

HEMPHILL COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT OPEN MEETINGS AND OPEN RECORDS TRAINING POLICY

Communication with the public about Appraisal District issues or problems is the responsibility of the Chief Appraiser. Employees are to refer the public to the Chief Appraiser if a question is non-routine, controversial, or outside of the scope of the employee's normal duties.

No one is permitted to remove or make copies of any Hemphill CAD records, reports or documents that are legally confidential, such as renditions, without prior management approval. Disclosure of confidential information could lead to termination, as well as other possible legal action. Most records, however, are public record, such as appraisal cards and as such the requester does not have to tell you why he/she wants the information. Make sure you know the difference between confidential records and open records; if you're unsure, refer the request to the Chief Appraiser.

Open Meetings/Records Act

All employees shall complete the Attorney General's Open Meetings Act and Public Information Act course within the probationary period of employment. Course completion certificates will be held on file in office.

Notice of the meeting shall be posted in a place readily accessible to the general public at all times for at least 72 hours preceding the scheduled time of the meeting. In the case of an emergency, the nature of which shall be expressed in the notice, it shall be sufficient if the notice is posted two hours before the meeting is convened.

Except as otherwise provided by Article 6252-17 VTCS, all meetings shall be open to the public. No closed or executive meeting shall be held unless the Board has first been convened in open meeting for which notice has been given. For all closed, or executive sessions, a certified agenda must be kept indicating the time at which the closed meeting began and ended. The subject matter discussed, and a record of any further action taken. Said certified agenda must be kept on record for at least a two-year period after the date of the meeting. No action shall be taken in a closed session.

Ex Parte Communications: (6.15 Texas Tax Code) A member of the Board of Directors commits an offense if the member directly or indirectly communicates with the Chief Appraiser or any employee of the Appraisal District on any matter relating to the appraisal of property, except in: 1) an open meeting of the appraisal district BOD or another public forum. 2) a closed meeting of the BOD held to consult with the board's attorney about pending litigation, at which the Chief Appraiser's presence is necessary for full communication between the board and the board's attorney. The above does not apply to a routine communication between the Chief Appraiser and the County Assessor-collector that relates to the administration of an appraisal roll, including a communication made in connection with the certification, correction, or collection of an account, regardless of whether the a/c was appointed to the BOD or serves as a nonvoting director.

An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor.