

ULSTER COUNTY
PERIODIC COMPENSATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

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Richard Gerentine, Chair
Leon "Butch" Dener
Sarah Fassett
Anthony Marmo
Kathleen Mihm



Periodic Compensation Review Committee

Minutes for May 22, 2024 Meeting

Held at 12:00pm: Legislative Chambers, County Office Building, 244 Fair Street, Kingston, NY

Committee Members:

Richard Gerentine, Chair

Leon "Butch" Dener

Sarah Fassett

Anthony Marmo

Kathleen Mihm

Other participants:

Vanessa Shea - Confidential Secretary, Office of the County Executive

Chair Gerentine asked for a motion to call the meeting to order. Ms. Mihm motioned and Mr. Dener seconded the motion. With all in favor, the meeting was called to order at 12:12pm

Chair Gerentine asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the 5/15/24 meeting. Mr. Marmo motioned and Ms. Fassett seconded the motion. With all in favor, the minutes were approved.

Chair Gerentine reported that he received messages from Legislators in response to the request for comments/recommendations. He read the responses.

Chair Gerentine referenced the memo submitted by Comptroller Gallagher re: Elected Officials Benefits Review

Mr. Marmo noted that he researched the population sizes of the surrounding counties as he believes that the population should be taken into account when considering salaries. He pointed out that he added the populations to the chart and shared the document with members. He stated

that he believes the committee should consider like-sized counties when considering their recommendations.

Chair Gerentine noted that the operating budgets of the counties will vary with population size. He asked Ms. Shea to share the Operating Budgets of the surrounding counties. He also noted that the job titles in different counties may have differing responsibilities. Discussion ensued.

Chair Gerentine asked the committee if they would rather salary increases to be lump sum or a percentage. Chair Gerentine recommended a lump sum as has been done in the past. Ms. Mihm noted that thinking about the percentage is important, especially when it comes to cost of living. Discussion ensued regarding the implications of a percentage increase and the benefit of a lump sum. All committee members agreed with a lump sum increase.

Mr. Dener stated that he believes legislators' salaries should stay the same based on the work they are doing and noting that his "sympathies are with the common tax payer." He noted that he would consider otherwise given the research and recommendations of other committee members. Chair Gerentine responded from his point of view as a past legislator. Mr. Marmo stated that this is not a performance review and that salaries should be competitive in order to attract candidates. He noted that he would like to be as objective as possible. Ms. Fassett agreed with Mr. Marmo that the numbers should be attractive. Chair Gerentine responded that unless the salaries are much higher, it will not be the reason someone runs for these positions or not.

Discussion ensued regarding the position and the work of legislators.

Chair Gerentine asked members to consider legislators salaries and make recommendations. Ms. Mihm referenced the \$2,000 increase from the last PCRC recommendation report and suggested the same increase of \$2,000. Discussion ensued if this would be a one time raise (for the 2-year period) or if it would be a \$2,000 raise per year for two years. Chair Gerentine noted that the Legislature has the ability to approve/deny/amend the recommendations of the committee.

All committee members are in support of a \$2,000 increase in legislator salaries for the next two years (\$16,000 → \$18,000).

Chair Gerentine noted that the Majority and Minority leaders had an increase of \$2,000 from the last PCRC recommendation. He asked if the committee approved of the same for this session. All were in favor (\$18,000 → \$20,000).

Chair Gerentine discussed the Legislative Chair salary of \$26,000 and asked if members support a \$2,000 increase. Kathy recommended that a \$2,500 increase be considered for the Chair based

on past precedent and the work involved in the position. Discussion ensued. All members were in agreement of a \$2,500 increase (\$28,500).

Chair Gerentine noted that the last PCRC recommendation was fixing a lag in salary increases for Comptroller/Sheriff/Clerk, and noted that they will not recommend as large of increases this session.

Chair Mihm asked about what a 3% increase would be in order to take cost of living into account. Chair responded that it would be approximately \$3,500.

Mr. Marmo asked if all three positions (Comptroller/Sheriff/Clerk) are considered together. Ms. Mihm responded, yes, the three positions would all need to have the same increase.

Chair Gerentine recommended that the Comptroller/Sheriff/Clerk, which are currently at \$116,709 be increased to \$120,000 - which is slightly less than 3%. All members are in agreement.

Chair Gerentine suggested a similar increase of approximately 3% for the County Executive which would bring the salary to \$153,000. Discussion ensued. All members are in agreement.

Chair Gerentine reviewed the recommendations to this point (for fiscal year 2025 and 2026):

- Legislators: \$18,000
- Minority/Majority Leader of the Legislature: \$20,000
- Chair of the Legislature: \$28,500
- Comptroller/Sheriff/Clerk: \$120,000
- County Executive: \$153,000

Chair Gerentine noted that he believes he will be getting correspondence from the Sheriff in regards to recommendations. Ms. Mihm confirmed that these numbers are not finalized; the Chair agreed.

Mr. Marmo asked about the timeline. Ms. Shea noted that the final report is due June 30th, and that before the due date, the committee needs to write their recommendations in a draft form which is attached to the Public Meeting Notice for the meeting that will be held on 6/18/24. Once comments are heard from the public at that meeting, the committee will have until 6/30/24 to update/adjust accordingly before submission.

Discussion ensued regarding the timeline and scheduling of the next meeting.

Mr. Marmo noted again that these recommendations should be based on data of comparable counties. Discussion ensued. Mr. Marmo discussed the “leadership crisis” locally and nationally.

Ms. Mihm suggested that the full-time positions be given an increase in salary each of the two years (eg: \$3,000 first year and an additional \$3,000 the second year).

Mr. Marmo discussed wages in our current marketplace and how they have increased substantially. He noted that elected official salaries should be considered in the same way as other salaries. He stated that he would like a week to think about the recommendations.

Discussion ensued regarding the scheduling of the next meeting and the timeline for the draft recommendation and Public Hearing.

A meeting date of Monday, June 3 was chosen. Ms. Shea will follow up with the committee with confirmation.

Mr. Marmo made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Fassett seconded the motion. With all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 12:58 pm.