

SPOKANE COUNTY CITIZENS' COMMISSION ON SALARIES

February 9, 2021
5:30pm – 6:30pm

ZOOM information:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84853603206?pwd=K2lqaEV2KzFQZHrY29CSUFQZVp6dz09>

Meeting ID: 814 0276 8481
Passcode: 722216
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AGENDA

Present Committee Members: Jenae Ball, Tammy Bell, Dana Nash, Debra Stewart, April Croft, Keith Hamlin, Nancy Williams, Jeff Martin and Stephanie Curran

Present Spokane County Employees: Ashley Cameron, Toni Atwood

Meeting called to order 5:35PM by Chairperson Jenae Ball.

1. Approve previous week's minutes All
 - a. Motion made by Keith Hamlin
 - b. Motion approved by April Croft
 - c. Motion passed and carried with the request to correct the spelling of Jenae Ball's name.
2. Elected Official/Commissioner Follow-up Discussion All

Started discussion on Elected Official/Commissioner wage increases. April Croft thought that the Elected Officials and Commissioners were all very forthcoming with information and the consensus from them was that they were not concerned about their own wages but thought many of their employees are underpaid. Taking that into consideration she felt that they do not need a pay raise this year so that funds can be used elsewhere.

Keith Hamlin stated that since there was no increase for the represented and non-represented employees or the C-Suite that the Elected Officials and Commissioners would understand that there will be no increase for them either. He agrees with April Croft that no increases be given at this time but that the next Salary Commission can compensate for there being no increase in 2021.

Jenae Ball stated that the Commissioners received a 19% increase in 2017, which was their first increase since 2006. She stated the increase likely made sense during that Citizens' Commission as they had gone without a pay increase for 10 years.

Nancy Williams asked if there was any discussion to reevaluate non-represented employee COLA increases for 2021. Ashley Cameron stated that there was not but that there is a compensation study in progress that will change the market level compensation for some employee classifications (3.3% average increase). It is not known when the Commissioners will approve the classification study, but it is expected to occur in 2021. This is the first time an external consulting group has been brought in for a compensation and classification study. The County plans on continual evaluation of employee wages and total compensation to remain competitive.

Nancy Williams asked if employee contracts were seeing wage increases for 2021 or 2022. Ashley Cameron stated three contracts were currently meeting with the County for bargaining and wages are part of the negotiations.

Jeff Martin thought there were enough people running for BOCC positions, from two years ago and felt the County is getting good, quality candidates for Commissioners. Looking at a 2-year budget cycle, he recommended the committee should be considering both years. He recommended if they do not give the Elected Officials and Commissioners an increase in 2021 or 2022, the next Citizens' Commission on Salaries could potentially give them 3% or a "catch up" in two years.

Dana Nash thinks that zero increase is not fair for two years, as Elected Officials and Commissioners deserve to be recognized for their hard work. She feels two years is too long to not even receive a cost of living increase since the BOCC and elected officials are working hard and are staying within their budget.

Jenae Ball believes that it is not fair to give the Elected Officials and Commissioners a raise in 2021 since the Commissioners determined the non-represented employees were not getting a raise for 2021 due to budget concerns. She believes they should not receive a raise in 2021 if the other employees do not.

Debra Stewart is impressed with all the Elected Officials and Commissioners in regard to the work they do and immense responsibilities of their roles. She thinks if they do not receive a raise for 2021 they should receive 2% in 2022, at a minimum.

Keith Hamlin recommended a compromise for no increase for 2021 and 2% for 2022. That way the County employees can't question why the Elected Officials and Commissioners received a raise in 2021 and they did not.

Jeff Martin is open to an increase for 2022.

Stephanie Curran can see the argument for both sides; when there is not an increase incrementally it becomes harder to give a large increase at one time to make up for getting too far behind, like what happened for the 10 years no increase was awarded. She explained it's important to ensure the Commissioners don't lag behind comparable counties, as it should be important for the Elected Officials and Commissioners to have competitive salaries. She does not want to say no to 2021 increase if the budget is able to absorb the increase.

Keith Hamlin doesn't support an increase for 2021 but does for 2022. His biggest reason for not supporting an increase in 2021 is because the non-represented employees did not receive an increase in January of 2021, so some of the highest paid employees receiving an increase doesn't necessarily make sense.

Stephanie Curran asked if the employee salary budget can be changed for 2021. Ashley Cameron stated that it will not be adjusted for 2021 other than the potential implementation of the classification study.

Jeff Martin asked to evaluate 2021 and 2022 percentages separately.

Jeff Martin made a motion for 0 percent raise for 2021.

Motion approved by Keith Hamlin

One nay vote

Motion passed and carried by the rest of the Commission

Jenae Ball agrees with increase in 2022, agrees with Keith Hamlin that it doesn't feel equitable for leadership to receive a raise even though they ran everything well but employees do not; it's the principle of it.

Nancy Williams stated that it can be hard to catch up in pay if a year is skipped for a raise, which is what led to the massive increase in 2018 after years of no increases.

Keith Hamlin asked the group for ideas of increase in 2022? He explained, the last time the Commission met (2019) they agreed to 2% each year (2019 and 2020).

Jenae Ball stated in her research, she found the COLA for 2021 is 1.3%.

Keith Hamlin suggested doing 0 percent for 2021 and 3% for 2022. Dana Nash stated she does not think 3% over two is enough based on the level of responsibility the elected officials have to the community and work load required of them.

Jeff Martin made a motion for 2% salary increase for 2022

Motion approved by Tammy Bell

Vote taken and motion denied

Jenae Ball asked if they had to have a consensus for 2022 increases. Ashley Cameron stated they did need to make a decision as the next time the Citizens' Commission on Salaries would meet would be in 2023. Nancy Williams asked if a 2% or 3% increase would be comparable with other Washington counties. She explained if we did that, we could maintain where we want to be in the pack as you don't want to lag or be the lead for salaries.

Discussion around what the City elected officials were earning occurred. From what was found in a Spokesman Review article, an increase for Council members or Mayor in 2021 would not occur, but a 3% increase is slated for 2022.

Jenae Ball asked group if want to discuss percentages for 2022 – 2% or 3%?

April Croft thinks 2% is fair.

Jenae Ball felt an increase for 2022 needs to be closer to 3% to make up for no 2021 increase to ensure wages are still competitive for the work being done by elected officials.

She reminded the group, in their earlier motion, a 2% increase in 2022 motion was unanimously voted down.

Debra Stewart suggests 2.5% increase for 2022.

Jenae Ball asked for a motion for 2.5% increase for 2022

So moved by Debra Stewart

Seconded by April Croft

Motion carried unanimously

3. Salary Recommendation & Committee Consensus

All

The Committee consensus for 2021 is no increase in salary. For 2022 the Committee consensus is a salary increase of 2.5%. Elected Officials are 95% of the Commissioner's salary.

4. Miscellaneous

Chairperson

This will be the final meeting; all discussion and decisions are complete. Ashley Cameron will put the final document together and send it to the Committee members through DocuSign for electronic signatures.

5. Close

Chairperson

Meeting adjourned at 6:25pm.