Central Appraisal District of Johnson County Board of Directors Regular Meeting

Thursday, June 11, 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 - Absent
2. Vice Chairperson Peter Svendsen - Present
3. Secretary Jason Marbut - Present
4. Director Larry Trammell - Present
5. Director John Wood - Present
6. Director Chris Saunders - Present
7. Director Ignacio Hernaiz - Present
8. Director Shane McNeel - Present
9. Scott Porter, Tax Assessor Collector - Absent

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

JCAD Taxpayer Liaison Officer
Mrs. Amy Lingo - Present

JCAD Legal Counsel
Ms. Sharon Coffee Baxter, Managing Attorney MVBA, P.C.

1. Preliminary Business

1.A. Call to Order

Vice Chairperson Svendsen 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. Welcome

1.D. Invocation

Director Chris Saunders gave the invocation.

1.E. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chairperson Svendsen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.F. Recognitions

Prior to receiving non-agenda public communications, members of the Board and the Taxpayer Liaison Officer made remarks from the dais.

Board Member Chris Saunders distributed a summary of April 2026 property sales to the Board. Mr. Saunders stated that his review compared April sales prices to appraised values and indicated that, in aggregate, the total appraised value of the sampled properties closely aligned with their total sales prices. He noted that while the overall mass appraisal process appeared to perform well, a number of individual properties showed significant variances between appraised value and sales price. Mr. Saunders expressed his opinion that the April sales data did not support increasing property values at that time.

Board Member Larry Trammell addressed the Board regarding the 2026 residential property reappraisal process. Mr. Trammell stated that he was speaking in his capacity as a Board member elected by the taxpayers of Johnson County and discussed the 2025–2026 Reappraisal Plan, including the Board's prior approval of the plan and the March 2026 decision to authorize a special reappraisal. He expressed concerns that many residential taxpayers had reported substantial increases in their appraised values and questioned whether those increases were consistent with preliminary valuation data previously presented to the Board. Mr. Trammell stated that he was seeking transparency, accountability, and a clear explanation of the methodology used in determining the 2026 residential appraisals in order to maintain public confidence in the appraisal process.

Mr. Trammell made a motion to schedule a Board workshop and direct the Chief Appraiser to provide a detailed presentation regarding the 2026 residential appraisal values and process, including the market data utilized, ratio studies, measurements of appraisal uniformity, explanations for differences between preliminary and final value estimates, and any other information necessary for the Board and the public to better understand the development of the 2026 residential values.

Board Member John Wood seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Member John Wood addressed the Board regarding concerns he had heard from taxpayers and appraisers about the 2026 appraisal process and the District's new software system. Mr. Wood acknowledged the role of the Appraisal Review Board for property owners who dispute their appraisals, but stated that he had received reports of unusual or incorrect values. He requested that the Chief Appraiser provide the Board, as soon as possible or at the next meeting, with a corrective action list addressing software-related issues and proposed steps to resolve them.

Taxpayer Liaison Officer Amy Lingo addressed the Board regarding concerns and observations received from taxpayers during the 2026 appraisal cycle. Ms. Lingo noted that the appraisal process occurred during a period of leadership transition, implementation of a new appraisal software system, and a Board-authorized countywide reappraisal following the Texas Comptroller's Property Value Study, which contributed to delayed appraisal notices, an extended protest deadline, software-related issues affecting public access to appraisal information and mapping, and increased taxpayer inquiries regarding appraisal values and the protest process. She further reported concerns regarding significant increases in residential, acreage, and agricultural property appraisals, the effect of rising property taxes on mortgage escrow payments, and the handling of taxpayer evidence during informal appraisal meetings. Ms. Lingo emphasized the importance of taxpayers having access to accurate appraisal information so they can make informed decisions regarding their protest rights, encouraged taxpayers to remain engaged with local taxing entities during budget and tax rate discussions, and advised the Board that she was preparing an analysis of tax revenue growth among Johnson County taxing entities. She concluded by requesting that the Board consider the cumulative impact of the countywide reappraisal, leadership transition, software implementation challenges, delayed notices, and valuation increases on Johnson County property owners.

1.G. Non-agenda Public Communications

Derek Weathers, candidate for Mayor of Cleburne, expressed appreciation to the Board members, the Taxpayer Liaison Officer, District staff, and legal counsel for their service. He stated that many of the concerns surrounding the property tax system require action at the state level and acknowledged the efforts of state legislators working on property tax issues. Mr. Weathers encouraged public participation in the upcoming election and concluded by thanking the Board and staff for their continued service.

Bryon Nance, Chairman of the Appraisal Review Board (ARB), addressed the Board and provided an update on ARB operations. Mr. Nance expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve as Chairman and reported that ARB members had received additional training beyond the required Comptroller training, including sessions with a fee appraiser and newly appointed ARB legal counsel, Roy Armstrong. He stated that the additional training had better prepared the ARB members for hearing protests and applying appraisal law. Mr. Nance also reported that a third hearing panel was being added to increase the ARB's capacity to hear protests. He advised the Board that approximately 17,500 residential protests had been filed, nearly 1,000 had been heard, and approximately 6,000 were scheduled for hearing. Mr. Nance acknowledged that some appraisals appeared to be significantly high and stated that the ARB and District staff had worked cooperatively to evaluate taxpayer evidence and provide relief where supported by the evidence.

Jacob Wernette, Appraisal Review Board member, addressed the Board regarding property affordability and private property concerns. Mr. Wernette discussed national housing affordability statistics, his experience serving on the ARB, and the difficulty of upholding appraisal values when taxpayers express concern about their ability to afford their homes. He referenced historical writings and principles related to private property rights and urged the Board to consider the impact of appraisal values on local property owners.

Fernando Rodriguez addressed the Board during Non-Agenda Public Communications regarding concerns about increasing property taxes and their impact on homeowners, business owners, and residents on fixed incomes. Mr. Rodriguez stated that, through his work with the Johnson County Food Bank, he sees more residents struggling financially and expressed concern that rising housing-related costs affect taxpayers' ability to remain in their homes. He encouraged members of the public to attend Board meetings, speak during public comment, and remain engaged in the property tax process. Mr. Rodriguez also expressed appreciation to the Board and staff for their service and urged action at the local, state, and federal levels to address the burden of increasing property taxes.

Ray Jones IV addressed the Board during Non-Agenda Public Communications regarding concerns with the property appraisal and protest process in Johnson County. Mr. Jones expressed concern that the appraisal process relies too heavily on technology, artificial intelligence, and mass appraisal methods, particularly for properties in rural areas where properties may not be comparable. He stated that his 2026 appraisal notice was received late and reported a substantial increase to a portion of his property value. Mr. Jones also described difficulties with the informal review process, including unclear documentation, unexplained appraisal codes and abbreviations, limited communication options through the online portal, and confusion regarding how to communicate with an appraiser before a formal ARB hearing. He expressed concern that delays, changed deadlines, website issues, and lack of clear information were negatively affecting taxpayers.

Ray Jones III addressed the Board during Non-Agenda Public Communications regarding fairness in the appraisal protest and informal settlement process following recent technology disruptions. Mr. Jones stated that he was not assigning blame to the District for the technology issues, but emphasized that property owners need access to sufficient information before making decisions about settlement offers. He discussed the importance of property record cards and supporting appraisal information, including details regarding improvements, square footage, condition, quality, depreciation, and comparable properties. Mr. Jones expressed concern that some taxpayers may have entered into informal settlements without access to information normally needed to evaluate those offers and requested that affected taxpayers be allowed an opportunity to reconsider informal settlements after access to necessary information is restored.

Kim Jones addressed the Board during Non-Agenda Public Communications regarding the 2026 appraisal protest process. Ms. Jones expressed concern that taxpayers who participated in informal reviews before the appraisal website and online information were fully functional may not have had access to the information necessary to make informed decisions and requested that those taxpayers be allowed to have their informal settlements reconsidered. She also questioned the reported number of Appraisal Review Board hearings conducted, commented on the use of ARB training funds, and requested that future presentations regarding the District's appraisal software and valuation process be open to the public and include clearer explanations of appraisal codes, methodology, and data presented to the Board. She further encouraged the Board to make presentation materials available for public viewing during meetings to improve transparency and public understanding.

2. Action Items

2.A. Consent Agenda

2.A.1. Approve minutes of May 14, 2026, regular meeting

Director Larry Trammell made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2026 regular meeting. Director John Wood seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2.A.2. Approve monthly financial reports

The monthly financial report was not presented and no action was taken.

Agenda Item 2.B.3 was taken up out of order at this time.

2.B.3. Discussion to amend appraisal plan

Sharon Coffee Baxter, legal counsel with MVBA, P.C., addressed the Board at the request of Vice Chairperson Svendsen. Ms. Baxter stated that she was presenting general concepts discussed by other appraisal district boards regarding possible approaches to appraisal plan amendments and value increase concerns. She explained that, under current law, when a property owner receives a value reduction through the ARB, informal settlement, arbitration, or litigation, the appraisal district may face a higher burden of proof in a subsequent year if the value is increased. She described a concept considered by some appraisal districts that would require a higher evidentiary standard when a property’s market value increases by more than 5% after a prior-year reduction. Ms. Baxter stated that she had not yet seen the concept implemented and was not providing legal advice but presented it as a possible framework for Board consideration. She also explained that taxpayers who do not receive relief through the ARB may have additional remedies, including district court, arbitration, or the State Office of Administrative Hearings.

At this time, the Board paused discussion of Agenda item 2.B.3 to receive an additional non-agenda public communication.

Philip Sanders, Burleson resident, who had requested to speak during Non-Agenda Public Communications, addressed the Board regarding concerns about increases in property appraisals and the protest process.

Following the public comment, the Board resumed discussion of Agenda Item 2.B.3.

Vice Chairperson Svendsen asked Ms. Baxter to clarify the proposed 5% evidentiary standard concept discussed earlier. Ms. Baxter clarified that the concept would not create a 5% cap on value increases or replace the existing homestead limitation, but would instead affect the evidentiary standard used during an ARB protest hearing. She explained that, under the concept, if a property's market value increased by more than 5%, the property owner could protest the value and request that the appraisal district be required to meet a higher "clear and convincing" evidentiary standard, rather than the ordinary preponderance of the evidence standard, to support the increase. Following the clarification, Vice Chairperson Svendsen asked whether the Board wished to make a motion. Board Member Larry Trammell stated that the issue related to the reappraisal plan, which appeared later on the agenda, and that he intended to present language for consideration as part of the proposed reappraisal plan. Mr. Trammell stated that he had reviewed similar language from Tarrant County's reappraisal plan and intended to propose language providing that, when a property value has been adjudicated by the ARB in one year, any increase in market value of more than 5% in the following year would require the appraisal district to meet a clear and convincing evidence standard. Mr. Trammell clarified that the proposal would not change the state-mandated 10% homestead cap and that the Board does not have authority to reduce that cap to 5%.

2.B. General Action Items

2.B.1. Discuss and consider taking action to obligate the 2025 excess funds as reported in the 2025 financial audit.

Chief Appraiser Mitch Fast presented the item regarding the 2025 excess funds reported in the 2025 financial audit. Mr. Fast stated that the audit identified $1,140,430 in unspent 2025 budget funds and explained that, if the Board wished to obligate those funds for another appraisal district need, the District would need to follow the budget amendment process and provide notice to the participating taxing jurisdictions. He explained that the taxing jurisdictions would have the opportunity to object, and that if more than 50% objected, the Board would not be able to obligate the funds in that manner. Following discussion, Director Trammell made a motion to notify the entities of the BOD's intent to amend the 2026 budget by increasing the 2026 annual budget by $1,140,430, which is the amount of the excess funds from 2025. Director Wood seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2.B.2. Review and discuss the mass appraisal software conversion completion and transition to an annual maintenance contract for the Central Appraisal District of Johnson County, and take action as appropriate.

This item was not addressed. No discussion occurred, and no action was taken.

2.B.3. Discussion to amend appraisal plan.

This item was previously taken up out of order. No further discussion or action was taken at this time.

2.B.4. Review and discuss future office building location options and take action as appropriate.

Vice Chairperson Svendsen opened discussion regarding the District's long-range office building planning efforts and advised that two potential properties had been identified for possible acquisition. He explained that, before selecting a site, the Board wished to engage a consultant to evaluate the District's future operational and facility needs, including space requirements, workflow, site requirements, conceptual building layout, and preliminary cost estimates.

2.B.5. Review and discuss facilities assessment and long-range office planning reports to assist in the office building acquisition process and take action as appropriate.

Chief Appraiser Mitch Fast advised that the proposals received to date were intended to provide preliminary budgetary pricing and recommended inviting the firms, including an additional firm that had expressed interest, to present more comprehensive proposals outlining their qualifications, project approach, scope of services, deliverables, and examples of similar work.

Board members Larry Trammell, John Wood, Ignacio Hernaiz, and Vice Chairperson Svendsen discussed the proposed scope of work, evaluation criteria, project schedule, anticipated deliverables, and consultant selection process. Board members expressed a desire for the selected consultant to provide practical facility layouts, preliminary cost estimates, workflow analysis, and examples of comparable projects to assist the Board in determining its long-term office needs before acquiring property. Vice Chairperson Svendsen further explained that Board members planned to visit recently completed appraisal district facilities as part of the planning process and emphasized that the Board must first determine whether either potential property could accommodate the District's long-term facility requirements before proceeding with a purchase.

2.B.6. Discuss and consider taking action to grant a right of first refusal to purchase the current office building of the Central Appraisal District of Johnson County.

Vice Chairperson Svendsen also informed the Board that Dr. Maddox had expressed interest in purchasing the District's current office building and had requested a letter acknowledging a right of first refusal to purchase the property at fair market value to assist with discussions with the City regarding a proposed redevelopment project. Board Member Larry Trammell stated that he would support such a letter only if it was prepared or reviewed by the District's legal counsel. Vice Chairperson Svendsen stated that no action would be taken on the request until the matter had been reviewed by legal counsel.

3. Information / Discussion Items

3.A. Subcommittee Reports

3.A.1. ARB

Director Chris Saunders provided an update on the construction of the two new Appraisal Review Board hearing rooms, reporting that the rooms were nearing completion and expected to be operational soon.

3.A.2. Budget & Finance

Director Trammell reported that the preliminary 2027 budget was approved at the previous meeting and provided to the taxing entities. Mr. Fast confirmed that the taxing entities had been notified and stated that no action was required from them unless they desired to respond. Mr. Fast further reported that no correspondence had been received and that the TCDRS line item had been recalculated to reflect the 12.88% rate change discussed at the previous meeting.

3.A.3. Communications

Vice Chairperson Svendsen, Chair of the Communications Subcommittee, reported that, based on public comments received during the meeting, the District should continue working toward a more informative and transparent website. He stated that the website should include a list of appraisal codes, explanations of items shown on appraisal notices, copies of documents and information used to determine proposed values, and clear guidance regarding the documentation and information taxpayers should bring to informal and ARB hearings to better prepare for the protest process.

3.A.4. New CAD Office

This item was not addressed. No discussion occurred, and no action was taken.

3.A.5. Policies

Director Hernaiz reported that there were no updates from the Policies Subcommittee.

3.A.6. Reappraisal Plan

Director Trammell reported there were no updates from the Reappraisal Subcommittee.

3.B. Taxpayer Liaison Officer Report

3.B.1. Property Owner Communications

No additional report was provided under this item.

3.C. Chief Appraiser Report

3.C.1. 2026 Preliminary Value Estimates

Mr. Fast presented updated value estimate reports for the taxing entities. The reports compared the sum of 2025 values to current 2026 values by state code category for each ISD and included the percentage change between the two years. Mr. Fast noted that the reports did not include new construction and that the new CAMA software does not currently provide a report that breaks out new value by property type. He also presented an analysis of Johnson County properties categorized by properties with increases greater than 10%, increases less than 10% but greater than 1%, no change, and decreases for 2026. From a market value perspective, approximately 55% of properties increased, while approximately 45% decreased or remained the same. Mr. Fast explained the difference between market value and taxable value, noting that taxable value is affected by the homestead cap calculation and agricultural productivity value, and that one common reason for a taxable value increase is the annual reduction of cap loss under the 10% homestead limitation. He also reviewed stratification reports for each school district comparing district values to sales prices through sales ratios, which are used as part of the District's valuation analysis. Mr. Fast noted that there were fewer sales in 2024 than in 2025, and that current 2026 sales trends showed an increase in sales activity, which would be more influential for 2027 valuations. The reports will be uploaded to the District's website for public access.

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

Mr. Fast noted that approximately 16,000 accounts will have a protest deadline of July 15th while the majority of accounts remain under the July 2nd deadline. Certification of the appraisal roll remains on schedule for July 25th. Mr. Fast further advised that the district plans to begin work on the 2027 appraisal year in August, allowing additional time to review and analyze 2027 values. He also reported that the 2027 appraisal year will include a comprehensive update to the district's cost schedules and depreciation tables.

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.

At 7:54 p.m., Vice Chairperson Svendsen stated that the Board would convene into Executive Session.

4.A. Reconvene into Open Session

At 8:42 p.m., the Board of Directors reconvened into Open Session.

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

Vice Chairperson Svendsen announced that no action was necessary.

5. Closing Business

5.A. Future Agenda Items

- Future CAD Building
- Workshop
- Final Budget Approval

5.B. Discussion between members of the Board of Directors and the Chief Appraiser regarding appraisal as permitted by Sec. 60.15 of the Texas Property Tax Code.

This item was not addressed. No discussion occurred, and no action was taken.

5.C. Proposed Next Meeting Date

Thursday, July 9, 2026

5.D. Adjourn

Director Wood made a motion to adjourn. Director Trammell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Approved the 9th day of July, 2026.

Tina M. White

Chairperson

Secretary