

Howard County Compensation Review Commission

MINUTES (approved)

Date: Wednesday, October 18, 2017

Time: 6:36 p.m.

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

Commission Members in attendance:

Peter Hong
Deeba Jafri
Teresa Johnston
Jennifer Jones
Pravin Ponnuri
Steven Sachs
Mary Ann Scully

Staff present:

John Gwynn, Office of Law
Jeff Meyers, County Council staff
Ali Shirazie, County audit staff

- The Minutes from October 11, 2017, were approved unanimously.
- The chairperson, Mr. Ponnuri, reviewed the Commission's activities to date.
- No one from the public attended, so during the public hearing portion of the evening, no testimony was received.
- Mr. Ponnuri moved, and Ms. Jones seconded, a motion to remove from the table the following motion:

Council Members shall be paid \$88,000 for the first year of the next term and, for following years, that amount shall increase each year by 2.5% or the CPI-U Index, whichever is greater. The existing stipend for the Chair and the equipment allowance shall continue.

The Commission continued the discussion of the figure and the reasons for it. Mr. Hong indicated that an increase of that magnitude could not be justified, that something closer to \$69,000 would be more appropriate, and that such a large jump was unprecedented. Mr. Shirazie noted that Council Members had received a large salary bump in 2006. Mr. Ponnuri reminded the Commission of the factors behind the figure: the salary ranges for the Council Members' Special Assistants; salaries for similar positions in other jurisdictions; and the changing workload. Ms. Jafri noted that the figure was still well below the County median family income and that the figure is needed to attract well-qualified candidates for a demanding job. Mr. Sachs noted the increased pace of the Council Member's work due to the pervasiveness of social media and that the figure was fair given the complexity of the work. Ms. Jones

noted the increase in time that Council Members devote to the job, that the figure is comparable to that for similar positions in other counties, and that from time to time salaries need to be re-evaluated and reset. Ms. Johnston noted that Council Members are always “on” so that the figure is fair. Ms. Scully thought that the salaries of the Special Assistants was the most compelling rationale and that a desire to do public service should be the key motivation for seeking the job.

Voting yes on the motion: Ms. Jafri, Ms. Johnston, Ms. Jones, Mr. Ponnuri, Mr. Sachs, and Ms. Scully.

Voting no on the motion: Mr. Hong

Mr. Ponnuri moved to remove from the table the following motion:

The County Executive shall be paid \$210,000 for the first year of the next term and, for following years, that amount shall increase each year by 2.5% or the CPI-U Index, whichever is greater.

After discussion of the motion, because the Commission had not yet interviewed the County Executive, Mr. Ponnuri moved to Table his motion, and Mr. Sachs seconded. The motion to Table passed unanimously.

- The County Executive has agreed to meet with the Commission on October 25, 2017, at 7 a.m. The Commission wishes to hear the Executive’s thoughts about how he spends his time, the priorities of the job, the parts he likes, and the parts he dislikes. The Commission values the Executive’s perspective as it seeks to learn about his typical day and week and how that has changed over time. The Commission would also like to hear from the Executive about what changes in governmental structure or operations would improve efficiency and effectiveness and about the skills and competencies necessary to be effective as Executive..
- The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.