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Salary Setting Meeting
December 10, 2020
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Via Microsoft Teams

Call to Order – Gary Ratterree, Vice-Chair

The third meeting of the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials was brought to order by the vice-chair, Gary Ratterree, at 6:02 p.m. Gary led the meeting because AJ was unable to attend the meeting due to work conflicts.

Roll Call of Commissioners – Teri Wright, Executive Director

At the request from Gary, Teri did the roll call of Commissioners.

Commission Members Present:

Kirsten Barron
Jon Bridge
Tray Cave
Dr. Diana Gale
Libby Hart
Alahanna Kirtley
Sandi LaPalm
Greg Millican
Anastasia Potapova
Gary Ratterree, Vice Chair
Gerry Sherman
Wendy Sowers
Steven Starkovich
Karen White

Commission Members Excused:

AJ Malidore, Chair

Commission Members Unexcused:

Karen McGaughty

Staff Present:

Teri Wright, Executive Director
Lois Williams, Executive Assistant

Meeting Opening Statement – Gary

Gary read the opening statement. He is pleased to have the attendees here. He reminded them that they are charged with setting the salaries of elected officials and read the list of elected officials. He said this is the third meeting in the 2020-21 salary setting session and the group has set a proposed salary schedule for 2021-22 that is on the table for public comment until February 3, 2021, when the Commissioners will adopt a final salary schedule. He asked members of the public who are here to testify to log into www.salaries.wa.gov and wait to be called.

Housekeeping – Teri

Teri reminded everyone to mute themselves when not talking (and remember to unmute when making comments). The group can take breaks as they need.

Commission Work Session

Approval of the November 12, 2020, Meeting Minutes

Gary asked if there were any corrections or comments about the minutes submitted for the November 12 meeting. He asked for discussion and being none, Jon moved to accept the minutes and Sandi seconded the motion. By a hand vote the motion was approved.

Commissioner Round Table

Gary said he wanted to do a roundtable and see how everyone is feeling about the salary schedule that is on the table. He reminded them that there is one more public testimony meeting and a final meeting on February 3. He wants to give everyone the opportunity to ask about any updates or other information they would like to have. Teri said that the one public comment that they have received was from a person who works for Mason county. She wanted the group to be aware that there are several cities and counties that connect their salaries to our salary schedule and what the Commission decides affects those groups. The Governor will release his budget on December 16th and she will send it out. Currently she has updates to Tabs 8, 9, 12, and 27. She will also send the newest forecast. At the February meeting, there will be up to date presentations on the budget and the forecast. Gary asked Teri to go through the Commissioner list to get everyone's opinion. Before she started, Jon said that the two newly elected officials should be given the opportunity to testify in front of us. Teri said that she will reach out to the new Lieutenant Governor and Treasurer.

Teri polled the Commissioners:

- Kirsten stated she is disappointed about the economy and the pandemic. She feels comfortable with the Commission's decision for no raises. She appreciated that many of the officials who testified said they were not there for a raise. She is interested to hear where everyone else is at. She would like to have a time in the future when they can take a good look at the salaries and the folks who made significant contributions with their key leadership roles. Coming from the private sector, she knows compensation is different, but this is not the time to fix it. She feels she has all the information that she needs. She is positive about where they ended up and appreciated Anastasia pushing us.
- Tray stated that he feels like he is still figuring things out.
- Diana said this is her first year and she is still learning. She is not disappointed with the decisions that were made. She would have liked to make different decisions, but with the current economy, they can't. She has trouble with some of the technology, but it is okay.
- Libby believes she has all the information she needs to decide. She would like to be in a better economic state. She would like to see some improvement but she is happy with what was decided.
- Alahna stated that she feels good about the information and is comfortable with the decision. The economy doesn't seem to be getting better, so it is appropriate.
- Sandi stated that she is feeling conflicted, because of so many years in salary administration. The salary is based on the work, not the performance of the person, or the budget, or the

economy. She supports the decision made, but if everyone in state government gets a cost of living increase, then these officials should too. Sandi wants to be sure there is documentation that shows there was some support for salary increases, but the timing is such that we could not approve them at this time.

- Greg is pretty happy with all the information provided and he is still learning a lot. He is happy with the decision so far and doesn't expect to change his mind in the future.
- Anastasia stated that she is in conflict. A part of her feels a responsibility to the future. It is easy for Commissioners to freeze salaries, and then someone has to fix it and there is a problem for that group. Last salary setting, there was a lot of conflict from the public because they were going to raise salaries. She recommends the social security increase of 1.3 percent. She would also like to be able see what the state employees will get. She wants to see the new budget. She has a split mind because with their responsibilities, state officials need a raise, but shouldn't get it when other state employees don't. She would like to see at least a COLA adjustment.
- Gary stated that he would like to see the crisis abate, but it seems to be getting deeper. The vaccine will be out, but of course, won't be taken by all. The Governor has extended the orders. We really can't give a raise when some people in the state are starving to death because they have lost their jobs.
- Gerry stated that he will stick with the decision and he has not seen or heard anything to change his mind. There are too many unknowns about how the future will turn out and believes it premature to give raises to anyone at this point.
- Wendy stated that she is comfortable with where we are right now. She came out of the October meeting wanting to take a good look at the new budget. She liked the benchmark meeting where they looked at the data. She would like to know what other states are doing at relating to salaries. Teri said she will look into it. Most other states make recommendations to the governor or the legislature. She will look to see what she can find, but the information might be last minute because legislatures are not currently in session.
- Steve wanted to repeat and emphasize what has been said before. He spent 30 years in the private higher education sector and it is very budget sensitive. Salary freezes are not unheard of in a tight budget environment. He said the budget depends on the pandemic. He said about one-third of the country do not accept vaccines. Even after we take the vaccine, we will still need to wear masks and social distance. He read that it will take to fall of 2021 before we see anything different. Most of the cities and counties in the state are in worse shape than the state, so we need to be cognizant that what we do affects them. Last salary setting the Commission was very aggressive and addressed a lot of salary issues. He is as comfortable as possible.
- Karen said that she is comfortable for the moment, but she is anxious to see the Governor's budget. We need to be fiscally responsible and if it doesn't look good, then we should stick with what we have. There are people out of work and businesses are closing. It is less important to give raises than getting jobs back and businesses open. She is comfortable for right now.

Needed Materials

Teri asked if there is any additional information the Commissioners need. Jon said he would also like to find out what the other states are doing. Diana said she wants to know what is going to happen over the next two years. Can changes be made in February? Can we look at this again in

a year, if the world is looking better and make changes then? Gary said we can certainly make changes at the final meeting, but once we validate the schedule, it becomes law for the next two years. There will be a new Commission convened in two years with 50% new members. Teri said they will start salary setting again in October 2022 for 2023-24. Gary said the recovery will lag behind the crisis. Steve said the Commission in the interim can commission task forces. There have been task forces created in the past, they can't make a decision, but they help the next Commission. He said we can look at the second year separately from the first year, but there are ramifications with that.

Other Business as Needed

There was no other business.

Public Testimony

Procedure for Public Testimony

Gary read the procedure in its entirety. Due to Covid-19, the Commission is online this salary setting.

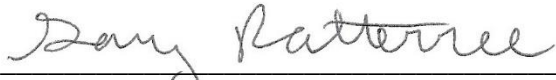
Teri introduced Dory Nicpon with the Office of the Administrator of the Courts. Dory said that she is here to observe and appreciated the opportunity.

Gary called for additional testimony. There was none.

Adjourn

Gary said the agenda for the evening had been concluded and called for adjournment. Jon moved that the meeting be adjourned. Diana seconded it. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45.



Gary Ratterree, Vice-Chair

1/6/2021

Date