

Howard County Compensation Review Commission

MINUTES (Approved)

Date: Monday, October 7, 2013

Time: 4:33 p.m.

Place: CVG Conference Room, George Howard Building, Ellicott City

Commission Members in attendance:

- Richard Goldman
- Damani Ingram
- Rhonda Jones (by telephone)
- Mary Marker
- Tom Price
- Howard Rensin
- Steven Sass

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

- Approval of minutes:
 - Mr. Sass moved to approve the minutes from the September 10 meeting.
 - Motion seconded by Ms. Marker.
 - Unanimous approval of the minutes
- Mary Kay Sigaty, Council Member District 4 interview
 - This Council has worked harder, had more complex legislation than previous councils;
 - She is spending more time meeting with people on legislation than she did in her first term;
 - With electronic communication, there are greater demands on her time and sets an expectation of immediacy;
 - Constituents expect the Council Member to attend more meetings and extend more invitations to Council Members;
 - Does not believe that the compensation is appropriate given the skills, knowledge base and expectations of the job and to do the job well;
 - Thinks that it is important to have a reasonable compensation so that it attracts people;
 - It is very difficult to have a job that allows the flexibility needed to also serve as Council Member as the rhythm of the job is not typical of other jobs;
 - Compensation should be such that it allows people to focus on the job;
 - Some expenses are not covered, such as iPad with cellular service, other technology needed for the job;
 - Other meetings/obligations that she attends: Patuxent River Commission, Maryland Association of Counties, Howard County Delegation meetings, intern mentor;
 - Charter is silent as to part-time or full-time for Council Member position, whereas it states full-time for County Executive;
 - Believes that there is enough work to make it full-time;

- Significant increase would attract people who are committed to the job.
- Calvin Ball, Council Member District 2 interview
 - Time that is needed to do the job well has increased;
 - Receives a few hundred emails a month that must be answered;
 - Overtime it has become easier to access the Council Member which increases the demand on the Council Members time;
 - He has had trouble meeting the demand of the responsibilities in his other job;
 - Thinks it is a full-time job, but there are implications of doing that: makes it difficult to find people mid-career because they would have to leave their full-time job for 12 years to serve as Council Member;
 - He provides his own technology and would like the idea of stipend to offset the cost to him;
 - Demands will continue to grow because technology is changing so fast;
 - Thinks the chair differential should be greater because when he did it it was about 70 hours per week because he had to be liaison to State and Executive Office, manage agenda, supervise the Council and Audit staff, first person the press comes to for quote, primary speaker at events;
 - As Council Member works 30-50 hours per week but has to say no to about 50% of the invitations he receives;
 - Should compare Howard County Council to Prince George's, Montgomery County and Anne Arundel County as far as compensation
- Ray Wacks, Budget Director interview
 - Income tax and property tax are about 90% of the general fund;
 - Property assessments in the County are down about 25% over the past 5 years, but didn't hit all at once and because of the 5% cap on growth, the past 5 years has seen a filling of the gap between the cap and assessment;
 - County has about \$50 billion in assessable base, \$10 billion is lost to the cap per year (which is the equivalent of \$100 million value in tax revenue);
 - In the reassessment this year, the County will see some growth but most of it will remain level;
 - He predicts that the property tax growth will be about 2% per year in property tax revenue through the next decade;
 - As far as income tax revenue, 2008-2011 the County saw flat or declining revenues;
 - The County was able to maintain essential services by decreasing services;
 - When comparing counties, Montgomery County has a higher per capita income, but Howard County has the second highest median income in the country because its households tend to generally have two high income professionals;
 - Federal government job growth has had a tremendous impact on the County;
 - Predicts strong economic growth for the County: 5-6% per year;

- At the same time there are increased demands on County budget through new pension obligations and maintenance of effort obligations for the public schools;
 - Education pension obligation needs to triple per year for the next couple of years, plus \$20 million per year that needs to go to pension and health care obligations for County employees;
 - COLA's have decreased for many jurisdictions;
 - Expects continued growth and better growth from the past 5 years;
 - Budget next year will be close to \$1 billion, \$1.5 billion all funds.
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- Adjourn at 6:44 pm