

September 12, 2018, Meeting Minutes
Radisson Gateway, 18118 International Blvd, Seattle

The meeting of the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials was brought to order by Executive Director, Teri Wright, at 2:55 p.m.

Commission Members Present:

Melissa O'Neill Albert
Jon Bridge
Greg Dallaire
Libby Hart
Sandi LaPalm
Andrew Malidore
Linda Peterson
Anastasia Potapova
Gary Ratterree
Don Robinson
Kozen Sampson
LeAnna Chauvin

Gerry Sherman
Karen White

Commission Members Excused:

Steven Starkovich

Commission Members Unexcused:

Larry Turner

Staff Present:

Teri Wright, Executive Director
Lindsay Matthews, Executive Assistant

Teri opened the meeting by going over the roles of the Chair and Vice Chair and how they are critical roles to the Commission. She spoke about what to expect at the October 9 and 10 meetings and asked that all Commissioners please let staff know if there are any scheduling conflicts for any of the meetings. Teri went over that the Commission follows Roberts Rules of Order and uses roll call voting. She told the Commissioners that the Commission has a request from a previous member to speak at the October meeting. Dick Walter believes that the Governor and Attorney General are overpaid and he will go into why at the October meeting during his presentation time. Teri asked the Commissioners to consider his opinion, but it is important that they create their own opinions. If the Commission agrees that a salary is too high, they can choose to freeze that salary during the time for which they are setting the salary.

Teri then went over Tab 26 in the Commissioners salary setting binder and asked them to read the letters and note the difference between "parity" and "benchmark." She pointed out a sentence from the 2004 Willis Study, "The Commission should reach a degree of parity with the Federal Bench." In the past the Commission has talked about using the Federal Bench as a benchmark,

she wants to have an extensive discussion after all Commissioners have had a chance to read through the information in their salary setting binders. Greg added the difference between parity and benchmark is quite significant. He went on to say that Judges made presentations to Commissioners about the scope of work and that is well understood. There was not a miscommunication but rather maybe a misunderstanding of the Commission's process. Teri recommended that the Commission needs to address, from the same Willis Study, a cost of living increase and an adjustment toward a degree of parity. It is up to the Commission to decide to what degree of parity.

Greg suggested that if or when the Commissioners suggest a cost of living adjustment (COLA) or a general wage adjustment (GWA) they do it to the whole branch, not position by position.

Melissa asked if a GWA and a COLA are the same things and if that should cover inflation and the increased cost of living in our part of the world. Teri replied they are the same things just new verbiage and it should cover the increased cost of living or inflation. Melissa added that the Commissioners should look at two things separately when deciding salaries, one being GWA and the other being if the responsibilities for the position have changed. Teri replied that is the recommendation made by the Willis Study for the Judiciary only.

Gary asked for clarification about what Greg mentioned earlier, if a GWA is proposed it should be for all positions not just some, because if there is a cost of living adjustment the need would be for everyone. Then if a position needs to be moved toward a degree of parity the Commissioners consider that separately. He also noted that the second paragraph is quite relevant, it says "it's difficult to justify a large move toward parity with the Federal Bench" a degree of parity is what we are working toward.

Jon added that there are three things we should be looking at; GWA, a change in position description and lastly, especially for the judiciary, we are looking toward establishing a degree of parity with the Federal Bench.

Kozen asked if there is a percentage of increase cap that we cannot go over. Teri replied no, whatever the Commission decides becomes law 90 days later and can only be overturned by referendum.

LeAnna added that at last salary session the Judiciary brought up, that they pay for their own retirement and they finance their own campaigns, which were points they wanted to make sure the Commission knew since that is so different at the federal level.

Teri concluded the conversation encouraging Commissioners to read thoroughly and understand all the information. There will be much discussion about meeting a degree of parity versus a benchmark.

Teri shared the process for elections of Chair and Vice-Chair and the terms.

Teri asked for nominations for Chair. Greg nominated Melissa O'Neill Albert, LeAnna seconded. Greg spoke briefly about Melissa's qualifications for Chair. Jon moved to close the nominations, seconded by Karen. There was show of hand vote. Melissa won with an affirmative unanimous hand vote.

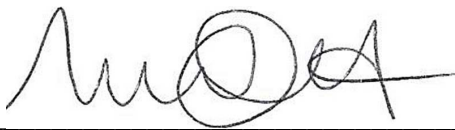
Teri asked for nominations for Vice-Chair. LeAnna nominated Greg Dallaire and was seconded by Kozen. Jon moved to close the nominations, seconded by Karen. There was a show of hand vote. Greg won with an affirmative unanimous hand vote.

Teri asked if there was any other business that needed to be discussed prior to adjournment and asked if the Commissioners could go around the table to voice expectations or concerns.

Discussion ensued.

Teri reminded Commissioners that filling out the travel reimbursement forms is necessary, even if the Commissioners prefer to not be reimbursed, they must.

The meeting was adjourned by a motion by Melissa and seconded by Kozen. The motion was carried by a unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 3:39 p.m.



Melissa O'Neill Albert, Chair

October 9, 2018

Date