

COMPENSATION BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY
June 10, 2021, Meeting Minutes

On Thursday, June 10, 2021, a meeting of the Madison County Compensation Board came to order at 3:05 p.m. in the Public Meeting Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners, Dan Allhands, Chairman, Jim Hart, and Ron Nye; Elected Officials, Phil Fortner, Sheriff, , Paula McKenzie, Clerk and Recorder, Shelly Burke, Treasurer, and Chris Christensen, County Attorney; Public Members John Armstrong and Billie Ratcliffe, present. Laurie Buyan, Commissioners' Assistant, was present to take minutes.

Others in attendance at the meeting were Carmin Hill, Deputy Clerk of Courts, Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, and Britani Allhands, Finance Assistant.

Chairman Allhands called the Compensation Board meeting to order and asked Vicki to take the lead.

Vicki Tilstra discussed the CPI, stating she's doesn't understand why we use but that it's a starting point. She reviewed documentation that had been distributed, noting that first page showed an estimate for an annual increase of 1.2% with expenses; the second page showed the estimate for a 3% increase; the third page showed health insurance; and the last two pages discussed the difference between the Consumer Price Index versus cost of living, noting that she highlighted some of the differences.

Vicki stated that the cost of insurance went up 5.9% which was not bad, noting that the Commissioners added an additional increase of \$200 for dependents, making a total of \$400 provided by the County for dependents, which everyone seems to be on board with. She added that the cash flow is good and that the nursing homes have been conservative for all they've been through.

John Armstrong stated that he's shocked that it didn't go higher and was surprised that it went down last year. He added that employees he's talked to have said it's nice to have the insurance for themselves but that they can't afford to insure the spouse or family. He asked what kind of raise the County is thinking of, noting that no one got rich on the pay increase from last year. Shelly stated that she would like to see at least a 3% increase and an adjustment to the longevity schedule that she provided to the Board at her preliminary budget hearing. There was discussion about the longevity proposal and copies of the proposal were distributed. There was also discussion about how many people have been with the County over 25 years and that the cost would be approximately \$120,000.

Paula stated that anything you can do to get people to stay in their position is good because the longer they've been here, the more they know. She added she is all for longevity and all for a 3% increase. Phil Fortner agreed. John stated that it looks reasonable to him and would like to have a little more discussion. Carmin discussed the cost of housing, stating that anyone wanting to come to work for the County is going to have a problem finding housing. John added that housing is one of the problems they having trying to get help at the Weed Board. Billie noted that it comes back to the old adage that it's cheaper to keep good employees that to try to hire new ones. Phil also talked about the difficulties for new deputies trying to find housing, and the cost of training new officers.

Billie asked how our County stacks up against other counties. Vicki noted that our new Human Resource Officer is working on a salary comparison. Shelly stated that the Jefferson County elected officials make about \$9,000 more than ours do. Paula added that in listening to discussions from other Clerk and Recorders, it sounds like 3% is about average of what everyone is wanting. Shelly agreed that she's heard that too. Shelly reviewed increases from previous years.

Following discussion Phil Fortner moved to recommend a 4% increase for elected officials and the County Attorney. Shelly Burke seconded the motion.

Jim voiced concerns about whether the nursing homes could afford the increase and the possibility of giving them a different amount. Billie stated that she didn't feel that was fair. John discussed challenges with nursing homes wages, travelers, and calling off shifts.

Billie asked the Commissioners what they're thinking. Jim stated that only thing he had in his head was what was originally proposed but felt that a 4% was reasonable. Ron discussed the difference in the totals from 3% to 4% and discussed concerns about the nursing homes and having to balance things out. He added he will have to think it over. Dan agreed with the other two Commissioners, stating his biggest concern is the nursing homes and the cost of travelers.

Following this discussion, all of the Compensation Board members present voted aye and the motion carried.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Dan W. Allhands, Chairman
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: June 15, 2021

Minutes prepared by:

Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant

Attest: _____
Paula McKenzie, Clerk and Recorder, Madison County