



February 5, 2025, Meeting Minutes
La Quinta Inn, 4500 Capitol Blvd SE Tumwater 98501
TEAMS – Meeting ID: 234 557 178 394, Passcode: YL7nT6ro

The meeting of the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials was brought to order by Jon, Chair, at 9:03 a.m.

Jon read a land acknowledgement, stating the Commissioners are meeting in the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary land of the Cowlitz, Squaxin, and Nisqually Peoples. The Commission acknowledged the Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and those who were forcibly removed from their homelands. In offering this land acknowledgement, the Commission affirms Indigenous sovereignty, history, and experiences.

Commission Members Present:

Andrea, Vice Chair – via TEAMS
Carli
Debbie
Ellen – via TEAMS
Erik, Vice Chair– via TEAMS
Jason – via TEAMS
Jon, Chair
Kirby
Kirsten – via TEAMS
Lancer
Linda
Melody

Nicholas
Sarah
Steve – arrived at 9:14
Stu
Sue

Staff Present:

Teri Wright, Executive Director
Lindsay Matthews, Executive Assistant

Teri took roll call.

Jon read the meeting opening statement.

Lindsay went over meeting folder contents.

Nicholas moved to approve the January 8, 2025, meeting minutes. Lancer seconded.

The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Public Testimony

Jon welcomed Eric Richey, a Whatcom County Prosecutor. Mr. Richey submitted another letter that was given to Commissioners. Mr. Richey said he wanted to make a couple of points that he didn't mention the last time he testified. He said he heard concerns about the budget and how salary increases may be scrutinized by the public. Mr. Richey acknowledged that the Commissioners are tasked with basing salaries on realistic standards and that the salary be based on the duties of the office not the person that holds the position, he believes that he is making the suggestions with that in mind. He said no one will complain about salaries being set as he has described because people's understanding of Governmental hierarchy and common sense. He went on to say if Commissioners are concerned about the budget, that they could consider lowering each Judicial salary by \$100 each and that would make up for his suggested increase to the Governor and Attorney Generals' salaries. Mr. Richey explained that he cares about the increases to the Governor and Attorney Generals salaries because he cares about justice, and he fights for what he believes is right. He went on to say, in his opinion, inequities have happened to the salaries that have been adjusted over the last 25 years. He shared that this is a time sensitive subject, and he believes putting this off until the Commission meets again in two years is not advisable. He acknowledged that the Commissioners' roles are important and each of their voices matter, he encouraged Commissioners to make themselves heard with their final decision today. He thanked the Commissioners for hearing him.

Jon thanked Mr. Richey for his testimony.

Commissioners moved into a work session. Discussion ensued around the things Commissioners are thinking about the current salary schedule and the Judicial salaries, not keeping the 5% differential versus the top-up or bottom-down method of maintaining the 5% differential. Teri suggested looking at general wage increase, or COLA (cost of living adjustment) before any individual increases, but said that decision is up to Commissioners, she just pointed out historically that is how it has been done. Jon added that he supports not maintaining the Judicial differential at this point, that way each position gets the same increase. Teri explained how the Commission has used the Willis Study in the past and that she is still looking for a replacement study or someone to complete a Willis Study for the positions that the Commissioners look at, she is working with OFM (the Office of Financial Management) since the state bought the Willis Study.

Jon welcomed Dave Reich, Chief Economist from the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council.

Dave Reich, Economic and Revenue Forecast Council

Dave Reich shared that the most recent Economic and Revenue Forecast report came out in November 2024. He shared a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Reich spoke about the overview of

the November forecast in the United States economy, and the Washington State economy. He shared that economic measures have generally been positive. He then spoke about forecast risks from November, upsides, and downsides. His next graph showed that inflation has slowed significantly but remains above the target rate. Mr. Reich went on to show a graph around employment growth, it has slowed, and the Federal Reserve is now balancing this with inflation. He went on to talk about how the Federal Reserve began reducing the interest rates in September 2024 and they are expecting them to continue to lower them going forward. The next slide showed that consumer sentiment improved near the end of 2024 but fell in January. Dave Reich showed a slide and spoke about U.S. retail sales being up 3.9% in December compared with the same month in 2023. He then spoke about the GDP (growth domestic product) forecast, it calls for positive quarterly growth in 2025 and beyond. Mr. Reich then spoke about oil prices; the oil price forecast was higher in November than in the September forecast. His next slide showed that inflation forecasts have increased since November. The next slide showed that Washington's personal income forecast is averaging 5.3% annual growth from 2024-2029, which is down from 5.5% in September. The next couple slides were presented that featured graphs of forecasts around Washington employment, and housing permits. Dave Reich talked about Washington state revenues being largely sales tax, B&O (business and operation), and property taxes. He then shared the revenue act collections growth has slowed; November activity was down 0.9% compared with last November 2023. The next slide showed growth in Washington wholesale/retail taxable sales has been near zero for the last six quarters. Dave Reich showed that Washington construction taxable sales have contracted for four quarters through the second quarter of 2024. The next slide went over real estate excise tax, the activity has increased in 2024. Mr. Reich shared the forecast changes through the 2023-2025 biennium and the forecasted changes of the 2025-2027 biennium. He showed that much of the 2023-2025 revenue change is due to sales and B&O taxes. His next slide showed the forecast of funds subject to the budget outlook process by fiscal year. The forecast for fiscal years 25-27 shows growth between 3.2% to 4.2% which is a little slow for Washington State. In summary the United States economy is holding up well, better than was forecasted in 2024. Washington's employment level is lower but growth is unchanged, small changes to personal income growth and residential construction permits compared to September. He shared the risks to consider, including impacts of the conflicts in Russia-Ukraine and Middle East, lower spending and delayed rate cuts. Total State revenues are expected to grow about 2.6% in the current biennium, and 7.6% in the 2023-2025 and 2025-2027 biennium.

Jon thanked Dave Reich for his presentation and time.

Robyn Williams from the Office of Financial Management was unable to attend the meeting.

Commissioners moved into a work session. Jon mentioned the proposals from October and made note that the Commissioners had talked about not maintaining the 5% differential in the Judiciary

instead of using the top-down or bottom-up method regarding the 5% differential. Jon asked the Commissioners if they had any thoughts or changes they would like to discuss. Discussion ensued around a COLA. Teri read the proposed salary schedule that was voted on in October. Discussion ensued.

Ellen moved that the Governor and Attorney General receive a salary increase of 4% on July 1, 2025, then another 5% July 1, 2026, in addition to whatever COLA is decided upon. Lancer seconded it.

Discussion ensued around salary comparisons for the Governor and Attorney General to city and county executives in Washington State, and responsibilities of each position.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Andrea	X			
Carli	X			
Debbie	X			
Ellen	X			
Erik		X		
Jason		X		
Jon		X		
Kirby		X		
Kirsten	X			
Lancer	X			
Linda		X		
Melody		X		
Nicholas	X			
Sarah	X			
Steve		X		
Stu		X		
Sue	X			

The motion Passed with 9 affirmative votes, and 8 negative votes.

Lindsay shared the updated Governor and Attorney Generals’ salaries without the COLA.

Jon opened the floor for any motions or discussions.

Linda moved for an across-the-board COLA salary increase of 3% on July 1, 2025, then another 2% July 1, 2026. Steve seconded it.

Discussion ensued.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Andrea	X			
Carli	X			
Debbie	X			
Ellen	X			
Erik	X			
Jason	X			
Jon	X			
Kirby	X			
Kirsten	X			
Lancer		X		
Linda	X			
Melody		X		
Nicholas	X			
Sarah	X			
Steve	X			
Stu	X			
Sue	X			

The motion Passed with 15 affirmative votes, and 2 negative votes.

Lancer moved for an across-the-board COLA salary increase of 5% on July 1, 2025, then another 2% July 1, 2026. Melody seconded it.

Discussion ensued around state workers getting a COLA to match the previous motion and giving an across-the-board COLA larger than the previous motion wasn't sitting well with Commissioners, if a particular position needed an additional increase, they could look at each position separately. **The motion was withdrawn by Lancer and Melody.**

Discussion ensued around the Lieutenant Governor's position. Commissioners voiced agreement that no further increase was needed at this time.

Discussion ensued around the Secretary of State, Auditor, and Insurance Commissioners' positions. Commissioners voiced agreement that they wanted to continue to look at the positions together and that no further increase was needed for those positions.

Discussion ensued around the Treasurer, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Commissioner of Public Lands' positions. Commissioners voiced agreement that no further increase was needed for those positions.

Discussion ensued around the Judicial branch. Commissioners recounted that Judges from each court came to speak to the Commissioners.

Erik moved that the Judiciary receive a salary increase of 1% on July 1, 2025, then another 1% July 1, 2026, without the 5% differential between each level of court. Linda seconded it.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Andrea	X			
Carli		X		
Debbie	X			
Ellen	X			
Erik	X			
Jason		X		
Jon	X			
Kirby	X			
Kirsten	X			
Lancer	X			
Linda	X			
Melody	X			
Nicholas	X			
Sarah	X			
Steve	X			
Stu	X			
Sue	X			

The motion Passed with 15 affirmative votes, and 2 negative votes.

Lancer mentioned he would like to see a higher salary given to Legislators for longevity. Teri and Jon explained that is not in the Commissions scope since the Commission sets salaries for the position not the person holding the position.

Sarah moved that the Legislators receive an additional salary increase of 6% on July 1, 2025, then another 5% on July 1, 2026. Lancer seconded it.

Discussion ensued around full-time legislators, challenges legislators face, and the workload of legislators.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Andrea	X			
Carli		X		
Debbie		X		
Ellen		X		
Erik		X		
Jason		X		
Jon	X			
Kirby	X			
Kirsten	X			
Lancer	X			
Linda		X		
Melody	X			
Nicholas	X			
Sarah	X			
Steve	X			
Stu		X		
Sue	X			

The motion Passed with 10 affirmative votes, and 7 negative votes.

12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m. Lunch

Jon welcomed everyone back from lunch. He then opened the floor for discussion or motions before moving forward. Carli shared that she would like to see legislators’ salaries moved closer to a full time salary, about \$84,000 annually.

Carli moved that the Legislators receive a salary increase of \$20,000 on July 1, 2025, and no additional increase on July 1, 2026, in addition to COLA. Lancer seconded it.

Discussion ensued around referendums, public opinion, and while Commissioners voiced support for an additional increase, they agreed that this amount may be too much at once.

Public Testimony

No members of the public were present to provide public testimony.

Back on the table is the original motion.

Carli moved that the Legislators receive a salary increase of \$20,000 on July 1, 2025, and no additional increase on July 1, 2026, in addition to COLA. Lancer seconded it.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Andrea		X		
Carli	X			
Debbie		X		
Ellen		X		
Erik		X		
Jason		X		
Jon		X		
Kirby		X		
Kirsten		X		
Lancer	X			
Linda		X		
Melody		X		
Nicholas		X		
Sarah	X			
Steve		X		
Stu		X		
Sue		X		

The motion Failed with 3 affirmative votes, and 14 negative votes.

Melody asked about a study to evaluate the positions the Commissioners look at for salaries. Teri said she is looking for a replacement study or someone to complete a Willis Study for the positions that the Commissioners look at, she is working with OFM (the Office of Financial Management) since the state bought the Willis Study. She explained the time commitment involved with a Willis Study for each position.

Teri went over next steps for the final salary schedule. She said the next meeting is very fast and is only to approve the meeting minutes but needs Commissioners to attend. That meeting is March 12, 2025, at 10 a.m. Lindsay reminded Commissioners about sending in travel forms for all meetings attended in person.

The next agenda item honored those leaving the Commission on June 30, 2026. Teri explained that in the areas of expertise, Commissioners may volunteer for a second appointment, Ellen has graciously volunteered to serve a second term. Teri thanked all the Commissioners for their service. She mentioned that the Commission has seven members who will leave the Commission on June 30, 2026. They are: Sue, Erik, Jon, Kirby, Lancer, Carli, and Linda. She gave each of them a thank you gift from the Commission.

Teri asked the Commissioners to go around the room and let her know things that could be improved or things that were done well. Many Commissioners mentioned wanting to attend meetings around the state, they mentioned specifically the eastern part of the state, the northern part of the state, and central Washington. Many Commissioners requested an electronic option, like an iPad or laptop or something similar instead of the binder. A Commissioner requested more “getting to know each other” activities. One Commissioner requested more information on Roberts’ Rules of Order. Other items were noted.

Jon asked if there was any other business that needed to be discussed prior to adjournment.

Melody moved to adjourn the meeting; Linda seconded.

The meeting was adjourned by Jon at 2:39 p.m.



Jon, Chair

March 12, 2025

Date