

Howard County Compensation Review Commission

MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2013

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Gary Arthur Community Center, Glenwood Maryland

Commission Members in attendance:

- Richard Goldman
- Damani Ingram
Rhonda Jones
- Mary Marker
- Tom Price
- Howard Rensin
- Steven Sass

Staff present: Meredith Beach, County Council; Rozonna Hightower, County Council; Jim Vannoy, Office of Law.

- Mr. Sass opened the public hearing
 - Mr. Sass moved to approve the minutes from the October 29, 2013 meeting
 - Motion seconded by Ms. Marker.
 - Unanimous approval of the minutes
- Courtney Watson, Council District 1
 - Work load is about the same as when they started
 - Some years are busier than others
 - Number of hours: 20 on a light week, average is 28-30 hours, a busy week is 40-50 hours
 - Time consists of community meetings, constituent meetings, study time, Council meetings
 - Email may have made access easier
 - District 1 seems to have more constituent demands
 - Could use another full time constituent representative
 - Each Council Member uses his or her discretion with the amount of time spent doing Council responsibilities
 - While social media may have increased access, none of the members has an official Council Facebook or Twitter account
 - Asked the Commission to look at the Chair differential, compare it to other counties and even the school board, which is \$3,000
 - Not every job is compatible with holding elected office, but don't want to eliminate people either
 - Council position is not meant to be a career because Howard County has term limits
 - Suggests a human resources audit for the Council office to see more constituent service personnel needed
 - Out of pocket expenses include buying tickets to events, supplies for home office, mileage; amounts to about \$1,000-\$2,000 per year; consists of things that she chooses not to be reimbursed for

- Suggests the Commission should compare Howard County to other part-time counties; Montgomery County is full-time
- Baltimore County has more staff, has more population and have district offices
- Ray Wacks, Budget Director
 - Reviewed pension information:
 - Just increased multiplier from 1.55% to 1.66%
 - After 5 years, Council Member would vest and could receive approximately \$4980 per year in pension
 - The County does credit service in other counties and the state
 - Current OPEB obligations are approximately \$70 billion
 - Some benefits are policy set by Executive and Chief Administrative Officer;
 - Property taxes are about ½ of revenues; not expected to grow in the next few years
 - Property and income taxes make up about 90% of the County revenue: 50% property and 40% income
- General Discussion
 - Mr. Goldman: Council is currently paid about \$35 per hour, which would have a full time salary of about \$75,000 per year
 - Mr. Sass: salary should keep pace with inflation, requested what the salary of Council and Executive would be had they accepted the Commission recommendation in 2009; suggested the increase could be CPI or set percentage, whichever is higher
 - Chair differential
 - Mr. Goldman moved to increase differential to \$3,500
 - Ms. Marker seconded
 - Approved 4-1 (Yeas: Mr. Price, Mr. Goldman, Mr. Sass, Ms. Marker and Mr. Ingram; Nays: Mr. Rensin)
 - Provided calculation of 2% increase for the next 5 years (starting with current salary):
 - \$56,077
 - \$57,198
 - \$58,342
 - \$59,509
 - \$60,699
 - \$61,913
- Draft report will be circulated for comments
- Adjourn at 8:40 pm