

# Howard County Compensation Review Commission

## MINUTES (approved)

Date: Thursday, September 28, 2017

Time: 6:38 p.m.

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

Commission Members in attendance:

Peter Hong  
Teresa Johnston  
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 September 14, 2017, were approved unanimously.
- Mr. Gwynn recommended that the Commission formally designate a member as required by the Open Meetings Act. As Mr. Hong had already been trained and was willing, Mr. Sachs moved, and Ms. Johnston seconded, his appointment. The motion carried unanimously.
- The Commission interviewed Jessica Feldmark, Administrator to the Howard County Council. She reviewed the Council organization and duties of the various staff. She also described the activities of Council Members and how that has changed during the last several years.
- The Commission interviewed Wanda Hutchinson, Human Resources Administrator. She reviewed the compensation and benefits available to Council Members. Commissioners were interested in retirement and health benefits, which are the same as those available to County employees.
- The Commission reviewed the written responses from the incumbent Council Members to these questions:
  1. Stated as a weekly average, how much time do you devote to your duties as a Council Member? What proportion of that time is devoted to (a) legislative matters, (b) constituent services, (c) attending meetings, (d) managing employees, and (e) other tasks (please describe)? Which of those are most important?
  2. What skills and abilities must a person have as a Council Member and which of those are most important?
  3. What do you think the compensation package should be for the next Council?
  4. What else would you like to tell the Commission?
- The Commission asked staff to provide it with certain information from counties outside of the State that are comparable to Howard County about (a) compensation for council members and executives, (b) demographics, and (c) budgets.

- The Commission asked staff to:
  - provide information about compensation information about the Council Members' personal staffs: Special Assistants and District Assistants.
  - request information from veteran Special Assistants to help the Commission understand how things have changed over the last several terms.
  - Provide data showing how County demographics have changed over the last 8 years.
- The Commission had a robust discussion of the kinds of data that would be useful to have when recommending compensation for Council Members and the County Executive. Generally, the Commission does not believe that reviewing private sector data would be useful because elected public service in the County is both temporary and motivated by reasons dissimilar to the private sector. Mr. Ponnuri thought that it would be useful to compare Council Members skill sets to those required of managers in the executive branch at all government levels.
- The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.