

## State Officers Compensation Commission Meeting

December 6, 2019, 11:30 a.m.  
550 w. 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., 1st Floor, Suite 106  
Meeting Minutes

### Members:

Scott Cunningham, Chairperson  
Johnny Ellis  
Richard Strutz  
Mike Miller  
Lester Lunceford (Absent)

### Others present:

Nancy Sutch, Department of Administration, Secretary  
Brook Riley, Department of Administration (telephonic)  
Rena Miller, Legislative Senate Majority Office

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Deputy Director Sutch called the meeting to order at 11:45 a.m.

#### **II. ROLL CALL**

Chairperson Cunningham and members Richard Strutz, Mike Miller, and Johnny Ellis were present.

#### **III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION: *Mr. Cunningham moved to approve meeting agenda.*

APPROVED: Moved and approved unanimously.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION: *Mr. Miller moved to approve the minutes from the November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 meeting.*

APPROVED: Mr. Cunningham seconded. Moved and approved unanimously.

#### **V. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY AND WRITTEN COMMENTS**

Deputy Director Sutch confirmed that there were no written comments and no public testimony.

#### **VI. FINALIZATION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### DISCUSSION:

Mr. Cunningham addressed an item from the 11/04/2019 meeting minutes in which Director Sheehan stated that she would provide an answer to the question as to whether or not those legislators that chose to hold the 2019 Special Session in Wasilla as opposed to Juneau, received per diem. Deputy Director Sutch

provided the answer; Only those legislators that met in Juneau for the Special Session were eligible for per diem. Mr. Ellis asked whom made that decision and Mr. Cunningham agreed that he would like to know that information. Deputy Director Sutch stated that she would follow up on that question and get back to the Commission. The Commission discussed whether to use Robert's Rules or Mason's Manual, Mr. Ellis moved that the Commission use Mason's Manual for their rules of conduct for Commission meetings and it was so moved unanimously.

Mr. Cunningham stated that there was no public comment received and Deputy Director Sutch confirmed, he then stated that there were no salary or wage changes recommended for the 2020 Legislative Session. Mr. Ellis proposed that the Commission solicit the input of both the minorities and majorities of both the House and Senate for their input on salary increases and per diem changes for the Legislature, Commissioners, and Deputy Commissioners for the 2021 Legislative Session. Mr. Ellis went on to state that the Commission should solicit public comment and testimony, he suggested that a salary increase could be accomplished in two phases and that the per diem is phased down when legislators are within their own communities. Mr. Strutz touched on the possible tax advantages of per diem vs wage increases and that he favors the federal rate. The Commission agreed to continue to meet in the coming year to discuss these matters. Mr. Ellis proposed that one possibility could be to raise the base salary of the legislators to \$74,500 annually with a much reduced per diem as that allocation is often criticized by the public. Deputy Director Sutch stated that the monthly salary for legislators was doubled in 2010 to \$4,200 per month.

The federal rate for per diem was also discussed as it is now the practice for per diem amount determinations as well as the Consumer Price Index as it may pertain to the purview of the Commission. Mr. Cunningham suggested a five to eight-year implementation of salary increases. Further discussion occurred that salaries could be raised and per diem payments lowered. Deputy Director Sutch pointed out that in 2015 there was a recommendation that the salaries of Deputy Commissioners whom accept positions as department head/Commissioner in the same department with no break in service and are paid at a higher salary than the salary authorized for the department head, retain their current salary. The legislature rejected the recommendation at that time. Mr. Cunningham suggested that Department of Administration staff write a letter to solicit the opinions of the House and Senate on salary and per diem adjustments with a response deadline of April 30<sup>th</sup>. The Commission would then consider the information solicited from the Legislature in their working meeting to determine the details of the proposed salary and per diem changes.

## **VII. OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting was scheduled for May 11<sup>th</sup> 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

