

Meeting Minutes

Whatcom County Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials

Date: February 12, 2025

Time: 4:00 PM PT

Location: Virtual Meeting

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 PM by Chair Shaddix.

2. Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes from the January 29th meeting were approved by all Commissioners in attendance.

2. Roll Call - Attendance

Quorum confirmed. Members present:

- Rebecca Sadwick Shaddix
- Guy Occhiogrosso
- Gary Wrightson
- Karen Funston
- Sonya Luhm
- Ralph Foldenauer
- Vanessa Bronsema
- Tracie Gulit
- Daniel Darwin

Absent:

- Brennen Brown

3. Public Comment

Citizen, Maya Morales, addressed the commission indicating that she intended to send a memo to the commissioners in advance of this meeting, but had just sent it immediately prior to the meeting. The memo went to the Commissioners, Deputy Prosecutor and County Executive office. Facilitator Carroll said she had additional updates to be shared during the new business section including information from Steve Oliver. Steve Oliver clarified the point made to Facilitator Carroll was on a topic.

4. New Business

4.1 Discussion to request to review compensation/budget for County Charter Review Commission

Commissioner Funston made a motion to defer the discussion until the next meeting so the commissioners could review the information provided but asked that any additional verbal information be shared at this meeting. Commissioner Wrightson seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Citizen Maya Morales shared Commission that there were proposals in front of the Charter Review Commission that were being discussed at an upcoming meeting and they would sort out the conflict between those proposals. She confirmed that there was more clarity in her written memo regarding her request of the Salary Review Commission.

Facilitator Carroll shared information from Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, Kellen Kooistra, regarding the legal opinion on this topic. Maya Morales made a statement that she disagrees with the opinion, but stated the information is in the memo. The Commission will resume discussion of this agenda item at the February 26th meeting.

4.2 Discuss questions to be asked of elected officials in writing and/or for meeting participation.

The Commissioners discussed the questions they would like the elected officials to answer in written form and be prepared to address during their invited time at an upcoming meeting. After a lot of discussion the Commissioners approved the following list of questions to be asked of elected officials:

1. Please briefly describe the essential functions of your position.
2. Please describe your scope of responsibilities. Such as: number of direct reports, total staff size, budget managed, level of decisions made with impact on the county. What (if any) changes have there been in recent years to your position and/or scope of responsibilities?
3. Please describe your thoughts on the process and the outcome the last salary commission used to determine salaries. Such as:
 - the structure of basing salaries on a state position and then internal alignment with other elected positions in the County.
 - Basing the decision in part on ensuring the salaries proposed exceeded the highest direct report (i.e. "second in command")
 - Was there anything missing, over or under emphasized from the last process? What additional factors would you like us to take under consideration?
4. What other position salaries should be considered when determining your position's salary?
5. Is your Deputy the position that would have responsibility for your duties in your absence? If not, what position would or what combination of positions would have responsibility?
6. What is your educational background, and what is your previous relevant work experience?
7. In your experience in the position, what is the education and experience necessary for the position (i.e. is there anything you believe is necessary for the position)?

The Commissioners requested that these questions be sent to the invited officials and attendance at an upcoming meeting be scheduled by Facilitator Carroll.

5. Information Review

5.1 Summary Market Data – Facilitator Carroll let Commissioners know that the Summary Data Document has been updated with the requests from the last meeting. There is still missing data that will be updated and sent out by the end of the week.

5.2 Commissioner Data Requests Status Updates – Facilitator Carroll shared where to access the updated Commissioner Data Request list and point out that links to the source documents had been updated. Facilitator Carroll also mentioned that there will be an update to item #11 regarding the funding of elected positions.

Facilitator Carroll shared there is some information that will be forthcoming about the proposed charter amendments that would change the process of setting salaries for elected officials. That information will be shared with the Commissioners.

Commissioner Luhm requested additional information which is information about benefits and/or fringe that the elected officials receive and how that compares to other county positions. Facilitator Carroll will make that an official data request and report back.

Commissioner Darwin let the Commissioners know he did an analysis on the 10-year salary history and will share it. Facilitator Carroll asked that he send it to her and so she can add it to the official record.

6. Next Steps

6.1 Request of elected officials

Facilitator Carroll confirmed she will send questions to elected officials and schedule presentations for half of the two upcoming meetings.

6.2 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 26th from 4-6 p.m.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:56 PM by Chair Shaddix

Prepared by: Stacey Carroll, Facilitator

Approval: Meeting minutes were approved at the February 26th meeting of the Commission.