

**COMPENSATION BOARD HEARING**  
**May 18, 2016**  
**COMMISSION CHAMBERS**  
**COURTHOUSE ANNEX, ROOM 111**  
**10:00 am**

Notice: These minutes are paraphrased and reflect the proceedings of the Compensation Board and the (Board of Commissioners. (MCA 7-4-2611). These minutes were officially approved by the Commission at the June 28, 2016 meeting.

**Commissioners** - Chairman Joe Briggs, Commissioner Jane Weber and Commissioner Jim Larson.

**COMPENSATION BOARD**

**Elected Officials-** County Attorney, John Parker; Sheriff, Bob Edwards; Clerk & Recorder, Rina Fontana Moore; and Justice of the Peace, Mary Jolley.

**Resident Taxpayer Board Members Appointed by the County Commission-** Ted Lewis, First National Bank (term expires on June 30, 2018).

Jean Faure- Faure Holden Attorney at Law PC (term expires June 30, 2016).

Anne Martinez, Independent Management Consultant (term expires on June 30, 2017).

**Cascade County Employees present:** Jeff Mora - Human Resource Director; and Marie Johnson - Chief Deputy Clerk and Recorder.

**Public-** No members present.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Commission Chairman Briggs called the special meeting to order.

**Commission Chairman Briggs** requested that a new Chairman for the Compensation Board be appointed and called for a motion.

**MOTION**

**Commissioner Weber moved, seconded by Sherriff Edwards to appoint Jean Faure as Chairman of the Compensation Board. Motion carried unanimously**

**Commission Chairman Briggs** previewed the salary schedule as provided in (Exhibit "A").

**John Parker** noted that Ted Lewis' term had expired on June 30, 2015. He wondered if they need to vote to reappoint before proceeding with the meeting.

**Commission Chairman Briggs** stated that his term expired date, is a typo in (Exhibit "A") and that Ted Lewis' term doesn't expire until June 30, 2018.

**Jeff Mora** gave a recap of the previous year's COLA (Cost of Living Allowance) stating that in 2012 there was no increase, in 2013 there was an increase of 3.2%, in 2014 and increase of 2.1%, and in 2015 an increase of 1.5% then for 2016 there was an 1.8% (typo in Exhibit at to state 1.6% increase). He also stated that the private sector increase in average annual wages in the last two (2) years have gone up 8%. Also the amount of the COLA set this year will affect the upcoming union salary negotiations and other employee contracts.

**Anne Martinez** responded by saying she is surprised by the 8% increase in the private sector.

**Chairman Jean Faure** agreed and stated that she is not seeing it. Although there has been some growth, but people aren't looking for jobs.

**Commission Chairman Briggs** noted that the 8% increase was information provided by the Great Falls Development Authority. He also stated that Job Service has 880 open jobs, which is odd for Cascade County.

**Bob Edwards** stated with the 1.8% increase last year they had a \$53,000 impact on the County budget. He noted recruiting and retention for the deputies is a concern at the Sheriff's Department and he just lost a few officers to higher wages in federal government and other Montana cities. Other concerns were the busy caseloads and the lack of personnel-which he is four (4) down at this time.

**John Parker** affirmed the importance of the Sheriff's Departments and the role of the deputy coroners who are extremely trained to work investigative fatality cases.

**Bob Edwards** noted that there are many unfunded mandates that his office is required to handle and it is hard on his staff. He reminded everyone that he is asking for a raise for his deputies not himself.

**Anne Martinez** requested that next year it would be helpful to have a chart to see the wage comparisons of the other Montana counties wages.

**Rina Fontana Moore** agreed that there is a shortage of deputies. She is in need of two (2) deputies to help for security on Election Day and no one has signed up. Which might cause her to contract with city police officers.

There was further discussion on the situations that these deputies face daily and importance of the Sheriff's Department protecting the community. There was also discussion about Cascade Counties base salaries compared to other Counties.

**Commission Chairman Briggs** noted that the base salaries for the other counties are all over the board. He also stated that Cascade County salaries are one of the lowest.

**Commission Chairman Briggs** explained the PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) and SRS (Secure Rural Schools) payments that the County receives and also pointed out the MACO COLA spread sheet. (See exhibit "C"). He also commented on how the County can only raise the tax base by 0.50% per Department of Revenue (see exhibit "D") and how properties in TIF districts don't apply.

**Commission Chairman Briggs** proceeded by going over the upcoming budget projections. And made the Board aware of the two major projects the replacement of the Courthouse roof which will be a 4-million-dollar project extended through three years, and the Fox Farm road project which will be a 3.5-million-dollar project. He added by stating that it is a difficult balancing act to fund both projects. Discussion followed concerning the budget.

**Commission Chairman Briggs** presented his spread sheet and stated that there were a few statutorily requirements added. The Commissioners receive an extra \$2,000 and because of the combination of the offices of Sheriff's Dept., Clerk & Recorder, and Treasurers the Treasurer also gets an additional \$3,200, and the Sheriff also gets longevity pay. Now there are new optional additives for the Clerk and Recorder \$2,000 Treasurer \$2,000, plus an additional \$400.00 for Superintendent of Schools.

**Mary Jolly** mentioned that Faye McWilliams, stated that the Clerk of District Court thought that this should have been awarded last year, and she should be awarded the \$2000 as well. She was asked by Judge Steven Fagenstrom to mention to the Compensation Board that his take home pay is less this year than 10 years ago with all the deductions from his paycheck.

There was some further discussion about the cost of health insurance to the employees and it was noted that the employees have good health insurance and that the premiums will not increase this coming year.

**Commission Chairman Briggs** also noted that if the Clerk of Court gets the \$2000 increase then the two (2) Justices of the Peace are entitled to a \$2000 increase. He requested that they begin to decide if the new statutory increases should be the full amount and if they should be included in the pay raises.

**Commissioner Weber** questioned if Jamie Bailey the Treasurer be entitled to the \$2,400 without a degree.

**Rina Fontana Moore** quoted MCA 7-4-2503 (2)(a). which states the Treasurer is to receive \$400.00 **except** if they hold and masters decree they can get up to \$2000.

**Commissioner Larson** asked if the amount could be anything from zero up to the \$2000 figure, he was affirmed that he was correct.

**Commissioner Weber** questioned if the \$400 amount for the Treasurer was optional.

**Commission Chairman Briggs** suggested that the \$2000 amount be brought down to \$1600 to match with the \$400 for a total of \$2000, like the other elected officials.

The Board played with the COLA numbers beginning with 1.5% and ending with 2.5%. There was further discussion on how each number would affect the budget.

**Bob Edwards** stated he knows that his department has the biggest impact on the budget. He reminded everyone of the dangerous demanding job his deputies perform. He suggested that at least keep the 1.8% COLA given last year.

**Ted Lewis** stated that he thought it was a good time to jump into the revenue. He questioned if there was more in the budget due to less employees.

There was further discussion on the impact to train new employees since they leave due to lower wages.

**Bob Edwards** stated it costs his department \$8,500 to hire, train and put a deputy on duty. Not to mention the seven months it takes to train them. There was further discussion on how other departments are keeping employees in their office and turnover.

**John Parker** mentioned that 2.1% be looked at allowing a little extra.

**Commissioner Weber** had some concerns about the constituents' reaction to the 2.1% figure.

**Anne Martinez** stated that she would be okay with that amount of an increase as a taxpayer she would feel it would be fair.

There was further discussion about the upcoming union contracts and (100) one hundred non-union employees being raised the same amount that is approved at this meeting.

#### **MOTION**

**Commissioner Weber moved, to approve a 1.9% with the statutory increases.**

**Mary Jolley** stated she was not in the meeting last year and wasn't sure what was discussed but she feels it should be a little higher, and that it would help with retention of the current employees.

After further discussion 2% was suggested.

#### **MOTION**

**Chairman Jean Faure asked for response to the previous motion, to approve 1.9% with the statutory increases. Joe Briggs, Anne Martinez, Jane Weber, Jean Faure, all in favor, and Rina Fontana Moore, James Larson, Bob Edwards, Ted Lewis, John Parker all against. Motion fails**

**MOTION**

**Anne Martinez made a motion to approve 2% with the statutory increases, Rina Fontana Moore seconded the motion. Joe Briggs, Anne Martinez, Bob Edwards, Ted Lewis, John Parker, Jane Weber, all in favor, and James Larson, Jean Faure, against. *Motion carries***

**John Parker** had questioned if Commission Chairman Briggs had a chance to look at the statute the figures the County Attorneys raise and whether he thought it should be the percent increase or the flat rate increase.

**Commission Chairman Briggs** stated that they have always used the percent increase but he could see that there could be a different numeric figure.

**John Parker** deferred the question of which increase to use to Jean Faure.

**Jean Faure** decided that the percentage increase would be allowed.

**Commissioner Larson** announced that he did not feel good about the raise as he knew his wage when he entered office but his wage connects and he is forced to take the raise.

**Bob Edwards** agreed with Commissioner Larson and thanked them stating he was speaking for his staff and they deserve it.

**Commission Chairman Briggs** thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.