



# COUNTY OF ERIE CITIZENS SALARY REVIEW COMMISSION MINUTES

Tuesday, February 27, 2024 Meeting #9

---

**Present:** Chair Lauri Buonanno, Alex Burgos, Gary Dickson, David Pietrowski, Fred Floss, Bill Ransom, Greg Rabb, and Mark Glasgow

**Absent:** Chris Stone

**Support Staff:** Mark Cornell, Lindsay McKay, and Natalie Nitsche.

**Non-Members Present:** Nate Lippitt

---

Meeting Notes: A quorum was present, and the meeting was called to order by Chair Buonanno at 2:02 p.m.

Chair Buonanno discussed the prior meeting's minutes. F. Floss motioned to accept the minutes as amended; A. Burgos seconded the motion. All in favor.

Chair Buonanno then asked the Commission to go around and present their proposals for just the county-wide elected officials.

F. Floss: County Executive \$175,000; Sheriff \$150,000; Clerk and Comptroller \$140,000;

G. Rabb: County Executive \$175,000; Sheriff \$150,000; Clerk and Comptroller \$140,000;

D. Pietrowski: County Executive \$175,000; Sheriff \$150,000; Comptroller \$140,000; Clerk \$130,000.

G. Dickson: County Executive \$150,000; Sheriff \$140,000; Comptroller and Clerk \$130,000;

B. Ransom: County Executive \$160,000; Sheriff \$115,000; Comptroller \$115,000; Clerk \$115,000;

M. Glasgow: County Executive \$190,000; Sheriff \$180,000; Comptroller \$115,000; Clerk \$115,000;

A. Burgos: County Executive \$175,000; Sheriff \$150,000; Comptroller \$140,000; Clerk \$140,000;

Chair Buonanno: County Executive \$175,000; Sheriff \$150,000; Comptroller \$140,000; Clerk \$130,000;

Next, Chair Buonanno asked for an explanation from the lowest and highest end suggestions. G. Dickson stated he is thinking about the public and is trying to be conservative with the numbers. M. Glasgow stated that the County Executive has a lot of visibility and works around-the-clock. B. Ransom reminded the Commission that this is his third term, and he believes that the reason the last commission was successful was because they were not so aggressive with the recommendations. There was concern about the percentage or raise being proposed for the elected officials when the average County resident does not see such a significant raise usually. The Chairwoman asked for additional comments.

F. Floss discussed that historically raises are around 3% and does not feel it appropriate for public servants to have the same raises that the private sector has. G. Rabb discussed that people do run for election to serve, but county-wide jobs are complicated and the pay should be commensurate with the work. D. Pietrowski shared that the Mayor of Buffalo earns \$178,000, the Deputy County Executive earns \$188,000,

and if the County Executive pay was higher, it could open up the pool of candidates.

G. Rabb made a motion for \$175,000 for the County Executive salary, which was seconded by A. Burgos. In favor: Chair Buonanno, A. Burgos, D. Pietrowski, F. Floss, and G. Rabb; Opposed: G. Dickson, B. Ransom, and M. Glasgow. **APPROVED 5-3. The Commission recommendation for the County Executive's salary is \$175,000.**

A. Burgos motioned for \$140,000 for the Comptroller salary, which was seconded by G. Rabb. In favor: Chair Buonanno, A. Burgos, D. Pietrowski, F. Floss, and G. Rabb; Opposed: G. Dickson, B. Ransom, and M. Glasgow. **APPROVED 5-3. The Commission recommendation for the Comptroller's salary is \$140,000.**

Next, Chair Buonanno asked M. Glasgow how he arrived at this suggestion for the Sheriff's salary. M. Glasgow commented that he would like to see if be more competitive with other counties to open it up for additional candidates. B. Ransom discussed that a raise to \$180,000 is a 68% increase, \$115,000 is a 13% increase, and he feels that all of the Sheriffs since 1995 have been qualified. G. Dickson stated that the Sheriff has control of the jail and emergency management, and he is willing to increase his recommendation to \$150,000. D. Pietrowski contributed that the Buffalo Chief of Police earns \$151,000. Chair Buonanno discussed other County Sheriffs' salaries and the numbers F. Floss came up with based on CPI.

F. Floss motioned for \$150,000 for the Sheriff salary, which was seconded by D. Pietrowski. In favor: Chair Buonanno, A. Burgos, D. Pietrowski, F. Floss, G. Dickson, and G. Rabb; Opposed: B. Ransom, and M. Glasgow. **APPROVED 6-2. The Commission recommendation for the Sheriff's salary is \$150,000.**

A. Burgos motioned for \$130,000 for the Clerk salary, which was seconded by F. Floss. In favor: Chair Buonanno, A. Burgos, D. Pietrowski, F. Floss, G. Dickson, and G. Rabb; Opposed: B. Ransom, and M. Glasgow. **APPROVED 6-2. The Commission recommendation for the Clerk's salary is \$130,000.**

M. Cornell discussed why and how the county-wide elected officials' salaries are so different. M. Cornell then provided what the salaries will look like based upon the next election with keeping the COLAs. In 2028, the County Executive will earn \$175,000; the Comptroller will earn \$148,526; the Sheriff at \$159,135; and the Clerk at \$133,900.

Next, the Commission discussed the Legislators' salaries. F. Floss stated that based on his analysis, \$64,000 is the average salary of a full-time middle manager in Erie County. G. Rabb stated that a lot of the job is analyzing the budget, and that part is complicated. G. Dickson believes that these are part-time jobs with each Legislator having a full-time aide. B. Ransom believes that the Legislators want a raise, but they are afraid to give themselves a raise. D. Pietrowski stated that all of the majority caucus indicated they work full time hours, and they get full time benefits. A. Burgos suggested this position is similar to Buffalo's Common Council, and the pay should be commensurate. Chair Buonanno stated that she was swayed by A. Burgos and M. Glashow about the Legislators being underpaid, but she believes they will not vote for a 100% increase in their salary. A. Burgos discussed that Erie County Legislators meet weekly where Monroe County meets monthly, at night. G. Dickson does not believe this raise will attract anyone new.

Chair Buonanno discussed that the Erie County Legislature has the potential to be the power house of Upstate New York and can have influence and make more of a difference in Albany. Democrats have the super-majority and that'll not change any time soon. Erie County is more moderate and is the linchpin between New York City and mid-west. Erie County needs to be stronger force in regional government. Erie County Legislature is not holding its weight in the State. EC is a trendsetter. She also believes that Alex's number is right, but will not be voted for by the Legislature. \$64,354 is a living wage for a middle manager in local government in Erie County. Erie County needs a stable legislature with more experienced people

who understand they are the powerhouse upstate. In the budget, they're full time with a pension, benefits, and healthcare.

F. Floss motioned for \$64,000 for the Legislators' salaries, which was seconded by G. Rabb. In favor: F. Floss, G. Rabb, and Chair Buonanno; Opposed: G. Dickson, D. Pietrowski, B. Ransom, M. Glasgow, and A. Burgos. **FAILED 3-5**

A. Burgos then motioned for \$70,000; there was no second to the motion. **NO ACTION.**

D. Pietrowski then motioned for \$65,000 base salary for the Legislature, and G. Rabb seconded the motioned. In favor: Chair Buonanno, D. Pietrowski, F. Floss, G. Dickson, and G. Rabb; Opposed: A. Burgos, B. Ransom, and G. Dickson. **APPROVED 5-3. The Commission recommendation for the Legislature base salary is \$65,000.**

F. Floss motioned for a \$5,000 caucus leader stipend and a \$10,000 chair stipend, which was seconded by B. Ransom. All in favor; none opposed. **APPROVED Unanimously. The Commission recommendation is that caucus leader stipend will remain at \$5,000 and chair stipend will remain at \$10,000.**

G. Dickson motioned to eliminate the COLA, which was seconded by F. Floss. All in favor; none opposed. **APPROVED unanimously. The Commission recommendation is that annual COLAs end.**

Next, the question was posed about when the salaries go into effect. Per the Erie County Charter, raises can only go into effect at the beginning of a new term for each office. As such, it was confirmed that the Sheriff, Comptroller, and Legislators would receive their raises in 2026; Clerk in 2027; and County Executive in 2028 – pending approval at the Legislature.

F. Floss motioned to not adjust salaries based on the election cycle; the motion was seconded by G. Rabb. **All in favor; none opposed. The Commission recommendation is that the above recommendations are the final Commission recommendations for the next term of each office with no pro-rating for effective dates.**

There were no public comments.

A motion was made by A. Burgos to adjourn the meeting; motion was seconded by F. Floss. All in favor.

The next meeting will be held on March 12, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. (tentatively).