



October 9 & 10, 2024, Meeting Minutes
La Quinta Inn, 4500 Capitol Blvd SE Tumwater 98501
TEAMS – Meeting ID: 262 944 199 318, Passcode: KSHDCK
October 9, 2024

The meeting of the Washington Citizens’ Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials was brought to order by Jon, Chair, at 9:00 a.m.

Jon read a land acknowledgement, stating the Commissioners are meeting in the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary land of the Cowlitz, Squaxin, and Nisqually Peoples. The Commission acknowledged the Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and those who were forcibly removed from their homelands. In offering this land acknowledgement, the Commission affirms Indigenous sovereignty, history, and experiences.

Commission Members Present:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Andrea, Vice Chair | Linda |
| Carli | Melody |
| Ellen (Arrived 10 a.m.) | Nicholas |
| Erik, Vice Chair | Sarah |
| Jason | Steve (Arrived 11 a.m.) |
| Jon, Chair | Stu |
| Kirby | Sue |
| Kirsten | |
| Lancer | |

- Staff Present:**
- Teri Wright, Executive Director
 - Lindsay Matthews, Executive Assistant
 - Jim Wright (Volunteer)

Teri took roll call. Lindsay went over housekeeping items. Jon read the meeting opening statement. Lindsay went over meeting folder contents.

Erik moved to approve the September 10, 2024, meeting minutes. Lancer seconded.
The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Jon asked that each person go around the room to introduce themselves and include the district or area of expertise from which they were selected.

Jon welcomed the Deputy Attorney General Erika Uhl, for Attorney General Ferguson.

Erika Uhl, Deputy Attorney General (AG) for Attorney General Bob Ferguson

Deputy AG Erika Uhl began by saying the Attorney General is not requesting a salary increase. Deputy Uhl presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Commissioners. She started by explaining that the AG is the legal advisor of the state officers and is responsible for defending all state laws that are passed by Legislature and laws passed by the people by initiative. She went on to say the legislature has added new responsibilities to the position. The AG's office advises and represents over 230 agencies, boards, and commissions as well as State Colleges and Universities and represents state entities in all legal proceedings. Deputy Attorney Uhl said the office enforces the state consumer protection act and antitrust laws. They also issue AGO opinions on all constitutional or legal questions for State Officials, agencies, and boards and commissions. Deputy AG Uhl showed the Office of the Attorney General's organizational chart and spoke briefly about the chart. They have an annual budget of \$280 million and have over 1,700 employees, of the employees 764 are attorneys and 982 are professional staff. They have 13 offices around the state and 31 legal divisions. The AG's office has a case load of over 20,000 active cases. Deputy Uhl spoke briefly about a several areas of practice: child protective services, environmental protections, consumer protections, anti-trust, tort lawsuits, bankruptcy, collections, appellate work, and "Hear me Washington" a youth tip line.

Jon mentioned that with 764 attorneys that the AG's office is the largest law firm in the state. He asked about salaries of the workers compared to that of the Attorney General's salary. Deputy Uhl didn't know the exact salaries but mentioned the starting salary for a brand-new attorney starts in the \$76,000 range and goes up to \$156,000 range.

Linda asked: What if anything has changed from the last biennia? Deputy Uhl replied, the office has grown by approximately 200 employees largely due to work that the state agencies have received. They have seen an increase into the Child Protective Services area of work in addition to hate crimes and violence hotline, and advisory committee work.

Erik asked: Does Deputy Uhl know how Washington compares as far as size of the department, case load and programs comparatively to other states? Deputy Uhl replied she doesn't know specifically but can provide that to the Commissioners. She added that the difference can vary state to state. Jon added that the Commissioners have salary comparisons state to state.

Kirby asked: Since the position of Attorney General is an elected position, does the AG need to have a law degree? Deputy Uhl replied that yes, they do need a law degree.

Nicholas asked: How does the Attorney General's compensation affect the county prosecuting attorney's salaries? Deputy Uhl replied that they are separate. Nicholas clarified by asking if

there is any impact from the AG's salary to the prosecuting attorneys' salaries? Deputy Uhl replied that informally yes, because they compete with private attorneys' firms. She added that the staff's salary is based on collective bargaining and is not related to what the AG is compensated.

Jon thanked Deputy Attorney Erika Uhl for her presentation.

Jon welcomed Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck.

Denny Heck, Lieutenant Governor

Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck thanked the Commissioners for their service. He came on behalf of Legislator salaries he did not come to present about the salary of the Lieutenant Governors salary. He gave a brief work history. He shared that he believes the salaries of the Legislators have fallen behind a reasonable evaluation of responsibilities, and the time demanded of them, and they need to be materially raised. He stated the current methodology associates the work the legislators do with band two in the state exempt management service (EMS). The bands were established by a Willis Study that was completed 20 years ago. The currently methodology also utilizes a 2008 study by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), 16 years ago, it was 74% of a full-time job. Lieutenant Governor Heck added two additional points; salary range for band two has been significantly increased and legislative salaries have not been adjusted to reflect that increase. He went on to say that if Commissioners were to take the mid-point of the EMS band two and multiply it times the out-of-date NCSL data of 74% the legislative salaries would still be due a significant increase. However, the use of these data points is highly questionable due to being out-of-date. Lieutenant Governor Heck went over some of the job duties of a legislator including being the board of directors of the entire state work force, they pass operating budgets of more than \$70 billion dollars, and that doesn't include the transportation budget or the capitol budget. They also set the legal framework under which all state employees' function. The time that is put into being a legislator is greater than 74% of a full-time job. The role of legislator has grown, and simply put the salary is not commensurate with the magnitude of their responsibilities. He added that the salary is fine for the well off or the unusually rare profession that would allow someone to come and go as they pleased. Lieutenant Governor Heck added that he believes the state would benefit if the legislature more accurately reflected the diversity of our state, and for example had more assembly line workers or nurses' etcetera and the racial diversity of the State of Washington. Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck thanked the Commissioners for their public service.

Lieutenant Gover Heck welcomed State Representative Spencer Hutchins from the 26th district.

Testimony by the Legislators

State Representative Spencer Hutchins from the 26th legislative district.

Representative Spencer Hutchins thanked the Commissioners for their work and shared some of his experiences as a legislator. He shared that he is not running for re-election due to it not being feasible, financially or practically. He is a small business owner and as such had to ask himself if he could sustain his livelihood while serving the state. He went on to say after talking to colleagues, he discovered that most could not continue outside work while serving on the legislature. He enjoys the privilege to serve but found that a part time legislature is at best a misnomer. He stated that you could choose not to engage in the legislative opportunities you have as a legislator outside of the legislative session, however many colleagues are able or willing to engage outside the session, and that could set you or your legislative district at a disadvantage. Representative Hutchins gave an example of last session ending and him going back to his small business and providing for his family, but once session started again there were already 50 pages of pre-filed bills on the first day of session, which is hundreds of hours of legislative work. He was not able to do that kind of work while not in session. He is grateful for the opportunity to serve his community but cannot continue.

Senator Annette Cleveland from the 49th legislative district. (Virtually)

Senator Cleveland shared her work history and experience. When Senator Cleveland started in the legislature, she had an employer that supported her desire to work part time and be a legislator, but after a new CEO came to work for the company she worked for, and she was laid off from her job and she found that the business world had changed from the last time she was searching for work. Her experience was that the work she was looking for had no interest in hiring a partisan legislator, she was offered two jobs contingent on her resignation from legislature. She did choose to continue to work as a legislator. She then went over a few of the downsides of being a legislator, including fearing for personal safety, threats to her safety, and a group that assembled in front of her home based on policy disagreements. She talked a bit about the complexities of the work and mentioned that she serves as a committee chair. Senator Cleveland believes that the added responsibility truly requires year-round work, and explained the things she believes the role requires. Due to the challenges and barriers, she believes that it will be harder and harder to fill the seats in legislature. She hopes the Commission will consider her testimony when considering reasonable and fair compensation for the role of Legislator.

State Representative Skyler Rude from the 16th legislative district. (Virtually)

Representative Rude shared his legislative history, including that when he started as a legislator, he treated it as a full-time job and committed to not having a second job. This allowed Representative Rude the opportunity to invite all 17 school districts to meet up and sit in with a classroom, seven districts invited him to their schools to learn what he could about what they needed or wanted from him. He eventually found it necessary to hold a second job and attempted a couple different second jobs that would be compatible with the legislative schedule. He now does have an hourly second job that is willing to work around his legislator schedule, but it has

its drawbacks, including only being able to meet with constituents from 8 AM – 9 AM and after 5 PM. Representative Rude has had to decline 141 meetings since he took a day job that would have taken place during regular business hours, over a four-month period. He gave another example of his day, he had 5 declined meetings, two from constituents, then he has three meetings from 8 AM to 9 AM before he starts his second job and has a meeting that starts at 5 PM after he gets off work from his second job. He did mention locality pay, which the Commission doesn't have authority to offer.

Senator Yasmin Trudeau from the 27th legislative district. (Virtually)

Senator Trudeau shared about the issues that her district is facing, including housing, fentanyl, and behavioral health. She shared that constituents expect that legislators be available to hear them and be active on their behalf. She added that she is a working mother and some of her experience as it pertains to the job of legislator as a working parent. She spoke about some of the same concerns as the previous speakers and noted that distrust and public discourse is difficult, they are trying to meet constituent's where they are at and build trust that is vital to democracy. Senator Trudeau shared that she pays 1/3 more for childcare than she does for her mortgage, as the job of legislator requires, lunches, dinners, coffee chats, town halls and events where they can meet with constituents'. The job requires that each legislator is flexible to be able to meet the needs of the constituents. Senator Trudeau added that it is important to have relevant lived experience, lots of different perspectives, not just as testimony but represented in the room. She wants to stress that working more than one job is necessary for her to be able to do the job of legislator and that should change because not everyone is privileged enough to be able to have a part time seasonal job to supplement or already be independently wealthy. Senator Trudeau shared what a typical week looks like in her role as a legislator.

Former State Representative Jesse Johnson from the 30th legislative district. (Virtually)

Jesse Johnson spoke briefly about his history with the legislature. He wanted to make three points to the Commission, firstly that every child deserves a solid foundation at home, which includes being able to see their parent or guardian, next that everyone has the tools that they need to succeed in the work force and lastly, that everyone has stability as they age. He stated that the things the Commissioners are contemplating this session plays a role in those three things. He shared more about his history in the legislature, he was the youngest member in legislature, his wife was pregnant and finishing her last year of medical school all while he was working a second full time job as a counselor at a school where he had taken four months of un-paid leave to do the legislative work. Mr. Johnson shared that he would get phone calls sometimes at midnight from constituents that expected him to be available. Mr. Johnson also shared that he too had death threats, not to mention having to be escorted out of a meeting due to threats. He had to step away due to the workload of a legislator, along with having to hold a second job to supplement his income. He thanked the Commissioners for their time and listening to his lived experience working as a legislator.

Jon added that legislator pay is at about \$62,000 annually with a little more for the House Minority Leader, and Senate Minority Leader and the Speaker of the house and Senate Majority leader.

Erik asked what percentage of time is worked as a legislator? Representative Spencer Hutchins replied that he believes the role of legislator is a full-time position. He added that legislators can reduce response and activity but that means they would be undercutting their effectiveness to the work. Lieutenant Governor Heck added that the methodology to tie the salary to an exempt management services (EMS) band had been to value how many people you supervise and what kind of budget you oversee. Senator Trudeau added that looking at the roles and responsibilities in the EMS Band two doesn't reflect the roles and responsibilities of the legislators. She also spoke to a "part time legislature" being able to work full time during session then not working, but in her opinion that is not how it ends up working out. She gave an example that she was working 12-14 hours a day during session, so more than full time during session and after session still working full time for those that can.

Jon thanked Lieutenant Governor Heck for his presentation and the Senators, Representatives and former Representative for their testimony.

Jon welcomed Dave Reich, Chief Economist from the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council.

Dave Reich, Economic and Revenue Forecast Council

Dave Reich shared that the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council does four reports per year and their most recent report came out September 27th. He shared a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Reich spoke about the overview of the September forecast in the United States economy, and the Washington State economy. He then spoke about forecast risks, upsides, and downsides. His next graph showed that job openings continue to fall, leading to a better labor market balance. Mr. Reich went over wage growth slowing and the job market becoming more balanced. He made note that inflation slowed significantly and is expected to continue to trend down. He went on to show a graph around unemployment rates, they have increased but remain near historically low levels. Mr. Reich shared that the United States employment growth has been slowing and the Federal Reserve is now balancing this with inflation. His next slide went over the Federal Reserve lowering rates in September and is expecting them to continue to lower them going forward. The next slide showed that consumers are still concerned about high prices and a slowing employment market. Dave Reich showed a slide and spoke about the growth domestic product forecast, it calls for positive quarterly growth in 2024 and beyond. He then spoke about oil prices; they are forecasted to be lower than in the June forecast. His next slide showed that inflation should continue to moderate. The next slide showed that Washington's personal income forecast is averaging 5.5% annual growth, which is down slightly from the June forecast. The next couple slides were presented that featured graphs of forecasts around Washington employment, and housing permits. Dave Reich talked about revenue act collections growth

slowing, but July activity was up 2.4% compared with last July 2023. The next slide showed real estate excise tax, the activity has increased in 2024. Mr. Reich then briefly talked about the cannabis revenue forecast. He shared the forecast changes through the 2023-2025 biennium and the forecasted changes of the 2025-2027 biennium. In summary the United States forecast is looking incrementally better than forecasted in June, Washington State forecast a little less so, and shows modest changes. He shared the risks to consider, including Boeing and capital gains that are specific to Washington State. Total State revenues are expected to grow about 2.7% in the current biennium, and 7.7% in the 2023-2025 and 2025-2027 biennium.

Lancer asked: What is the inflation rate, or wage growth forecast for next year? Dave Reich replied he would have to look, but somewhere in the mid 2% range.

Jon thanked Dave Reich for his presentation and time.

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Lunch

Jon welcomed the speakers from the Judiciary.

Testimony by the Judiciary

Justice Debra Stephens, Supreme Court

Justice Stephens introduced herself and gave a brief work history. She mentioned she is joined by judges from all levels of court to speak to the Commission and said each judge will present on their level of court. Washington has four levels of courts. Justice Stephens said the Judiciary will give a short presentation and answer any questions the Commissioners have. She gave a brief explanation of what happens at each level of court

Judge Bill Bowman, Court of Appeals

Judge Bowman introduced himself and gave a brief overview of the work he does.

Judge Kirstin Ferrera, Superior Court

Judge Ferrera thanked the Commissioners for their service. She mentioned she is the president of the Superior Court Judges Association.

Judge Carl Williams, District Court

Judge Williams said he is one of eight Pierce County District Court Judges and is also the president of the District Court and Municipal Court Judges' association. He thanked the Commissioners for their work. He went over the work that happens in District Court and how complex the cases are, he spoke briefly about the different things seen in District Court. He added that the turnover of Judges has been impactful.

Justice Stephens thanked the Commissioners for their work in the last salary setting session. She said that the increases that were approved last session went a long way towards closing the gap for recruitment and retention of quality Judges. She went on to say that the Judicial branch is requesting a 6.75% increase over the biennia. She made mention of a report that was handed out to Commissioners. Justice Stephens stated that Judges are one of the only elected officials that must hold a law degree to hold the office. She went on to explain the recruitment challenges as it pertains to salary.

Jon shared that the Commissioners in the Judicial branch get a percentage of the salary that the Judges themselves receive, although the Salary Commission does not set their salary it is just another piece of knowledge.

Judge Ferrera added that it is important to have the best of the best serving on the bench, the salary is a part of the recruitment process and retention of the Judges. She added some of her work history and background to get into the Judiciary. She spoke about the different types of cases they see in Superior Court, and the experience necessary. Judge Ferrera clarified that the Judiciary is requesting 6.75% over the biennia and a cost of living increase each year.

Justice Stephens wanted to highlight that the Judiciary is a relatively small branch of Government, yet has a huge impact to a functioning democracy, and the salaries of all Judicial officers in Washington State has never exceeded one tenth of 1% of the budget. She believes that is a quality investment due to the impact the Judiciary has on the State, and the people.

Jon added that the largest number of people that the Salary Commission sets salaries for is the Judiciary. It is a major part of the work the Commission does. Jon clarified that the Judges and the Attorney General are the only Elected Officials that have set requirements of education.

Carli asked: Based on the increases approved last session, while she knows it's only been two years, are the retention and/or recruitment issues that were talked about last session improving? Judge Bowman replied thank you for the increases last session, but yes, it has only been two years, so they only have a small sample to work from. The biggest competitor to the state court is the federal court, which is why they want to aim for close to parity with the federal court. Although there are still differences to the State bench versus the Federal bench, the salary being close to parity does help to encourage Judges to choose State court. He added that based on his knowledge there are still significant openings to fill and difficulty recruiting. The impact may not have reached what they had hoped for yet but doesn't know numbers wise if it is better than before the last increases and recruiting is still a challenge.

Jon shared a few differences between State and Federal Judges regarding campaigning, and lifetime appointments in the federal level among other differences.

Ellen referenced the salary setting binder Judiciary tab, and asked: Have the numbers been updated from 2016? Brittany Gregory, with the Administrative Office of the Courts, replied that those are the updated numbers of vacancies from 2016 to current.

Erik asked: Are we seeing the same issues of retention and recruitment across the state or just in King County based on salary? Judge Williams said he can only speak to Pierce County, and although his experience was unique that he ran six times before being elected. He explained some of the responsibilities that come with his level of court. Judge Ferrera added that she does think they are having some recruitment and retention issues across the state, but the recruitment and retention changes area to area.

Melody asked for clarification regarding what the Judiciary is asking for, her calculations of the ask are 6.75% over the biennia, plus a cost of living increase each year at 2.5% per year, so 9.25% over the two years making the ask about 4.625% each year? Justice Stephens replied that the ask is for 6.75% over the biennia, however the Commission prefers.

Judge Ferrera added that remote practice is now something that is offered in the legal arena, so a lawyer can work from their home state but practice elsewhere and Judges do not have that option, they are required to be in court.

Sarah asked: Do the courts track demographics? Justice Stephens replied that they do, it is important to have diversity in the courts.

Discussion ensued around diversity in the Judicial branch, Judges being appointed verses elected, campaigning for Washington State Judges, and the increases over the years to the Judicial branch.

Jon thanked the Judges and Justice for their time and presentations.

Jon welcomed Assistant Director Nona Snell from the Office of Financial Management.

Nona Snell, Director of Budget, Office of Financial Management (State Budget)

Nona Snell said at the Office of Financial Management (OFM) they are essentially the Governor's budget office among other things. Nona spoke about the work they do surrounding the budget side of things. Director Snell briefly explained there are three budgets, capital, transportation, and operating budget, the operating budget is where salaries come from. She spoke about the Governors process of proposing a biennial budget to the legislature, who enacts the budget. Director Snell spoke briefly about the Revenue Forecast Council and how they use the forecasts to help them with setting up the budgets.

Jon asked: What percentage of the capital budget is elected officials' salaries? Nona replied that it is small, she didn't have the exact number. Director Snell spoke about constitutional requirements and entitlements to fund with the State budget. She explained how OFM uses the information from the Caseload Forecast Council. She said that about 65% of the State budget goes to requirements/entitlements and added that Elected Officials salaries fall under the requirements/entitlements in the budget.

Erik asked: What percentage of the 65% is Elected Officials salaries? Nona replied that she didn't have the exact number. Teri added that it had been figured in a while, but when they looked last it was 0.000000000001% of the overall general budget. Discussion ensued regarding the minimal effect the Commission has when it raises salaries.

Director Snell went over the things they asked of state agencies regarding their budget requests. In November they will get another forecast, and in March. She spoke about the fact that a new Governor will be coming in at the next election and what that could mean for the budgets.

Linda asked: What was negotiated during the collective bargaining regarding state employee salaries? Nona replied she is speaking about the federation of state employees, they are giving a general wage increase (GWI) of 3% in fiscal year (FY) '26, and 2% in FY '27.

Jon thanked Director Snell for her presentation.

Jon welcomed State Auditor, Pat McCarthy.

Pat McCarthy, State Auditor

State Auditor McCarthy gave a brief background of her work history. She thanked the Commissioners for their work last session. State Auditor McCarthy said the Auditor's office published more than 2,400 audits last year, and 2,200 so far this year with 800 still underway. She went on to explain what they do at the Auditor's office and went over some of the recognitions they have received. State Auditor McCarthy talked about the different kinds of audits they do. They also have a non-audit side to their organization they call it "the center" and "the center" provides trainings to state governments and has many guides available. State Auditor McCarthy spoke about the changes and growth in responsibilities since the last salary session. She added that 13 of her over 400 employees have a salary higher than her own. State Auditor McCarthy explained that if a government gets public dollars, they are audited by the State Auditor's Office.

Erik asked: How does the Washington State Auditor position compare to other states? State Auditor McCarthy replied each state is so different, it is hard to compare state to state.

Linda asked: Has legislature given more jobs or duties to the Auditors office? State Auditor McCarthy replied that the partnership with the Military, along with the Department of Health, Department of Ecology, and expanded cyber work are all examples of expansion. State Auditor McCarthy added that most audits are paid for by the auditees also.

Jon thanked State Auditor McCarthy for her presentation.

Jon welcomed Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler.

Mike Kreidler, Insurance Commissioner

Insurance Commissioner Kreidler began by letting the Commissioners know that he will not going over the things they have already been given in their salary setting binder and he will not be seeking reelection. He made note that appointed staff compared to elected staff the salary disparity is an issue and that can in his opinion create compression. The office of the Insurance Commissioner is competing with the insurance industry for employees and being able to give salaries that are reasonable is the only way to get good employees. There is a couple dozen people that work under the Insurance Commissioner that do make a higher salary than he does. Insurance Commissioner Kreidler said if you want to get good people to run for public office, that are willing to make the sacrifices of public service you have to offer compensation that is reasonable. Commissioner Kreidler said that it is important to attract and retain the best and the brightest into public service and compensate them accordingly.

Jon asked: How many states have an elected Insurance Commissioner versus an appointed Insurance Commissioner? Commissioner Kreidler replied 11 states have an elected Insurance Commissioner.

Linda asked: What tasks has the legislature or Federal Government added to the position of Insurance Commissioner in the last 2 years? Commissioner Kreidler replied that the Federal Government and Legislature gives more to their office, for example, new authority, and more employees.

Andrea referred to some of the information given to Commissioners from the Insurance Commissioner's office, she stated that all the employees on the page noted are making more than the Insurance Commissioner and what does he think would be fair compensation. Insurance Commissioner Kreidler replied that he is reluctant to give a specific number. He acknowledged the difficulty of choosing a salary for elected officials.

Jon thanked Insurance Commissioner Kreidler for his presentation.

Public Testimony

No members of the public were present in person or virtually to provide public testimony.

Commissioners moved into a work session. Teri went over the schedule for the remainder of the day and the next day.

Jon suggested talking about a base salary increase to all positions, of 3% to take effect on July 1, 2025, then another 2% to take effect on July 1, 2026, then Commissioners could add to a base salary increase for each position as they would like, basically a general wage increase (GWI) or cost of living adjustment (COLA). He noted that last salary setting session much ground was made up on certain positions based on the needs they heard. Jon said that from what the Commissioners had heard so far this session, the Legislature and the Judiciary are requesting an increase over the base increase. Kirsten clarified for the Commissioners that the commission does increases to a position not the person filling the position, and not based on the things they do that the Commissioners think are done well or not but based on their position description and the changes that legislature requires. Discussion ensued around percentages for a GWI as a base salary increase and what was requested from the Judiciary. Lancer suggested the Commission look at a 4% increase to take effect on July 1, 2025, and a 2% increase to take effect on July 1, 2026. Linda made note that she is hesitant to do a base salary increase at that level due to the rural district's median income level. Discussion continued around living wage, allotment pay for District and Municipal Judges around the Puget Sound, and where the money comes from that pays for the Judicial salaries.

Discussion continued around ideas for salary increases and first impressions of the presentations the Commissioners heard thus far.

Linda shared that hearing from the legislators was helpful this session. She noted it is important to remember to take into consideration what is required of the position, if there have been any changes to the position and/or added responsibilities.

Sarah shared her experience as a legislative assistant and shared that she thinks they deserve a salary increase greater than would be acceptable over the biennium.

Nicholas said that the Judicial pay sounds to him like a regional issue. He was moved by the Lieutenant Governor and Legislators presentation. He shared his experience with the legislature. He stated that to improve the public policy in the State you must improve the legislator compensation.

Discussion continued around legislature not being part time and wanting to hear from more legislators to hear their perspectives. Jon shared his experience with legislators and stated that the perspectives of the legislators that presented would be basically the same with all legislators.

Kirby said he is curious to know how many legislators work full time jobs while also being a legislator. Jon said that can be a problem because they can be beholden to the organization that is paying them also. Discussion continued surrounding a part time versus full time legislature, appointed positions versus elected positions.

Carli shared that last session she supported boosting the Judicial salaries but feels that they are making the same ask again for a boost and doesn't know if this is typical.

Jon shared that the Judicial branch is pushing for close parity to the federal bench and will continue. Jon noted that the Washington state Judicial branch is paid well comparatively to other states except California.

Carli added that the pay for legislators in her opinion is too low for what is expected of them. Many Commissioners voiced agreement that legislators need to be paid more.

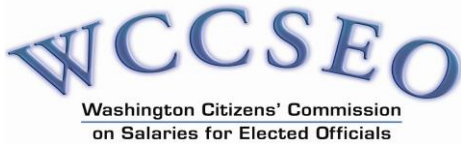
Discussion continued around living wages, median income, about how public service work is a choice.

Jon noted that the Judiciary is making a case that more catch up is needed, and that is something this Commission will need to decide and shared his experience. Kirsten added her experience and thoughts. The discussion surrounded the 5% wage gap between each level of court, as was requested by the courts, and previous Commissions have used. Jon suggested this Commission also keep the gap. Discussion continued.

Discussion ensued around base salary increases to all positions.

Melody moved to adjourn the meeting; Sarah seconded.

The meeting was adjourned by Jon at 4:49 p.m.



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October 10, 2024

The meeting of the Washington Citizens’ Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials was brought to order by Jon, Chair, at 9:00 a.m.

Jon read a land acknowledgement, stating the Commissioners are meeting in the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary land of the Cowlitz, Squaxin, and Nisqually Peoples. The Commission acknowledged the Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and those who were forcibly removed from their homelands. In offering this land acknowledgement, the Commission affirms Indigenous sovereignty, history, and experiences.

Commission Members Present:

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| Andrea, Vice Chair | Linda |
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| Ellen | Nicholas |
| Erik, Vice Chair | Sarah |
| Jason | Steve |
| Jon, Chair | Stu |
| Kirby | Sue |
| Kirsten | |
| Lancer | |

Staff Present:

- Teri Wright, Executive Director
- Lindsay Matthews, Executive Assistant
- Jim Wright (Volunteer)

Teri took roll call. Lindsay went over housekeeping items.

Public Testimony

No members of the public were present in person or virtually to provide public testimony.

Commissioners moved into a work session. Jon suggested continuing the discussion that was happening the prior day which was a base salary increase to all position of 3% to take effect on

July 1, 2025, then another 2% to take effect on July 1, 2026. Discussion ensued. Linda mentioned that social security said their increase for 2025 would be 2.5%. Sarah and Jon briefly explained Rules of order.

Linda moved for an across-the-board salary increase of 3% on July 1, 2025, then another 2% July 1, 2026. Lancer seconded it.

Discussion ensued around a possible friendly amendment.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Andrea	X			
Carli	X			
Ellen	X			
Erik		X		
Jason	X			
Jon	X			
Kirby	X			
Kirsten	X			
Lancer		X		
Linda	X			
Melody	X			
Nicholas	X			
Sarah	X			
Steve	X			
Stu	X			
Sue	X			

The motion Passed with 14 affirmative votes, and 2 negative votes.

Jon suggested going through each position to discuss increases above the base salary increase. He added that based on the discussion yesterday he wanted to wait until talking through each of the other elected officials positions to talk about the Judiciary, and the Legislators.

Kirsten asked about the referendum process, and Teri explained it. Discussion ensued. Jon opened the discussion around the Governor's salary, Lieutenant Governor's salary, and the Treasurer's salary separately, and asked if there was any interest in talking about a raise over the base salary increase that had already passed. Discussion ensued around not raising any of the forementioned salaries further.

Jon opened the discussion around the Attorney General's salary, discussion ensued around the head of an agency being paid less than that of their employees. Ellen asked to revisit the Attorney General's position when the Commissioners discuss the Judiciary. Commissioners agreed.

Jon opened the discussion around the Superintendent of Public Instruction's salary, discussion ensued. Linda shared her experience as a teacher of 24 years, and working for the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for a year. She shared that school districts are more locally controlled, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction does less than many thought. Commissioners voiced agreement to not raise the position's pay further.

Jon opened the discussion around the Commissioner of Public Lands salary, discussion ensued around the duties of the position and where their salary lands in the comparable states. There was no interest in raising the Commissioner of Public Lands further.

Jon opened the discussion around the Judiciary's salary. Discussion ensued around the Judiciary's ask of 6.75% plus COLA each year over the biennium, recruitment and retention issues, the Federal bench's salaries, seats on the bench running unopposed, comparison of salaries in Washington versus other states, and how each different court pays it Judges.

Erik moved that the Judiciary receive a salary increase of 1% on July 1, 2025, then another 1% July 1, 2026, while maintaining the 5% differential between levels of court. Lancer seconded it.

Discussion ensued.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Andrea		X		
Carli				X
Ellen	X			
Erik	X			
Jason		X		
Jon	X			
Kirby		X		
Kirsten	X			
Lancer	X			
Linda		X		
Melody		X		
Nicholas	X			
Sarah	X			
Steve	X			
Stu		X		
Sue	X			

The motion Passed with 9 affirmative votes, 6 negative votes, and 1 abstain.

Discussion ensued around the Attorney General’s position. Commissioners voiced agreement that no further increase is needed this session.

Discussion ensued around the Legislative branch. Erik brought up that the responsibilities in EMS Band two are not as impactful as that of the Legislators.

Kirsten moved that the Legislators receive a base salary increase of \$10,000 on July 1, 2025, and no additional increase on July 1, 2026. Note this would be added before previous motion. Sarah seconded it.

Discussion ensued surrounding median household income, overtime pay for non-elected officials, EMS Band two median income level at 74%, which is the percentage of time the Legislators work of a full-time job according to the NCSL, the time that the Legislators actually work, and what other states pay their Legislators.

The motion was tabled due to the next speaker arriving.

Jon welcomed the Secretary of State, Steve Hobbs.

Steve Hobbs, Secretary of State

Secretary of State Hobbs mentioned his information is in tab 17 in the Commissioners Salary setting binder. He talked about the history of the position. The Secretary of State's office has over 300 full time employees. Secretary of State Hobbs described several of his responsibilities including things that are not required by the legislature. They oversee the State elections, a new aspect is having security clearance due to cyber security issues. He went over a brief work history for himself. He shared that the voters registries are connected to other states, and that the security of the position has evolved.

Eric stated that the Secretary of State had spoken to cyber security being added as a responsibility, and asked: What new skills or certifications has the Secretary of State had to go through, also what duties or responsibilities have changed or gotten more complex over his time in office? Secretary of State Hobbs replied that the security clearance has been used since he became the Secretary of State, but since he was in the military before it was a relatively easy process, although if he had not have had it before it would be quite the undertaking, also the cyber security is an ever-growing threat, and educating the public on the election process.

Nicholas asked: Has the role of Secretary of State in educating the Auditors enhanced or grown as all the information needs to follow the chain of command down to each county? Secretary of State Hobbs replied, yes, it has. He then gave an example.

Linda mentioned that the State library is well run. Secretary of State Hobbs spoke about the changes he has overseen regarding the libraries since taking office.

Andrea referenced tab 17, page 13 showing the salary table. She asked what the table depicts. Secretary of State Hobbs replied that is a table of comparable salaries.

Jon thanked Secretary of State Hobbs for his presentation.

Back on the table is the original motion.

Kirsten moved that the Legislators receive a base salary increase of \$10,000 on July 1, 2025, and no additional increase on July 1, 2026. Note – before previous motion. Sarah seconded it.

Discussion continued around the referendum process, public opinion, defensible increases, and other public employee’s salary increases.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Andrea		X		
Carli	X			
Ellen		X		
Erik		X		
Jason		X		
Jon		X		
Kirby				X
Kirsten	X			
Lancer	X			
Linda	X			
Melody	X			
Nicholas	X			
Sarah	X			
Steve		X		
Stu		X		
Sue	X			

The motion Failed with 8 affirmative votes, 7 negative votes, and 1 abstain.

Erik moved that the Legislators receive an additional salary increase of 4% on July 1, 2025, then another 5% July 1, 2026. Andrea seconded it.

Discussion ensued around full-time legislators, comparable states Legislator salaries, and EMS Band two salaries median range at 74%.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Andrea	X			
Carli	X			
Ellen	X			
Erik	X			
Jason	X			
Jon	X			
Kirby	X			
Kirsten	X			
Lancer				X
Linda	X			
Melody	X			
Nicholas	X			
Sarah	X			
Steve	X			
Stu	X			
Sue	X			

The motion Passed with 15 affirmative votes, 0 negative votes, and 1 abstain.

Jon asked if Commissioners wanted to maintain the \$8,000 dollar difference for the Speaker of the House and Senate Majority Leader roles and \$4,000 dollar difference for the House Minority Leader and Senate Minority Leader roles. Commissioners all voiced agreement.

Jon opened the discussion around the Secretary of State, Auditor, and the Insurance Commissioners positions. He asked is Commissioners wanted to keep them at the same level of salary or look at each position separately. Discussion ensued around increased responsibilities that would potentially separate a position form the other positions, employees under the elected officials that make more than them and keeping the salary at the same level for the three positions.

Andrea moved that the Secretary of State, Auditor, and Insurance Commissioner receive an additional salary increase of 1% on July 1, 2025, then another 1% July 1, 2026. Lancer seconded it.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Commissioner	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Andrea	X			
Carli		X		
Ellen	X			
Erik	X			
Jason	X			
Jon		X		
Kirby	X			
Kirsten		X		
Lancer	X			
Linda		X		
Melody	X			
Nicholas		X		
Sarah				X
Steve		X		
Stu		X		
Sue	X			

The motion Failed with 8 affirmative votes, 7 negative votes, and 1 abstain.

Teri went over next steps, and what to expect.

Lindsay reminded Commissioners to let Teri know if someone reaches out to them personally so that can be added to the public disclosure log. She also mentioned the next meeting in Port Angeles on November 14th from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., she is booking sleeping rooms for Commissioners and needs to know who will attend in person and who will attend virtually. Lindsay also mentioned she will reach out to Commissioners regarding the December 11th meeting in Vancouver from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., January 8th meeting in Ocean Shores from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., and February 5th meeting back in Tumwater from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., she also reminded Commissioners to fill out travel reimbursement forms and return them.

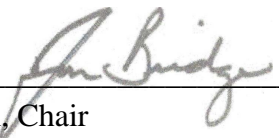
12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m. Lunch

Public Testimony

No members of the public were present in person or virtually to provide public testimony.

Lancer moved to adjourn the meeting; Nicholas seconded.

The meeting was adjourned by Jon at 1:31 p.m.



Jon, Chair

November 14, 2024
Date