



**MINUTES of the Snohomish County Citizens'
Commission on Salaries of Elected Officials
March 14, 2012**

The March 14 meeting of the Citizens' Commission on Salaries of Elected Officials was called to order at 6:00pm in the 6th Floor Executive Conference Room of the County's West Administration Building, 3000 Rockefeller Avenue, Everett.

Commission Members Present

LaVerne Gemar, Chair
Harry Heathman
John Beal
Richard Harbert
Dat Nguyen
Jason Redrup

Staff Members Present

Brian Parry, Executive Office
Marcia Isenberg, Council Chief of Staff
Gordon Sivley, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney
Tina Larsen, Human Resources Analyst

The meeting was called to order by Brian Parry at 6:00 PM.

The Commissioners made introductions. Mr. Parry opened discussion to the Commission for selection of a chairperson.

Commissioner Heathman moved that Commissioner Gemar, who served on the Commission in 2010, be selected as the Chair. Commissioner Redrup seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Parry provided an overview of the Commission's duties and reviewed salary history information contained in the Commissioner notebooks. Mr. Parry asked the Commissioners to help identify additional information they would need in order to conduct their work.

Commissioner Beal asked for further clarification as to why the salaries of the Prosecuting Attorney began being tied to that of Washington State Superior Court Judges in 2001. Commissioner Nguyen suggested that a description of the responsibilities of the two positions would be helpful.

Commissioner Gemar suggested the Commission adopt a rule as had been done in 2010 to provide that a majority of a quorum of the Commission would be sufficient to conduct business to ensure the Commission could do its work in the event of absent Commissioners. For the sake of this rule, a quorum was defined as five Commissioners. Discussion followed.



Commissioner Harbert made a motion that a majority of a quorum (5 members) be sufficient for the Commission to conduct its business. Commissioner Redrup seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion continued regarding information that would assist the Commission in its duties. Commissioner Harbert requested whether staff could provide additional comparables with other governments such as size of departments and budgets. Commissioner Redrup asked for more information to be provided related to other employee's wages and benefits as compared to those of the elected officials, budget trends by department and an overview of the budget outlook for Snohomish County. Commissioner Nguyen requested information about any benefits that may be provided to elected officials that are not provided to other employees. Specific questions were asked about the budget information provided in Commissioners' notebooks. Mr. Parry said that he would ask the Finance Department to provide a budget overview at the next meeting as well as gather the requested personnel information.

Commissioner Beal opened a discussion about the overall philosophy of the Commissioners and how the Commission should approach its duties. Commissioner Heathman said that he was influenced by the impact of the recession on local residents and the economy. He noted that he had been open to decreasing elected officials' salaries when he served on the Commission in 2010. Commissioner Harbert said the Commission must be focused on openness and stressed that he would like more information before narrowing the range of options. He said he felt it was important to compare the economy of Snohomish County to other areas to help judge the effectiveness of local elected officials.

Commissioner Redrup said that he too was sensitive to the perception of the Commission's work in the community. He said that he was especially interested in looking at how the Commission's decisions would compare to what was happening with other county employees, the budget, taxes and other factors.

Discussion continued about the state of the economy and its influence on the work of the Commission. Commissioner Harbert suggested the Commission should be cautious about basing their work on the overall economy and instead look more locally at Snohomish County. He said that Snohomish County's economy has performed better than other areas of the country.

Chair Gemar said that it's important for the Commission to think more generally about the qualifications of each elected position and attracting the most qualified candidates rather than focusing on the specific performance of those currently in elected positions in Snohomish County.

Brief discussion continued. Chair Gemar noted it was getting close to 8:00 and suggested the Commission adjourn until its next scheduled meeting on March 28. Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.