

President Robert J. Hodge, District 5

Vice President Alan McCarthy, District 1

Councilwoman Joyce Bowsbey, District 2

Councilman Dan Schneckenburger, District 3

Councilman George Patchell, District 4



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COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY

Cecil County Administration Building
200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Suite 2110, Elkton, MD 21921

COMPENSATION REVIEW COMMISSION MINUTES

MAY 12, 2016

2:00 P.M.

ELKTON ROOM at Administration Building
200 Chesapeake Blvd, Elkton MD 21921

PRESENT: Frank Williams, Bob Amato, Ken Wiggins, Jay Williams, Bruce England, and Jim Massey.

Also present: Robert Meffley

Chairman Wiggins called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

On motion made by Mr. Jay Williams, seconded by Mr. England, the Commission approved the minutes of May 2, 2016 as presented.

Chairman Wiggins reviewed the documents provided by Mr. Massey including HB 816 (Sheriff's salary), median household income by county, Sheriff's pay scale and management salaries, activity log from Councilwoman Bowsbey, New Castle County, DE compensation, Harford County Council reimbursement policy, and current Council reimbursement policy. Discussion ensued.

Chairman Wiggins requested information about the Cecil County Board of Education stipend.

Mr. Jay Williams provided his analysis of the county data, which showed that Cecil County was the only County that did not pay a differential to the Council President. He summarized the data by 12 Charter counties and 12 Commissioner counties as follows:

Of 12 Charter counties, 7 provide retirement benefits, 1 does not and 1 is unknown.

Of 12 Commissioner counties, 10 provide retirement benefits, 2 do not and 1 is unknown.

Of 12 Charter counties, 9 provide health benefits, 2 do not and 1 is unknown.

Of 12 Commissioner counties, 11 provide health benefits and 1 is unknown.

There are 11 smaller counties than Cecil County that pay health benefits.

County Executive compensation ranges from \$85,000 to \$197,141. Calculations of Executive compensation per capita ranges from Baltimore County \$6.99 per capita (lowest) to Cecil County \$175 per capita (highest)

Chairman Wiggins has invited Council President Hodge to attend the Commission to discuss his additional duties as Council President.

Mr. Frank Williams suggested that the Council President should be compensation at a higher rate than other Council Members, which was the consensus of the members. He also proposed that the Sheriff's compensation should be increased. He suggested that the Commission should set priorities. He agrees with Councilwoman Bowsbey that the Council Members' compensation should not be increased and that the Commission should look at a stipend for expenses.

Mr. Jay Williams agreed that Councilman Bowsbey's suggestion of Council stipend could be considered, but asked how it could be implemented to be fair to Council Members who attend more events and those who attend less.

Mr. England agreed with current Cecil County Council reimbursement policies that Council members should not be reimbursed for fundraisers should not be reimbursed. He commented that it has been traditional that Council members have not requested reimbursement for events. He also stated that Harford County's reimbursement policies have more details but are not different from Cecil County's policies.

Mr. Jay Williams calculated that, based on Councilwoman Bowsbey's estimated schedule of meetings, the Council's current compensation of \$25,000 annually equates to \$36.08 per hour or \$29.66 per hour with travel time included.

Chairman Wiggins spoke with Rebecca Demmler and Council President Hodge about Council compensation. Neither complained about the amount of compensation and expressed similar comments that elected members do not run for Council because of the compensation.

Mr. Jay Williams suggested that most Council Members have another job or receive retirement so that at least 30% of their Council compensation goes to taxes. He proposed an increase in Council compensation of \$25,000 to \$27,000 for Council Members and \$25,000 to \$30,000 for the Council President.

Chairman Wiggins stated that Councilwoman Bowsbey emphasized that the cost of events is expensive and suggested rewording the language of reimbursable expenses.

Robert Meffley stated that the cost of his election was expensive but he was not running for Council to make money. He cited that certain events are at least \$100 and many organizations make donations requests.

Mr. Amato stated that the current reimbursement policy was adequate.

Mr. Wiggins asked about the difference between the County Executive and Council Members attending events. Mr. Massey stated that most events invite both. However, some organizations ask for the Executive to represent the County.

Mr. Jay Williams suggested a County policy that organizations that request Council Members to make presentations should be reimbursable.

Chairman Wiggins suggested that each Council Member could be allowed \$100 per month for reimbursable expenses, which would cost \$6,000 annually. The Commission discussed how this reimbursement would be administered. He also stated that the current Cecil County reimbursement policy is specific about MACo expenses while reimbursement for other travel expenses must be approved by the Council President.

Mr. England stated that he liked Harford County's reimbursement policy that tied the reimbursement to the district where the proclamation/certificate was presented. He also mentioned the difference between expenses and entertainment.

Mr. Amato stated that there had been some problems in the past where a County official received a set amount for travel reimbursement, which did not require documentation. He also suggested that if the Council is required to present a proclamation or certificate, the Council Member's expense should be compensated by the organization.

Mr. Massey was asked to provide Cecil County's policy of reimbursable expenses.

Chairman Wiggins has requested Donna Nichols, Director of Human Resources, to attend a future meeting of the Commission to discuss benefit issues.

Mr. Frank Williams stated that Cecil County's current reimbursement policy was acceptable as is.

After discussion, Chairman Wiggins called for an action item of a volunteer to revise the current Cecil County Council reimbursement policy. Mr. England agreed to work with Mr. Massey to present a draft at the next meeting.

Mr. Amato suggested that the Council's reimbursement policy should not be in conflict with the County employees' reimbursement policy.

Chairman Wiggins stated that recommendations for the County Executive compensation and allowance will be an agenda items at the next meeting.

The Commission discussed providing health care benefits to elected officials.

Mr. Frank Williams stated his opposition of providing health benefits.

Mr. Amato agreed with Mr. Williams that health benefits should not be provided; and cited the history of how Charter government was not supposed to cost more than the Commissioner government.

Chairman Wiggins stated that Cecil County was the only subdivision not offering health benefits. He also stated that the Council positions are considered part time jobs and that most Council Members have an alternate source of income that usually includes health insurance. Discussion of duplicating health benefits.

Mr. England and Mr. Frank Williams agreed that health benefits should be provided to the County Executive.

Mr. Jay Williams stated that he favors increasing Council compensation rather than offering health benefits or retirement.

Mr. Jay Williams suggested that the Commission separate their discussion between the areas of 1) Executive, 2) Council, 3) Sheriff; and suggested that the Commission start with the Executive. Commission members agreed by consensus to this approach.

Mr. Frank Williams stated that the Executive's salary was established four years ago and that there has been little growth in the economy since that time.

The Commission discussed when any salary increase would be effected. Mr. Massey stated that State law prohibits currently elected officials from setting their own compensation. As Cecil County elects in both the Presidential and Gubernatorial years, there is some uncertainty of whether compensation revisions can be effective in 2018 or 2020. Mr. Massey will ask for clarification on this topic.

Mr. England provided a statistics to compare the Executive's salary with the population and number of county employees. The following is his calculations

COUNTY	Salary/population	Salary/employee
Cecil	\$.95	\$175
Montgomery	\$.18	\$20
Prince George's	\$.21	\$7.10
Baltimore Co.	\$.21	\$6.99
Anne Arundel	\$.23	\$9
Howard	\$.56	\$57
Harford	\$.82	\$81
Frederick	\$.38	\$46

Chairman Wiggins stated that the larger counties have a more complex governmental structure. He also stated that an Oregon county's philosophy to compensated elected officials was to provide a fair compensation without providing an incentive to become career employees.

Mr. Massey was asked to provide the pay scale for County management such as department heads so these salaries can be compared with compensation for the County Executive. He was also asked to provide the school administration salaries.

Mr. Frank Williams stated that the top salaries of the county should be earned by the Executive, Sheriff, and School Superintendent. Council positions are part time positions.

Mr. Jay Williams stated that the Cecil County Executive has the lowest compensation of all the Charter counties, including counties with smaller populations.

Mr. Amato stated that Montgomery County Council Members are entitled to a SUV vehicle. He suggested that the Commission should calculate the total amount of the increase that is recommended.

Chairman Wiggins stated that we should disregard Montgomery and Prince George's Counties because they are so much larger. He asked the members whether they support an increase for the Executive as well as health benefits and retirement. The Commission discussed how elected officials could be vested in the retirement system after 10 years.

Commission members agreed by consensus that the Executive should be offered health benefits and retirement.

The Commission discussed the Executive's salary but agreed to wait until they were provided with the County managers' salaries. This item will be placed first on next week's agenda.

Mr. Frank Williams recommended that the Executive should receive \$100,000 in salary.

Mr. England asked if the Executive's salary could be tied to the CPI.

Mr. Massey was asked to provide a list of the Executive's responsibilities and duties.

The Commission would like to finish their recommendations by the end of June.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held on Friday, May 20, 2016 at 2 p.m. in the Elkton Room of the County Administration Building, 200 Chesapeake Blvd, Elkton MD 21921.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James Massey
Council Manager