

Clayton County Compensation Board
Meeting Minutes
12/3/2019

The Clayton County Compensation Board met Tuesday, December 3, 2019 at 6:00 pm at the Clayton County Office Building in Elkader. Those present were members Joe Minor, Sue Henning, Krista Fischer, Kate Young, Gary Bowden, Richard Owings, and Annette Reimer. Clayton County elected officials present were Sheriff Mike Tschirgi, Treasurer Linda Zuercher, Recorder Sue Meyer, Auditor Jennifer Garms, Supervisors Sharon Keehner, Ray Peterson and Steve Doeppke.

Auditor Jennifer Garms called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. She asked members of the Compensation Board to elect a chairman. Owings nominated Gary Bowden, Young seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

Bowden began directing the meeting and asked for someone on the board to volunteer to be secretary. Krista Fischer volunteered. Owings motioned, Young seconded. All members were in favor.

Minutes from the previous meeting had been read prior to the meeting and were accepted. Owings motioned, Reimer seconded. All members were in favor.

Chairman Bowden turned the floor over to the elected officials and asked for their comments. Auditor Jennifer Garms gave a brief explanation of all handouts showing statistical pay information from all counties in Iowa. These documents were given to the board in advance. She reported that the county has \$400,000 of new money for 2021 generated from taxes. Supervisor Ray Peterson noted that county union employees will receive a 2.75% raise. Sheriff Mike Tschirgi told the board that being salaried with no overtime pay results in much less pay than what his deputies make. Pay statistics show that he is making an average of 11% less than his peers in the state of Iowa. Treasurer Linda Zuercher brought attention to pay statistics from neighboring similar sized counties and that Clayton County is an average of 5% lower. Recorder Sue Meyer mentioned that they are not guaranteed a long-term job as an elected official. They pay for their own election costs out of their pocket. Supervisor Sharon Keehner said that Supervisors attend several meetings per week and although they are paid mileage, it doesn't cover normal wear on your vehicle. Auditor Jennifer Garms commented on raises for elected officials result in raises for employees in their respective offices. Medical insurance for single cost county employees nothing while a family plan costs county employees \$1,208/month and this cost will go up 5-6% in FY2021. Auditor Jennifer Garms indicated that making a motion to recommend a 5% pay raise does not mean that it will be done. This recommendation is turned over to the Supervisors to determine if the county budget will allow it. She also noted that due to the Iowa State Legislature passing Senate File 634 additional measures must be taken to allow for more transparency on money being spent by local governments. The change requires cities and counties to publish notice of proposed property tax change in excess of 2% and hold a public hearing. This applies to fund groupings of (1) General Basic/General Supplemental and (2) Rural Services. The county can go above the 2% with the adoption of a resolution by the Board of Supervisors.

Chairman Bowden turned the floor back over to the Compensation Board for discussion on making recommendations for any pay increases for elected officials. The board agreed that something needs to be done to make these offices more attractive for younger people who want to run for these offices. Owings noted that we currently have good people in these offices, however, a majority are approaching retirement age and some have run unopposed in recent elections. Fischer noted that the younger generation is motivated by more than pay such as more vacation and work schedule flexibility. \$1,200 is high for family insurance when you consider the lower wage Clayton County currently pays. All agreed that a raise in pay is needed and it needs to be

consistent on an annual basis. Stipends, wage adjustments, and having the county pay more for family insurance was discussed.

Reimer motioned that a 5% wage increase be made for elected officials. Henning seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

It was decided that stipends could be used as a one-time wage increase for Clayton County elected officials so pay is comparable to their peers. Stipends can be given to the elected official without increasing wages for employees in their respective offices. This would keep the overall cost of county payroll lower. Auditor Jennifer Garms stated that Iowa Code would have to be checked to verify the legality of stipends.

Chairman Bowden motioned voting for stipends would be done separately and to begin with Sheriff. Owings motioned that a \$7,000 stipend be given to Sheriff Mike Tschirgi, Reimer seconded. All members were in favor.

Auditor, Treasurer, and Recorder were grouped together as they all make the same wage. Owings motioned for a \$4,500 stipend given to each official. Minor seconded. All members were in favor.

The Supervisor's Chairman is paid \$500 annually for organizing and conducting meetings. Gary Bowden, having been a former Supervisor Chairman, indicated that it was a lot of work for \$500. Young motioned that Supervisor Chairman be paid \$1,000 annually. This was seconded by Owings. All were in favor. Rather than a stipend, a decision was made to recommend a wage adjustment of \$3,321 be given to Supervisors. Bowden made the first motion, Young seconded. All members were in favor.

A stipend of \$3,000 was recommended for County Attorney. Owings motioned, Minor seconded. All members were in favor.

Bowden thanked everyone for taking the time to attend and for preparing facts and figures to make recommendations. Owings motioned to adjourn the meeting, Young seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Krista Fischer, Secretary