

Clayton County Compensation Board  
Meeting Minutes  
1/4/2021

The Clayton County Compensation Board met Monday, January 4th at 6:00pm at the Clayton County Office Building in Elkader. Those present were members Joe Minor, Sue Henning, Krista Fischer, Kate Young, Gary Bowden, Richard Owings, and Annette Reimer. Clayton County elected officials present were Sherriff Mike Tschirgi, Treasurer Linda Zuercher, Recorder Sue Meyer, Auditor Jennifer Garms, Supervisors Ray Peterson and Steve Doeppke.

Auditor Jennifer Garms called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. She asked members of the Compensation Board to elect a chairman. Kate Young made a motion to nominate Gary Bowden, Richard Owings seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Gary Bowden directed the meeting and asked for a volunteer to be Vice Chairman/Secretary. Richard Owings made a motion for Krista Fischer, Kate Young seconded. All were in favor.

Previous meeting minutes had been read prior to the meeting and were amended due to a small minor change found by Gary Bowden. Richard Owings motioned, seconded by Annette Reimer. All were in favor.

Chairman Gary Bowden turned the floor over to the elected officials and asked for their presentations. Supervisor Ray Peterson reported that unions for the county roads department and sheriff's office may be receiving a 2.5% raise that is locked in for the next 3 years. Auditor Jennifer Garms gave a brief explanation of all handouts showing statistical pay information from all counties in Iowa. She reported that the county has \$290,000 of new money for 2021. County budget will increase \$36,210,755 in value for an overall taxable valuation of \$1,119,889,182. Gary Bowen inquired on TIF money and Jennifer Garms reported that those funds remain stable for 2021. Garms, Zuercher, and Meyer would like the recommendation to be at least the same as recommended last year for courthouse staff as they remain lower paid than surrounding counties. Sheriff Mike Tschirgi said that his pay is far below other counties and needs to be increased to be attractive to the next person that wants to run for Sherriff. His position pays less than the deputies he manages after overtime. There are younger deputies that are considering to run for sheriff and would like the position to have higher pay. They are willing to negotiate with the union to take lower pay raise allowing the difference to be paid to the sheriff position. Clayton County Attorney Zach Hermann was not present, however, sent a handout stating his position is paid well below neighboring counties that are smaller in size. His position and Assistant County Attorney are considered "part-time" but it leaves little time for other private legal work. His office of two is doing the work of three people compared to neighboring counties saving the County \$100,000 in not paying for an additional employee. He would like to see a much larger increase than 2.15% last year which was below the 3% raise Supervisors received.

Before moving on to making recommendations for pay increases for elected officials, chairperson Gary Bowden said due to stressed economic times that a tax increase should be avoided. All agreed that Clayton County is challenged in being larger than most Iowa counties with more roads to maintain, more parcels of land, and a lower population rate. This results in less money that is generated from taxes in order to pay officials a competitive, comparable rate as neighboring counties. Upcoming retirement for several employees and a few elected officials is projected in the next 2-3 years. This makes it important to have competitive wages to attract talented knowledgeable people to these positions in the future.

Board members moved on making recommendations for County Attorney pay raise. All agreed that a healthy pay raise is needed in order to keep our County Attorney. Joe Minor made motion for a wage adjustment of \$5,618 to increase salary to \$80,000 with additional percentage approved by Supervisors calculated on that wage. Richard Owings seconded the motion. All were in favor.

For Sheriff, motion was made by Kate Young for a 7% increase dependent on union negotiations with deputies to take a lower pay raise of 2% and if the contract is not agreed upon, then the Sheriff would have a 3% recommendation. Annette Reimer seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Sue Henning motioned for a wage adjustment of \$161 for Clayton County Auditor, Treasurer, and Recorder. This would bring salary to \$60,000 and any percentage increase would be based on that amount. Kate Young seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Annette Reimer made a motion for a 3% increase recommendation to County Attorney, Auditor, Treasurer, and Recorder. Seconded by Richard Owings. All were in favor.

Supervisors had been omitted from the discussion and a formal vote was taken via email on January 7, 2021. A motion was made by Krista Fischer for a 3% increase recommendation for Supervisors and a \$1,000 stipend for Supervisor Chairperson. Joe Minor seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Gary Bowden thanked everyone for taking the time to attend and for preparing facts and figures to make recommendations. Richard Owings motioned to adjourn the meeting, Kate Young seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Krista Fischer, Vice Chairperson/Secretary