

**COMPENSATION BOARD HEARING**  
**August 21, 2013**  
**COMMISSION CHAMBERS**  
**COURTHOUSE ANNEX, ROOM 111**  
**3:00 pm**

Notice: These minutes are paraphrased and reflect the proceedings of the Compensation Board and the (Board of Commissioners. (MCA 7-4-2611).

**Commissioners** - Chairman Joe Briggs, Commissioner Bill Salina and Commissioner Jane Weber.

**COMPENSATION BOARD**

**Elected Officials-** County Attorney, John Parker; Clerk & Recorder, Rina Fontana Moore; Clerk of the District Court, Faye McWilliams; and Treasurer, Jamie Bailey.

**Appointed Compensation Board Members from the Public** - Brett Weber, Nancy Zadick, and Jean E. Faure.

**Cascade County Employees present:** Brian Hopkins - Chief Deputy County Attorney; Dewey Goering - Human Resource Director; and Marie Johnson - Chief Deputy Clerk and Recorder.

**Public-** No members present.

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

**Chairman Briggs** welcomed the two new public members to the Compensation Board; Brett Weber and Jean E. Faure. He also stated that two Commissioners are required to agree with the Compensation Board and that historically they decide on a COLA (Cost of Living Allowance). He reminded them that the Deputy Sheriffs' salaries are tied to the sworn officers' salaries and the 1% longevity pay only applies if there is an increase in the Sheriff's wages.

**John Parker** reminded the Commissioners that the recommended compensation schedule requires a majority vote of the compensation board and at least two county commissioners must be included in the majority. The Compensation Board is to be made up of the three commissioners, the county attorney, three elected officials, and 2-4 resident taxpayers.

**Chairman Briggs** verified that Justice of the Peace, Steven Fagenstrom, and Rina Fontana Moore and Faye McWilliams had been asked to attend as the three elected officials. In the absence of Steven Fagenstrom, Chairman Briggs suggested a motion to substitute Jamie Bailey for the third elected official position.

Commissioner Weber made a **MOTION** to substitute Jamie Bailey-Treasurer in place of Steven Fagenstrom- Justice Court Judge.

**Motion carries**

**Chairman Briggs** stated that this year there would be a decrease in the County's mill levy value due to less development. In reviewing the anticipated fixed cost expenses, he explained there are 13 different unions with 11 contracts requiring salary increases for those union employees. The County is estimating an increase of \$55,000 for union employees and for non-union employees an increase of \$30,000 is proposed at this time. He also mentioned that with the absence of a Chief Financial Officer, the County Commissioners were developing the budget and unable to have a clear picture of how FY 2013 would close. In addition, he stated that the two Federal programs *Secure Rural Schools* and *PILT* (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) might be reduced, or not appropriated, this year.

**Nancy Zadick** questioned when the final budget was due. Chairman Briggs responded that it must be approved September 5, 2013 by 8:00 a.m. and could be modified if need be after that time.

**Commissioner Weber** wondered if they could keep the 2.1% COLA as an upper limit, but not specify the compensation schedule until such time as the budget work is more fully developed and the Board of County Commissioners has a better idea of the projected revenue and expense balances.

**Commissioner Salina** agreed with Commissioner Weber's statement and asked for the direction of John Parker on this matter.

**John Parker** stated he would have to review MCA to see if this was possible. He thought that the County Commission could set the salary as recommended by the Compensation Board; but was unsure whether the Compensation Board could delegate the decision on the final amount to the Commissioners.

There was further discussion concerning the loss of longevity if the COLA is denied. Also in comparison to the City police officers, wages are higher than the County deputies despite the added duties.

**Nancy Zadick** voiced that this was a gloomy revenue picture.

**Chairman Briggs** reminded the Compensation Board of a section in state law that allows the Commission to levy additional mills to bring the revenues back to previous levels. However, this action would require homeowners tax bills to go up, and the Commissioners have tried not to do this. He also stated that they were looking for a tax decrease of \$541,000 due to the Fair Bonds being fully paid for which allows the voted levy to go away.

**Rina Fontana Moore** stated that the Commission has done a fantastic job not raising taxes in the previous years. She also mentioned that with the recent loss of our Finance Officer other staff members had to be added to make up for this loss. She also suggested that with the hiring of a new Finance Officer an assistant would be needed too.

**Commissioner Salina** mentioned that if the 2.1% COLA was approved it would be a wash for the employees due to their health insurance increase. In addition, he mentioned that the County has paid the insurance increase which amounts to \$559.19 per month.

There was further discussion about upcoming insurance fee increases and changes for Cascade County.

**Commissioner Weber** asked the public members of the Compensation Board members of their opinions.

**Nancy Zadick** commented that she is depressed by the budget. In the future, she requested more information before the meeting and some figures to preview ahead of time.

**Jean Faure** stated she did not have a problem with paying taxes and was shocked when the school levy did not pass. She also stated that the County Attorneys pay was very low when compared to other attorneys' wages in the community, and felt that other wages in the County were also low.

**Brett Weber** announced that he was supportive of paying taxes. In addition, he felt that the employees of Cascade County would be disappointed with a raise in paying taxes and a raise in insurance premiums with no raise in salary.

There was further discussion about union wages and the limits by statute for raises.

**John Parker** suggested that there be a second action in the motion.

**Commissioner Salina** announced with the loss of the Chief Financial Officer, the Commission has been looking for alternatives without exceeding the COLA, since the County does not have the money this fiscal year. He requested that the Compensation Board give the County Commissioners the flexibility to go up to the COLA.

**Commissioner Weber** stated that the revenues currently projected in the FY 2014 budget are very conservative.

**Commissioner Briggs** stated that he has no doubt the County Commissioners will be able to balance the budget with or without the COLA being granted but is concerned about the impact on local taxpayers. The decrease in overall taxable values coupled with a less than normal increase in newly taxable property will require the Commissioners to increase taxes in order to maintain revenue at last year's level.

**There was an emergency break in the meeting; due to a motor vehicle accident outside the building. John Parker and Brian Hopkins left the meeting to assist the victims.**

**Nancy Zadick** thanked the Commission and stated she appreciates all that they have done.

**Nancy Zadick** made a **MOTION** to approve a 2.1% COLA.

**Jean Faure** seconded the **MOTION**.

*At the time, that this motion was made John Parker was not present.  
It was suggested that the motion be made when he returns.*

John Parker returned and gave an update on the accident.

**Nancy Zadick** made a **MOTION** to approve a 2.1% COLA.

**Jean Faure** seconded the **MOTION**.

**Motion carried with all three commissioners voting in favor.**

**Jean Faure** made a **MOTION** to endorse the idea for the Board of County Commissioners to provide less than the numerated schedule if projected revenues cannot be obtained.

**Brett Weber** seconded the **MOTION**

**John Parker** vote in favor of this motion in support of the Board of County Commissioners whom are being fiscally responsible with the taxpayers' money.

**Rina Fontana Moore** echoed John Parker.

**Motion carries with all three Commissioners abstaining.**

**John Parker** moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

**Motion carries**