

MINUTES
Elected Officials Salary Review Committee
Tuesday November 17, 2009 - 2:00 p.m.
County-City Building, Room 113

Committee Members Present: Gerry Dimon, Jim Gordon, Pat Kahm, and Joe Edwards

Committee Members Absent: Doug McDaniel, Sam Seever and Steve Eicher

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer; Minette Genuchi, Administrative Aide - Lancaster County Board; Don Thomas, Lancaster County Engineer, R. J. Nuernberger, Lancaster County Treasurer and Sue Kirkland, Clerk of the District Court

The meeting was called to order by Gordon at 3:10 p.m.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, November 10, 2009.

Dimon moved approval of the Meeting minutes of Tuesday, November 10, 2009, seconded by Kahm, Edwards abstained. Motion passed 3 - 0.

2. Don Thomas, Lancaster County Engineer:

Gordon inquired what, if anything, had changed in the past four years in the Engineer's office. Thomas referred to the second page of the summary of duties and responsibilities for his department that was distributed prior to the meeting (**Exhibit A**). There are three specific changes:

- 1) The City and County Engineers are the appointed representatives on the design and right-of-way acquisition for the East Beltway.
- 2) The City and County Engineers are representatives on the design team with the Department of Roads to address design changes to the South Beltway.
- 3) The implementation of the Rural to Urban Transition of Streets (RUTS) program and the construction of two road projects on East 98th Street and on Alvo Road near N. 14th Street.

Dimon asked what the County Engineer's major challenge was. Thomas indicated money has always been a challenge, however, their program has grown immensely over the past years. In the past the departments main responsibility was grading roads, now they are involved in beltways, RUTS, paving of roads and serving as County representatives on various committees.

Gordan commented on Thomas's suggested salary range between \$107,000 and \$112,000. These numbers fell within the middle of the salary range in the comparability study for the engineer's department presented at the November 10, 2009 meeting.

3. R. J. Nuernberger Lancaster County Treasurer:

Nuernberger indicated there had not been any changes in the past four years in the Treasurer Department. Kahm inquired if there were any technology changes that had impacted the department. Nuernberger responded they are currently working with a new accounting program. The Treasurer's Department is responsible for collection of all real estate and personal property taxes and investing the monies until the funds are needed for the subdivisions. The payments are tracked and statements sent. The Motor Vehicle Department is part of the Treasurer department which issues titles, registrations and license plates for boats and motor vehicles in the county. The responsibilities in the driver's license department has lessened to the issuance of duplicate licence requests. The State of Nebraska has taken over the responsibilities of the photo's and collecting the fees. Gordon inquired about the size of budget and personnel for the department. Nuernberger responded personnel has stayed steady and due to technology, they have the ability to keep up with increased workload. Kahm inquired if the change in the drivers license responsibility impacted the employees workload. Nuernberger responded they are doing less in this area. Dimon asked if there had been any impact due to the economy. Nuernberger stated there had not. Gordon asked Nuernberger what recommendation he would make to the committee regarding any adjustment in the salary for his position. His response was a cost of living increase.

4. Sue Kirkland - Clerk of the District Court:

Kirkland distributed a summary of responsibilities and duties. The first paragraph portrayed the number of cases filed, how much money goes through the office, and basic details of job duties for clarification. The Clerk of the District Court keeps all the records for items on the district court level, the grand jury, mental health board files and judicial bypass. Kirkland referenced the items that are new since 2006. The Lancaster County Office of the Clerk of the District Court was the first District Court to roll out electronic filing as designed by the State of Nebraska. They continue to be on the forefront of electronic technology. They were the first in the state to have a Pro Se Self-Help Desk on site. The Nebraska State Bar Association and the Legal Aide of Nebraska oversee the Pro Se Self-Help Desk which is staffed by volunteer attorneys. Kahm asked the value of the Self-Help Desk. Kirkland referred to Gordon who responded the Self-Help Desk was absolutely imperative. The individuals using the Self-Help Desk can not afford an attorney or do not qualify for legal aide representation and are desiring to move forward without an attorney pro se. The problem is the judge can not give them legal advise. The Pro Se Help-Desk works with the individuals and walks them through the process, advises them and makes sure they have the correct forms. Kirkland added the Help-Desk has a direct, positive, impact on the office of the District Court. The office is made up of lay people who are unable to give legal advise, however they are able to steer the individuals to the Pro Se Help-Desk.

Kirkland is especially proud that the department is very proactive in controlling budgets. Every budget year starting seven years ago, except for mandated cost of living and step increases, spending has been reduced. Also, overtime and the hiring

of temporary employees has dropped 99%. Gordon inquired whether there would be an impact with other offices going paperless. Kirkland responded yes they are slowly seeing this, instant copies back and forth with the State of Nebraska, and it is much more efficient. Gordon inquired if Kirkland had any thoughts on adjustments that could be made to the salary for this position. Kirkland responded that four years ago the position was brought up to a fair level. She stated she would not be human to not respond she is saving the county money every year and would love a raise. However, she would like the salary to stay competitive so it will draw a good administrator. Gordon asked if anyone in her department made a larger salary then she. Kirkland responded that no, and at her direction, the Chief Deputy is paid 90% of her salary. Kahm inquired if Kirkland saw any changes or challenges in the foreseeable future. Kirkland stated they continue to struggle with perfecting of the e-file, which touches everything and requires lots of out-reach to other departments. For now they are going forward with the e-files and imagining. Not all Clerks of the District Court in Nebraska are doing imagining.

General discussion took place regarding the formulation of questions for the committee to address at the next meeting. It was suggested each committee member format their questions and to contact Eagan if they would like the questions distributed to the other committee members prior to the next meeting.

Eagan reported the major factors used for the 2005 report were comparability, cost of living, salary compression with the sheriff. Another factor this year will be the economy which the committee might want to put with the list of considerations. Also, the committee could make a general statement stating the positions are generally the same as four years ago with some minor changes.

Eagan indicated he would start writing the report. However, the important part will be the factors the committee uses to make their recommendations.

Kahm requested a spreadsheet covering the past 12 years of what the elected officials salaries have been. She also requested a comparability report from around the nation for elected officials.

Next meeting scheduled for Monday, December 7, 2009, 2:00 p.m. in Room 106, City-County Building.

Motion to adjourn was made by Dimon and second by Kahm, motion passed 4-0.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 4:05 p.m.

Submitted by,

Minette M. Genuchi
Administrative Aide - Lancaster County Board