



# COUNTY OF ERIE CITIZENS SALARY REVIEW COMMISSION MINUTES

**August 30, 2018, 10:00 a.m. Meeting**

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Present: Donald Allen, Owen Patrick Brady, Laurie Buonanno, Michael Lukasik, Jerry Newman, Tiffany Perry, William Ransom, and Christopher Stone.

Absent: Louis Panzica (appointed August 29, 2018, and indicated he could not attend)

Support Staff: Scott Bylewski and Mark Cornell, both from Erie County Division of Budget and Management.

Non-Members Present: Hon. April N. M. Baskin, Brian Poliner, Scott Kroll, and representative from WIVB.

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Meeting Notes: Quorum was present and meeting called to order at 10:02 a.m.

## **WELCOME, PURPOSE, and INTRODUCTIONS**

Meeting began with S. Bylewski welcoming everyone and reviewing the Commission's purpose by the enabling legislation in the Erie County Charter, Article 2, section 202.3, and Article 22-A.

Introductions of Commission Members and Staff, as well as others present occurred.

## **BACKGROUND FACTS**

S. Bylewski then discussed the Fact Sheet with the Commission.

M. Cornell then discussed the graph, "Changes Since elected Officials' Last Raise".

J. Newman commented that the salaries of elected officials were a small fraction of a percent of the overall County budget, and it would be worth looking at the change in the County budget relative to other counties.

L. Buonanno mentioned that Exhibit IV of the 2014 Commission's Recommendations included Median House hold and Median Real Estate Values. Further, she indicated that the Legislature's public hearing in 2014 was probably not the right time, and she is more optimistic this time.

L. Buonanno, D. Allen, and J. Newman all mentioned legislative salaries and discussion occurred around the total compensation package.

S. Bylewski then briefly reviewed 2018 Budget Book A, NYSAC 2018 County Salary Survey and Benefits, MC 2019 Payscale, and Job Descriptions. All documents would be provided electronically to the Commission Members.

### **ELECTION OF COMMISSION CHAIR**

S. Bylewski opened the floor to discussion of the Commission Chair. W. Ransom moved to nominate L. Buonanno based on her qualifications and work & experience as a 2014 Commission Member. Nomination was seconded by all Commission Members present. No other nominations were put forward. L. Buonanno unanimously elected chair by voice vote of Commission Members present.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

L. Buonanno and D. Allen again discussed Legislatures salaries and J. Newman mentioned looking at total compensation package, but benefit analysis of other county legislatures may not be readily available.

O. Brady mentioned the news clippings from 2014 and a request was made to obtain the clippings M. Cornell has archived. Further, M. Cornell indicated the Commission can ask for other data and the staff will attempt to compile.

J. Newman and L. Buonanno discussed in private sector looking at budget size and number of employees; however, cannot compare public with private with nonprofit salaries.

D. Allen asked L. Buonanno about testifying before the County Legislature in 2014. L. Buonanno mentioned that some in the Legislature felt the 2014 Commission was saying the Legislature does not deserve a raise. However, the only defense when comparing salaries across legislatures was that some legislatures allegedly provided cell phones. L. Buonanno offered and Commission members agreed that they should look to meet with County Legislators to discuss why they rejected the 2014 Commission's findings related to elected official pay raises and that such insight could be beneficial as the 2018 Commission deliberates going forward. Members also discussed whether it would be useful to interview the other elected officials as part of their deliberations.

L. Buonanno, W. Ransom, and O. Brady discussed obtaining benefits for other legislatures to compare, divide up list of Legislators to interview, and devise a common list of questions.

L. Buonanno read aloud a Buffalo News editorial concerning the 2014 Commission's work. Discussion then occurred as to the next steps, which by consensus appear to be:

- Developing questions to ask Legislators.
- Volunteering / dividing up the list of Legislators to be interviewed.
- Developing the Commission's timeline, including when Commission believed it would realistically have a report.
- Other variables to consider in evaluating compensation data across New York State Counties.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by T. Perry, seconded by C. Stone; carried 8-0.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:30 a.m.

Next Meeting: September 11, 2018, at 11:30 a.m.