

State Officers Compensation Commission Meeting

November 14th, 2024, 3:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Members:

Larry LeDoux (Senate Appointee, member of the public; virtual attendance)

Lynn Gattis (Governor Appointee, member of the public; virtual attendance)

Jomo Stewart (House Appointee, member of the public; virtual attendance)

Others present:

Kate Sheehan, Department of Administration, (Secretary; virtual attendance)

Brook Riley, Department of Administration (virtual attendance)

I.

CALL TO ORDER

Director Sheehan called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. She then performed a roll call of all members present and their respective appointee designations. Mr. Stewart offered himself as Chair but admitted that he would rather not. Director Sheehan briefly explained the duties of the Chair to the Commission. Ms. Gattis and Mr. LeDoux moved to elect Mr. Stewart as the Committee's new Chair and he accepted.

II. Review of Materials

Director Sheehan reviewed and explained the salary and data materials provided to the Commission members prior to the meeting. There was some discussion and clarification about the contents therein. Chair Stewart asked if the calendar year 2024 newly enacted salary schedules were published yet, Director Sheehan confirmed that the 2024 salary schedule report was not yet available. Chair Stewart asked if the legislature received an increase in per diem. Director Sheehan reminded the Commission that at the most recent meeting on March 15th 2023, the only recommendation was the annual salary increase for legislators to \$84,000. Mr. LeDoux stated that at the last SOCC meeting they did not discuss per diem nor any other details but simply agreed to that increase.

Director Sheehan reminded the Commission that the legislature goes by the federal per diem rates. Chair Stewart asked if there were any questions about the documents in the preliminary report that were just reviewed, and with no questions asked, he moved on to address whether using a CPI as a baseline for considering salary increases would be beneficial for the Commission to consider. The members agreed that there should be some sort of algorithm or data points to review and evaluate to determine the appropriate salary increases. It was determined that tying wage increases to the CPI is consistent with other industries and avoids the appearance of granting wage increases for political or arbitrary reasons.

In considering to which value future Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustments should apply, a Member proposed having them attach to the original \$50,400 and future increases be held in abeyance until “the value of the dollar catches up to” and exceeds the \$84,000 salary level recommended for adoption in 2023. Likewise for Executive Branch officers. The other two Members, however, noting the Commissioners’ unanimous belief that \$84,000 is appropriate to the position and work, proposed simply applying the CPI adjustments to the current \$84,000 base salary moving forward. The majority having spoken, the Commission agreed to recommend CPI as the basis for future pay adjustments and applying it the base salaries currently in force.

The consideration for increases should happen every other year and that the current legislative body would not vote on their own increases in pay but would be voting on that of the following year’s legislative representatives.

Mr. LeDoux explained that he was uncomfortable with how they quickly made pay raises at the last meeting and the Commission agreed that the process should be open and transparent.

It was determined that the commission will further discuss implementing regular wage increases that are based off of CPI and current base pay every two years going forward at the December meeting. This would apply to the salaries of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, department heads, and legislators.

The Commission set the next meeting for December 10th or 11th 2024, both in person at the Atwood Building in Anchorage and with one member joining via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.