

**Glacier County Commissioners
Tuesday, November 2, 2021
Regular Meeting (GoToMtg)
Cut Bank, MT**

The Glacier County Board of Commissioners met at a regular scheduled meeting at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, November 2, 2021. Commissioners Mary Jo Bremner, Michael J. DesRosier, and John B. Overcast were present with Austin Parrent taking minutes.

Present at the meeting: Carol Larson, Public; Ken Hoyt, Public; Elaine Mitchell, Public; Linda Luther, Public; Jeri Johnson Elliott, Public; LeAnne Kavanagh, Press; Laurie Elhard, Public; Marlene Luedtke, Public; Twila Pyette, Clerk of District Court

Present via GoToMeeting: (3) Callers; Austin; Gloria; Linda Burley; TM

A. Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m.

B. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Overcast motions to approve the agenda with no changes; Commissioner Bremner seconds the motion; motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

C. Discussion/Approval: September 2021 Cash Report – Glacier County Commissioners

Commissioner DesRosier motions to approve the September 2021 Cash Report; Commissioner Overcast seconds the motion; motion carried.

D. Discussion/Approval: FY2021-2022 PHEP Amendment 4 – Jenny Krapf, Glacier County Health Director

This item was tabled to the meeting held on Thursday, November 10, 2021.

E. Discussion/Approval: Rescind Compensation Board Meeting Approval from 10/28/2021 Commissioner Meeting – Mary Jo Bremner, Glacier County Commission Chair

Commissioner DesRosier motions to rescind the prior motion from the October 28, 2021 commissioner meeting where compensation board members Dean Oscar, Kenny Hoyt & Jeri Johnson Elliott were appointed for one additional year; Commissioner Overcast seconds the motion; motion carried.

F. Discussion/Approval: Reappoint (3) Compensation Board Resident Taxpayer Members (District 1, 2 & 3) – Glacier County Commissioners

Commissioner DesRosier motions to reappoint the compensation board resident taxpayer members: District 1 – Jeri Johnson Elliott, District 2 – Kenneth Hoyt, and District 3 – Dean Oscar until March 2022; Commissioner Overcast seconds the motion; motion carried.

*Commissioner Overcast motions to recess for a 30-minute break at 9:12 a.m. until the compensation board can meet; Commissioner DesRosier seconds the motion; motion carried.

**Commissioner Overcast motions to bring the meeting back in session at 9:41 a.m.; Commissioner DesRosier seconds the motion; motion carried.

G. Discussion/Approval: Compensation Board Meeting Agenda

1. Reappoint Compensation Board Resident Members till March 2022

See Item F. above for reappointment of compensation board members.

There was discussion on Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) percentages and the need for packets of information to help decide what the COLA percentage will be. A question is asked on where the COLA percentage sited in the example resolutions provided comes from. Montana Code Annotated (MCA) section 7-4-2503 allows for incremental increases in salary based on the previous year's consumer price index as calculated by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. The compensation board discusses doing more in March 2022 when more information is ready and available.

Glacier County Attorney Terryl Matt states that she was looking at Broadwater County's wages and Glacier County's wages seemed low in comparison. She would like to compare Glacier County's wages to other counties within Montana and add that to the information received when the compensation board reconvenes in March 2022.

Compensation Board Member Jeri Johnson Elliott asks why the Sheriff's salary is less than it has been in previous years. Clerk & Recorder Mandi Bird Kennerly responds that the new amount is the Sheriff/Coroner's actual base salary which is based off the Clerk & Recorder's salary. There is additional discussion around the Sheriff and his deputies' longevity pay being affected due to the Sheriff's salary not increasing. Commissioner Bremner clarifies that they took care of it last month due to the release of new legislation which includes the Sheriff and his deputies' longevity pay. Commissioner DesRosier states that even if Glacier County did not receive a COLA, they would still receive their longevity pay.

2. Affirm FY 2020, FY 2021 no wage increase to Elected Officials

Compensation Board Member Jeri Johnson Elliott motions to affirm the FY 2020, FY 2021 no wage increase to Elected Officials. Compensation Board Member Dean Oscar seconds the motion.

3. Approve/Affirm/Discuss ARPA Premium Pay for Elected Officials

There was a discussion around the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Premium Pay Payment in the amount of \$1,500.00 that was paid to all elected officials and Glacier County Employees. Compensation Board Member Jeri Johnson Elliott states that she received concerns from residents surrounding the payment, however, due to the ARPA funds being federal rather than state, it's outside the compensation board's purview. She also asks why the ARPA Premium Pay Payment was not \$2,000.00 instead of the \$1,500.00 which was issued. Commissioner Bremner states that the commissioners went with the maximum of \$1,500.00 out of the given the options of \$500.00, \$1,000.00 or \$1,500.00 by Glacier County Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Chancy Kittson.

Commissioner Bremner continues to say that the State of Montana said the ARPA Premium Pay Payment was alright as long as the proper taxes were taken out of the payment. All essential employees who worked during the COVID-19 shutdown were given the payment.

4. Wage of County Attorney

There was a lengthy discussion on the comparison of the Glacier County Attorney's current wage and how it compares to other counties within the state. The compensation board also discussed how the county attorney's wage is paid by Glacier County and the State of Montana in a 50/50 split. The 50% that the State of Montana pays for the county attorney's wage is currently being withheld with the rest of the funding that is being withheld by the State of Montana.

Glacier County Attorney Terryl Matt states that she has seen some of the Clerk & Recorders, Treasurers, and District Court Clerks salaries throughout the State of Montana whose salaries are a lot higher. She would like to know what those counties budgets are, how much money they receive, and gather more information around other counties financials to compare to. This will allow Glacier County to determine if it is feasible to increase the salaries here or not when the compensation board meets again in March 2022. Terryl also points out that the case load for Glacier County's District Court is much higher than in neighboring counties as well. There is additional discussion on case loads for the attorney's office.

5. Wage of Clerk and Recorder

Compensation Board Member Jeri Johnson Elliott asks Clerk & Recorder Mandi Bird Kennerly if she has a chief deputy. Clerk & Recorder Kennerly responds that she does not because all of her deputies have similar responsibilities and step up to fill in other roles within the Clerk & Recorder's office as needed. There is additional discussion between Jeri and other elected officials on the necessity of their chief deputies since it could save the county money to not have them. The elected officials involved in the conversation list the reasons why their departments need to have a chief deputy or not.

There was a lengthy discussion on the Justice of the Peace, who was not in attendance at this meeting, and whether or not she is able to accept full-time pay from Glacier County if her court is only open part of the time. During the discussion it was clarified that the Justice of the Peace is an elected official and her court is open full-time. The salary of the justice of the peace may not be less than the salary for the district clerk of the court in that county, per Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 3-10-207 (2). There was additional discussion on whether or not the court was considered to be open full-time and if that means the justice of the peace needed to be physically present for the full 40 hours from 8 to 5 pm. It was again clarified that elected officials' positions are salaried positions and as long as her office is open full-time, her salary cannot be reduced by MCA 3-10-207 (3) which states "If the justice's court is not open for business full time, the justice's salary must be commensurate to the workload and office hours of the court. The salary of a justice of the peace may not be reduced during the justice's term of office."

OTHER BUSINESS:

H. Public Comment

LeAnne Kavanagh, Press, asks about which fiscal year is being discussed in Item G. (2) “Affirm FY 2020, FY 2021 no wage increase to Elected Officials”. Clerk & Recorder Kennerly responds that the compensation board is discussing fiscal year 2021-2022, the previous two resolutions need to be affirmed to go on record as wage freezes for FY2020 and FY2021.

I. Next Meeting – Tuesday, November 9, 2021 – Browning

Commissioner DesRosier motions to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Overcast seconds the motion; meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.