



COUNTY OF ERIE CITIZENS SALARY REVIEW COMMISSION MINUTES

September 18, 2018, 11:30 a.m. Meeting

Present: Chair Laurie Buonanno, Donald Allen, Michael Lukasik, Jerry Newman, Louis Panzica, Tiffany Perry, William Ransom, and Christopher Stone.

Absent: Owen Patrick Brady.

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

Non-Members Present: Brian Poliner and Ross Kostecky.

Meeting Notes: A quorum was present and meeting called to order by Chair Buonanno at 11:30 a.m.

Motion made by C. Stone, seconded by W. Ransom to approve the minutes of September 11, 2018; motion carried unanimously by all members in attendance.

The Commission was informed that the Legislature Minority Caucus would meet with the Commission on Thursday, September 20, 2018. Chair Buonanno indicated she would contact Timothy Callan, Chief of Staff for the Legislature's Majority, to arrange meeting(s) with as many Majority Legislators as possible for the same date. The Commission then discussed parking, time, and other logistics for the meeting with Legislators.

W. Ransom and C. Stone discussed the table providing 3 percent to 8 percent salary increases over three to six years. The closest to the 2014 recommendation was 8 percent over 3 years.

L. Panzica discussed the internal equities between the elected officials and those who directly report to them. J. Newman mentioned that he believed the internal equity argument will work better now than the external equity argument. W. Ransom mentioned that the meeting with the Legislators is important to get a "feel" for their thinking. Chair Buonanno expressed her impression of NYS counties as "handmaidens of the state," and that because of this, there is a great deal of comparability in positions across counties.

Chair Buonanno then discussed comparable Counties, looking at mean salaries for county executives, and eliminating eight counties because their median incomes are one standard deviation above the median.

J. Newman mentioned a discussion he had with a waitress where the "gut" reaction from her was a "no" to elected officials receiving salary increases, but, when mentioned the last increase was in 1996, the waitress appeared more likely to be in favor of a raise.

The Commission then discussed L. Panzica's spreadsheet comparing internal equities. Chair Buonanno mentioned that the report should include internal, external, and CPI, and then conclude why the current salaries are too low and provide a recommendation that will probably along the lines of W. Ransom's step increase proposal.

M. Cornell mentioned new hires that are junior to elected officials begin at a lower step usually than an incumbent position holder. Chair Buonanno indicated that should be noted in the report when explaining internal equities.

Chair Buonanno, J. Newman, and D. Allen then discussed how CPI and union contracts historically are closer to 3 percent.

Discussion then turned to questions for the County Legislators with the Commission generally feeling that questions asking what data would the Legislators need to make an informed decision and asking what was wrong with the 2014 Commission's methodology being crucial.

Chair Buonanno indicated that at the next Commission meeting, a determination would need to be made as to what the salaries should be.

Chair Buonanno then briefly discussed the draft report and indicated that L. Panzica's narrative should be added.

J. Newman indicated that he was interested in writing a letter to the editor of the Buffalo News concerning County salaries.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by W. Ransom, seconded by L. Panzica; motion carried unanimously by all members in attendance.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:50 p.m.

Next Meeting: September 25, 2018, at 11:30 a.m.