

Minutes of Meeting
Wage Study
July 31, 2019
2:00 p.m.

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chris Fillios, Commissioner Leslie Duncan, and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda item. Also present were Clerk Jim Brannon, Chief Deputy Clerk Jennifer Locke, Finance Director Dena Darrow, Staff Accountant – Budget Michelle Chiaramonte, Treasurer Steve Matheson, Chief Deputy Treasurer Laurie Thomas, Coroner Dr. Warren Keene, Chief Deputy Coroner Lynn Acebedo, Deputy Coroner JoAnn Porter, Assessor Rich Houser, Chief Deputy Assessor Joe Johns, Prosecutor Barry McHugh, Civil Deputy Prosecutor R. David Ferguson, Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud, HR Generalist – Benefits & Compensation Dorothy Cross, Undersheriff Dan Mattos, Sergeant Jeremy Hyle, Public Defender Anne Taylor, BOCC Communications Manager Nancy Jones, Senior Business Analyst Nanci Plouffe, and Deputy Clerk Ronnie Davisson. Also present were citizens Bob Norris, Rick Whitehead, John Parmann, and Joe Whipple.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business:**

Wage Study Update and Discussion (Action)

Chairman Fillios provided a brief overview of the previous months in which the Board and the other Elected Officials had discussed the Wage Study. He said they had decided to utilize the BDPA data set and had accepted the results. He then introduced HR Director Sylvia Proud and turned the meeting over to her.

Accounting Manager Grace Blomgren, Payroll Technician Kathy Von Kienast and HR Generalist – Employee Relations Kimberley Buffin entered the meeting at 2:06 p.m.

Ms. Proud said that it was a team approach to making the study happen quickly and pointed out that it had begun in April 2019. Then in June 2019, there were several different scenarios presented to the Elected Officials, who had selected the scenario in which potential full implementation in FY20 was included. She further explained that in July there were meetings held with each of the Elected Officials to share the changes of pay grades to employees within their departments. At the conclusion of the discussions with the Elected Officials, it had been requested to reevaluate 20 of the positions in the County. Ms. Proud addressed concerns over job descriptions and said that 48% had been reclassified and updated over the prior years, which, along with Elected Officials feedback, helped HR to place those positions within the correct pay grades. Ultimately, Ms. Proud said that she and the HR team felt as though they had presented a very comprehensive plan and asked the Board to consider the results for FY20 implementation.

Chairman Fillios said that Assessor Rich Houser had made poignant comments about Chief Deputies and their pay, and invited him to speak to his concerns. Mr. Houser said that in 2003, they had received a legal opinion regarding the difference between departments underneath the Board and the other Elected Officials. He said that it was stated that it was important to distinguish the difference between an officer and an employee and that the positions under the Board still had to report to the Board for major decisions regarding personnel and budget. Mr. Houser said that if the Board had relinquished those rights to their Department Heads, it would mean the Board was not following statute and he felt that he should bring it to their attention in order to stay in line with Idaho Codes §31-8818 and §31-2003. He asked that the Board keep those statutes in mind because Chief Deputies had the same authority as the Elected Officials, especially related to personnel and budget duties, whereas a Director or Department Head did not have that same authority. Mr. Houser then pointed out that most of the Department Heads under the Board had been increased two to three grades above the Chief Deputies.

Commissioner Leslie Duncan asked Mr. Houser if he agreed with the grading of the Chief Deputies since they had been moved. Mr. Houser said that if the market indicated they fell within that specific pay grade, then yes, he agreed; however, he wanted the Board to be aware of the statutes.

Treasurer Steve Matheson said that he did not agree with the Chief Deputies classifications because he felt as though the top three categories should be combined into one large category. He also said that he was having a difficult time ensuring there was parity between the attorneys and the general pay plan, as there was no relative information comparing an AT5 to the General Pay Plan. Ms. Proud said that that comparison could be done and it would be based on the salary data received. Mr. Matheson requested to see the comparison and said that as the County Treasurer, he believed that parity would be an issue if they were to move forward with the current structure. Further, he would be willing to adopt the wage study if the top three classifications were put into one large category.

Mr. Matheson agreed with Mr. Houser, in that Chief Deputies had the same authority as Elected Officials and that Chief Deputies serve as proxies to the Elected Officials. Further, if that were true, then there were many employees with pay grades higher than Elected Officials and Chief Deputies, with which he did not agree. Ms. Proud said that those factors were included, but the market was driving the values of those positions.

Clerk Jim Brannon said that the Elected Officials had agreed to accept the BDPA survey and pointed out that bits and pieces had been changed, so there was not really an acceptance of the survey. He also pointed out that there were job descriptions that had been inflated after the Position Review Committee had been disbanded, people were writing their own job descriptions, and said that job descriptions should have been the first step in the process. He also said that having only three data points was dangerous and could cause an adverse effect on the positions, which would not be fair.

Ms. Proud addressed Clerk Brannon's comments and said that the job description aspect was a work in progress. She also explained that BDPA had used survey average, which was

the data set they used. She acknowledged that she would like to tackle the job descriptions in FY20.

Commissioner Duncan said that she did not think some of the groups used in the study were appropriate because some of the agencies used had higher costs of living and other aspects that were lacking in Kootenai County. She also said that she wanted to visit the Chief Deputy/Director positions and that she wished it would have been a two-year implementation. She then asked Commissioner Brooks and Chairman Fillios what their plan would be with the Directors and if they were going to take them to market at some point in the future.

Ms. Proud spoke in response, stating that in the next Fiscal Year she would ask to work closely with the Board in getting everyone to market rate and to work on a salary progression. She then said that the salaries needed to be at market first before any merit increases were given. Ms. Proud said that it was a work in progress and building a compensation plan was an ongoing project.

Commissioner Duncan said that moving forward in FY21, the Board would be eliminating promotions and midyear increases being presented to the Board and that they should be built into each department's budget. She said she was uncomfortable adopting the wage study now, but liked the progress that had been made thus far and said she was in favor of increases, whether COLA or merit, for FY20.

Chairman Fillios said that prior boards did not tackle the wage issues the way it should have been, explaining that there were multiple wage studies performed, but little to no action had been taken. He said the majority of the Board had opted to make it a priority and they were trying to fix the concerns. He said that he would make a motion to accept the wage study, which would be \$1,691,628.40 with a \$20,000 buffer for any issues that may arise.

Chairman Fillios moved to accept the HR recommended wage increases for the position grade and salary schedules for the General and Attorneys Pay Plan and Sworn Officers Matrix spreadsheets dated July 31, 2019. Additionally, Elected Officials are to receive a 3% wage increase. All increases are effective Pay Period 1 for FY2020 and these are loaded amounts. And again, this is not to exceed for FY20 a figure of \$1.711 million. Commissioner Bill Brooks seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Deputy Clerk Davisson called the roll:

Commissioner Brooks: Aye

Commissioner Duncan: Nay

Chairman Fillios: Aye

The motion carried.

- D. Public Comment (Discussion):** This section is reserved for citizens wishing to address the Board regarding a County related issue. Idaho Law prohibits Board action on items brought under this section except in an emergency circumstance. Comments related to future public hearings should be held for that public hearing. There were no public comments.

E. Adjournment: Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____
Ronnie Davisson, Deputy Clerk
