real property accounts in Johnson County, increasing from approximately 76,000 in 2019 to 109,000 in 2026. Additionally, he discussed the stratification report, which organizes data in a manner similar to the Property Value Study conducted by the Comptroller, including the division of school districts into strata. Appraisers will review sales data within these strata to identify market trends. Mr. Fast further noted that commercial properties typically have fewer sales, requiring independent appraisals conducted by the state. He concluded by reviewing value changes across jurisdictions and categories, noting that Categories E and F remain low. He added that Category F values were not yet entered into the new CAMA system at the time of this report.

3.C.2 2026 Appraisal Notice Calendar and Key Dates

Mr. Fast presented the anticipated schedule for mailing appraisal notices to Johnson County taxpayers. He noted that delays in the timeline may place the appraisal district behind its typical schedule; however, all statutory deadlines are expected to be met. Mr. Fast stated that the information provides the Board with an overview of upcoming activities and timelines for the appraisal district in the coming weeks. He also advised that once notices are received, Board members may experience an increase in inquiries from taxpayers. He encouraged Board members to direct taxpayers to contact the Johnson County Central Appraisal District to speak with an appraiser or with Mr. Fast regarding questions about property values. Mr. Fast further encouraged taxpayers to utilize the protest process, noting that it allows the appraisal district to review individual property characteristics that may not be fully captured through mass appraisal methods. Chairperson White asked for protest deadline dates. Mr. Fast confirms the May 30th date.

Central Appraisal District of Johnson County Board of Directors Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 9, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Cross Timbers Branch Meeting Room, Cleburne Conference Center
1501 W. Henderson Street Cleburne, Texas

4. Executive Session

Pursuant to Sections 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Deliberation Regarding Real Property), 551.074 (Personnel Matters), and 551.076 (Deliberation Regarding Security Devices or Audits) of the Texas Government Code, the Board of Directors reserves the right to convene in Executive Session(s) as deemed necessary during the course of this meeting for any posted agenda item.

4.A. Reconvene into Open Session

4.B. Discuss and possibly take action on anything discussed in Executive Session including property owner complaints and personnel matters.

No recordable action

5. Closing Business

5.A. Future Agenda Items

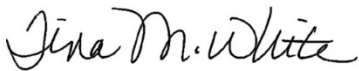
- Preliminary Budget
- Future CAD Building

5.B. Proposed Next Meeting Date

Thursday, May 14th, 2026

5.C. Adjourn

Approved the 14th day of May, 2026.



Chairperson



Secretary