

COMPENSATION BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY
June 13, 2019, Meeting Minutes

On Thursday, June 13, 2019, a meeting of the Madison County Compensation Board came to order at 2:00 p.m. in the Public Meeting Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners, Ron Nye, Chairman, Jim Hart, and Dan Allhands; Elected Officials, Phil Fortner, Sheriff, Suzanne Nellen, Justice of the Peace, Karen Miller, Clerk of Courts, Shelly Burke, Treasurer, Kathleen Mumme, Clerk and Recorder, and Chris Christensen, County Attorney; Public Members John Armstrong, Billie Ratcliffe, Karen Brown, and Ken Walsh present. Laurie Buyan, Commissioners' Assistant, was present to take minutes.

Others in attendance at the meeting were Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, Tammy Mahlstedt, Human Resource Generalist, and Darcel Vaughn, Madison Valley Manor Administrator.

Ron Nye, Commission Chair, opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and turned the meeting over to Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer. Vicki distributed a packet that she had prepared and read the law related to County Compensation Board responsibilities. She stated that the Board is here to make a recommendation for the base salary of elected officials and for the County Attorney. She explained the estimated cost of living increase is 2.4%, noting that the overall cost to the county for this increase would be \$267,558.58 annually. She added that there will be no increase in health insurance premiums this year.

Vicki then discussed a proposal to increase elected officials base to \$57,550 with staff remaining at the 2.4% increase. She referred to a comparison of the top ten Montana Counties noting that Madison County is seventh in taxable values and tenth in salaries. This proposal would be an overall increase of \$342,395.47 annually. Karen Brown asked where the \$57,550 proposal came from. Vicki responded that she literally picked a number, adding that it would be an approximate 8% increase over the current base of \$52,860.

The cost of living increase was discussed with questions arising about how to keep it fair. Suzanne noted that she doesn't consider a cost of living increase a raise. She also stated that although we're not Gallatin County, we are affected by the surrounding counties and asked if it's true that Certified Nurses Assistants are only making \$12.00 per hour. Dan responded by adding in the benefits associated with the position, stating that overall it ends up being about \$20 per hour.

Billie Ratcliffe asked if all the Commissioners are in agreement with the proposed increase for the elected officials. Ron stated that the numbers are there to support it and thinks it's a viable option. Jim stated that they haven't talked about it but it's always a question to give yourself a raise but that he is more concerned with other elected officials. Dan stated that it's not too bright to say I don't want a raise but finds it hard to give himself a raise when we're having such problems keeping CNAs and don't give them a raise. He added that until we can, he could not in good conscience vote for this proposal.

There was discussion regarding the same type of raise that was given several years ago, with the elected officials getting a much higher percentage than other employees and the issues it created. There was also discussion regarding raises for nursing home staff, affordable housing for nursing home staff, and the cost of travelers. Darcel stated that if she can get some support from the county, base the care on the CNAs they currently have, don't admit new residents until they can get rid of the travelers, and advertise for new CNAs at a higher rate; it could be done within the current budget.

There was discussion about giving elected officials more incremental increases rather than doing it all in one year. Suzanne stated this may be more palatable for people in the county. She added that she believes in paying the people below you because they make you look good. Ken Walsh asked if the elected

officials get a raise, does it automatically raise the rest of the rates. Vicki responded that it doesn't anymore. Most of the elected officials agreed with the proposal of raising the salaries incrementally. Shelly suggested giving the elected officials 4% and giving the rest of the employees 3%. Ken Walsh suggested being a little more conservative and giving elected officials 2.4% of the current base, or \$1,268 and then give everyone 2.4% across the board, including the elected officials. Billie stated that she is more into fairness and longevity, noting that it is more expensive to replace employees than to pay them well and keep them. She agreed with Shelly's suggestion.

At this point, Chairman Nye stated that it's getting close to a motion and that only three of the five elected officials are allowed to vote. Kathleen and Suzanne abstained from the voting process leaving Shelly, Phil, and Karen Miller as the elected officials designated as voting members.

Ken Walsh moved to raise the base salary of elected officials by \$1,300 and give 2.4% across the board to all elected officials and staff. John Armstrong seconded the motion. Dan Allhands, Chris Christensen, Ken Walsh, John Armstrong, Karen Brown, Jim Hart, Ron Nye, and Billie Ratcliffe all voted aye. At this point, it was noted that eight of the thirteen members had voted in favor so the motion passed.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Ronald E. Nye, Chairman
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: June 18, 2019

Minutes prepared by:

Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant

Attest: _____
Kathleen Mumme, Clerk and Recorder, Madison County