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Salary Setting Meeting
November 12, 2020
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Via Microsoft Teams

Call to Order – Gary Ratterree, Vice-Chair

The second meeting of the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials was brought to order by the vice-chair, Gary Ratterree, at 6:05 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.

Commission Members Present:

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

Commission Members Excused:

Tray Cave (please see *note)
Libby Hart
AJ Malidore, Chair

Staff Present:

Teri Wright, Executive Director
Lois Williams, Executive Assistant

Meeting Opening Statement – Gary

Gary reminded the Commission of their obligation to set the salaries for the next two fiscal years for the elected officials of the state of Washington. He read the list of agency heads, judges, and legislators. He reminded them that this is the second meeting of the Commission and that at the first meeting they had adopted the proposed schedule that was released for public review for three months and the final decisions on salaries will be made in February.

Housekeeping – Teri

Teri reminded the Commission to keep themselves muted when not speaking and to take breaks as needed. Gary said that although it was not on the agenda, the minutes from the previous meeting will need to be reviewed and approved. Teri reminded the Commissioners that the minutes were in the packet that she had sent them. Jon moved that the minutes be adopted as presented. Diana seconded the motion. Gary called for a vote, it was agreed that an acclimation vote would be adequate. Gary asked if there were any opposed and there was no response, so he asked for those in favor. The adoption carried.

Commission Work Session

Updates to the Economic Forecast and Budget

Gary said that the update to the economic forecast was in the packet that the Commissioners had received in the mail last week. He asked Teri if there was anyone to present the findings. She said there will be no presentation, they had the information to review. She said there were no drastic changes only a few minor changes. She has not been updated on the state budget, the Governor will release his budget on December 16, so there probably won't be an update until the January meeting. Jon said the revenue was up 8.6% over the forecast primarily due to real estate sales so things are trending better than the forecast, but still down due to Covid-19. Gary asked for other comments about what was sent out.

Steve commented on the budget presentation and asked if there were more collective bargaining contracts any other than the 10 outstanding. Teri said there are no further agreements that she is aware of. Steve wanted to know if the largest ones are in. Teri said that they halted the negotiations on the public employees, which is the largest. Steve said that actually, it is shown further down on the page. Karen White said state employees are different from public employees and they are done.

Jon said the economic forecast is looking better than it had been. Retail sales are increasing more rapidly than expected, so the state won't have to go so much into the rainy day account.

Gary said the Governor is speaking about further restrictions and is asking people to stay away from holiday gatherings. There were no further comments on the economic forecast.

Commission Audit Update

Gary said that the auditor's preliminary findings were sent out by email. Teri said she wanted to be transparent with the Commission about the audit notes, so she sent them a copy of what she had received. There were a couple of audit notes and she has made corrective measures where she could. They found that the Willis Study meetings should have been registered with the Washington State Register and she didn't do that. She had checked with the Attorney General's Office about whether they were public meetings, which they were and she treated them as such, but had neglected to register them. She apologized for the oversight on her part. Another note was on her leave slips. The Commission has never had to have anyone sign the Executive Director's leave requests. She reports to whoever the current chair is and since they are not state

employees she had been told they couldn't sign them. She is now working with AJ and Gary to sign her leave requests.

Sandi said that she has seen many audit reports and she has never seen one this clean. It is a very good report. She said that normally in appointed positions, the directors have their admins sign leave requests. Sandi said the Commission is an unusual agency with so many non-state employees doing travel and all. The Commission members congratulated Teri on the clean report. Teri said she welcomes the audits and it is good to have the oversight to keep from falling short of expectations.

Jon said he wanted to compliment the October minutes for their completeness. Teri said that Lois had spent about 30 hours writing the minutes and she spent about 25 hours editing them. Diana said it was a good job on the audit and on the minutes.

Comments from the Public

Gary asked if there had been any comments from the public by email or phone. Teri said that she has been watching and has reached out to the public email lists. There has not been any public input, which is expected when there isn't a proposed salary increase.

Other business as needed

Steve appreciated the Commissioner of Public Lands the State Treasurer for updating their position descriptions.

Diana asked if it was common to not have comments. Teri said when there is no salary increase that there are usually no comments. Anastasias said that last salary setting, they were reading all kinds of comments about themselves and it was pretty tough. Jon said that last time it was very heated. He also wanted to mention, that in all of the positions the incumbent was reelected except for the Treasurer and Lieutenant Governor. He suggested that Teri contact them to let them know about the work the Commission is currently doing. She said she will wait until they are sworn in, it will be a fast turnaround for them. She asked if the Commission wanted her to reach out sooner. Gary said if the new officials are sworn in in mid-January, they should have adequate time to respond before the February meeting.

Gary asked if there was any additional business, since there was no response, he continued to the next agenda item.

Public Testimony

Procedure for Public Testimony

Gary asked if there was anyone who wanted to provide testimony tonight. There did not appear to be anyone.

Gary reminded anyone who watches this recording that they can make public comments on the website on the Contact Us section. Jon also reminded them that comments should be on the position itself, not on the current office holder.

Testimony by the Public

Gary made a final call for public testimony.

Adjourn

Gary asked Teri if there is anything else. Teri said she and Lois will check everything in the binders to see if there is any updated information. She said that sources have been very slow to update this year, so she doesn't know how many updates they will get.

Teri reminded the Commission of the next meeting on December 10 at 6 p.m. and said she plans to have the agenda and the minutes out two weeks prior to the meeting.

Gary said the agenda has been completed and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Diana moved and Steve seconded. There was no one opposed so the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

*Note: Tray Cave had IT issues and due to the meeting being so short, they were not able to get them resolved. Teri requested this be an excused absence and Gary granted the excuse.



Gary Ratterree, Vice-Chair

December 10, 2020
Date