

## **MINUTES OF THE LINN COUNTY COMPENSATION BOARD**

Thursday, February 7, 2019

**PRESENT:** Raymond Stefani II (Chair), Dedra Beauregard (via phone), Karl Kolz (via phone), Phil Klinger, Nicole Lee (via phone)

**ABSENT:** Steve Jackson, Mary Quass

All board members voting "aye" unless otherwise noted.

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 pm by Chairperson Stefani. Roll call was taken

Motion by Klinger, seconded by Lee, to approve the minutes of the January 29, 2018 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Klinger, seconded by Lee, to appoint Ray Stefani as Chair of the Linn County Compensation Board.

Motion by Klinger, seconded by Beauregard, to close nominations. Motion carried unanimously.

The initial motion to appoint Mr. Stefani as Chair of the Linn County Compensation Board was approved unanimously.

Motion by Klinger, seconded by Lee, to appoint Steve Jackson as Vice Chair of the Linn County Compensation Board. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Presentations to Board by Elected Officials**

County Attorney Jerry VanderSanden thanked the members of the Compensation Board for their service and suggested a 3% salary adjustment for FY 2020 for his office. The basis for his recommendation is the Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) salary survey, which he believes is a fair and objective reference point. The salaries of three staff attorneys – Nick Maybanks, Lisa Epp, and Lance Heeren -- are tied to his, and he believes they should be rewarded for their dedication and hard work. A 3% increase will help him retain and continue to attract qualified and dedicated staff.

Board of Supervisors Chair Stacey Walker indicated that the Board of Supervisors believes that a 3% increase is reasonable for the Supervisors. However, they are also requesting a one-time equalization increase of \$6,326.82 to bring their salaries to the same level as the Treasurer and Recorder. He reviewed increases given to other Boards of Supervisors over the last two fiscal years – including Polk, Black Hawk, Johnson and Scott – while Linn County's Supervisors' salaries were frozen over that same period. He noted that the Board oversees the second largest budget in the state and about a dozen department heads and reviewed some recent areas of activity.

Mr. Stefani inquired as to the effect of the Board's reduction in size on the Supervisors' workloads. Mr. Walker responded that the Supervisors recognized and accepted that the workload would increase and also noted the significant increase in size of each of the Supervisors' districts. Mr. Stefani indicated he believes it would be appropriate to bring the Supervisors' salaries closer to those of the Polk County Supervisors.

Sheriff Brian Gardner noted that he had provided the Compensation Board with relevant information prior to the meeting and reviewed for the Board the relative size of his constituency, budget, sworn staff and salary. He stated his belief that a 3% increase for FY20 would be appropriate and advised that there are a number of appointed commanders in the Sheriff's Office whose salaries are tied to his.

Mr. Stefani discussed with Sheriff Gardner the amount of revenue the Sheriff's Office generates, which is returned to the general fund. They also discussed Sheriff Gardner's responsibilities and workload in comparison to the Johnson County Sheriff, whose salary is currently about \$10,000 less than Sheriff Gardner's. The Linn County jail holds about 4 times as many inmates as the Johnson County jail and Sheriff Gardner supervises more personnel than the Johnson County Sheriff. The Johnson County Compensation Board recently recommended a 3.56% increase for all elected officials in Johnson County and an additional \$10,000 raise for the Sheriff. If approved, the Johnson County Sheriff's compensation would be larger than Sheriff Gardner's.

Auditor Joel Miller indicated that prior to the meeting he had sent the members of the Compensation Board information related to a compensation study he had commissioned, performed by the firm RSM. Mr. Stefani and Mr. Miller discussed compensation for the Auditor, and Mr. Miller indicated he did not disagree with the equalization of his salary with the Treasurer's and the Recorder's, but he also believes the Auditor's office should be judged independently. They also discussed the need to attract qualified people to run for elected office.

Mr. Michael Shedek of RSM discussed the compensation study his firm had performed for the Auditor and reviewed the methodology and recommendations. He noted that the average median salary for comparable positions, using both public and private sector salaries, is about \$119,000.

Treasurer Sharon Gonzalez expressed her thanks to the members of the Compensation Board for their service to the County. She noted that this is her 40<sup>th</sup> year in the Treasurer's office and her 9<sup>th</sup> year as Treasurer. She reviewed some of the changes she has made in the office to enhance the customer experience and discussed the amount of collections her office handles, about \$550 million in fiscal year 2018. She indicated her support for a 3% increase for FY 2020.

Mr. Klinger remarked that he has been a member of the Compensation Board since its inception and he believes all the elected officials are underpaid. He reminded the Board that Linn County government is the equivalent of a \$118 million/year corporation.

### **Motions and Board Action**

Motion by Klinger, seconded by Lee, to recommend that the Supervisors and the Auditor be granted salary increases to equalize their salaries to those of the Treasurer and Recorder.

Supervisor Brent Oleson indicated that the amount of the increases would be \$6,326.82 for the Supervisors and \$3,210.16 for the Auditor. Mr. Klinger indicated that he would amend his motion to include those figures; however, Mr. Kolz suggested that without a way to check on the figures it would be preferable to use the equalization language.

Mr. Klinger withdrew his initial motion and made a new motion, which was seconded by Ms. Lee, to recommend that the Supervisors and the Auditor be granted salary increases to equalize

their salaries to the fiscal year 2019 salaries of the Treasurer and Recorder. The motion was approved unanimously.

Motion by Klinger, seconded by Stefani, to recommend for fiscal year 2020 a 5.0% increase to the salaries of all Linn County elected officials, in addition to the equalization increases for the Supervisors and Auditor.

Mr. Stefani noted that he believes this increase is justified and he strongly encouraged the Board of Supervisors to accept it. Ms. Beauregard expressed her concern about the Linn County employees' bargaining unit receiving an increase of only 2.7% for FY 2020. Mr. Stefani discussed the value of leadership and the risks and burdens that leadership assumes. Mr. Kolz noted that the two groups are separate and the bargaining unit has protections which elected officials do not.

Mr. Klinger suggested a vote on the motion; there being no objection, the Linn County Compensation Board voted on the motion to recommend a 5.0% increase to the salaries of all Linn County elected officials, in addition to the equalization increases for the Supervisors and Auditor. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Adjournment**

Upon motion by Klinger, and no objection presented, the meeting of the Linn County Compensation Board was adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond R. Stefani II, Chairperson

Barbara Schmitz, Acting Secretary