



PUBLIC MEETING

December 2, 2021
MINUTES

The Lewis and Clark County Commissioners Public Meeting was held on Thursday, December 2, 2021, at 9:00 AM in Commission Chambers, Room 330.

Roll Call

Vice Chair Jim McCormick called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Commissioner Tom Rolfe was present. Commissioner Andy Hunthausen was out of the office. Others attending all or a portion of the meeting included Roger Baltz, Kari DesRosier, Nancy Everson, Charles Lane, Ann McCauley, and Nadine McCarty, Recording Secretary.

Pledge of Allegiance

Everyone recited the pledge.

Consent Action Items

There were no consent action items.

Compensation Board Recommendation. (Nancy Everson)

Nancy Everson, Chief Financial Officer, presented the recommendation approved by the Compensation Board for a mid-year cost of living adjustment of 3.5 percent for all employees effective the first payroll in January 2022. The West Region-Mountain CPI through October 2021 was 7 percent and is expected to go higher. The request is unusual as it is outside the budget process. The Compensation Board met and approved the increase for elected officials.

The County struggles to recruit and retain employees in all areas, but especially the detention center, which is 24 percent of the budgeted positions for the facility. Discussion occurred regarding the adoption of the West Region-Mountain CPI increase, the abrupt and steep increase.

Roger Baltz, Chief Administrative Officer, stated the request comes after review by leadership staff and taking a look at financial operations and budget condition. It will have positive impacts on retaining and recruiting employees. The benefits were weighted out in a long process before coming forward to the Commission.

The County has seen rapid changes in the economic conditions, since the beginning of the

pandemic. These include: an influx of people moving to the area inflating housing costs; scarce rental units, and those available are often higher than many employees can afford; a staffing shortage, with many organization and small businesses struggling to find adequate employees. Another area with high turnover is the deputy county attorneys. Across the board, there is a high number of resignations and recruitments occurring.

With the current staffing issues, the CPI of 7 percent through October and forecasted to be even higher by the end of December, staff recommends that a 3.5 percent increase to salaries be implemented at the start of the first payroll in January 2022. The increase will start to bring wages more in line with current economic conditions and send a message to the employees that they are valued and important to the success of the County. The projected cost of the increase is approximately \$550,000 for the six months ending June 30, 2022, paid for from current reserves as well as budgeted savings due to the continued lack of travel and training due to the COVID restrictions. The County is in a strong financial position due to careful planning to carry a high limit of reserves as well as the cost savings incurred as a result of the pandemic and able to easily manage the increased cost for the remainder of the fiscal year.

A similar discussion is anticipated to occur in February as the Commission considers the parameters that the FY23 preliminary budget will use.

No public comment was received.

A motion to Approve was made by Commissioner Rolfe and seconded by Commissioner McCormick. The motion Passed on a 2-0 vote.

Resolution 2021-104 Setting the Salaries for Certain Elected Officials. (Kari DesRosier)

Kari DesRosier, Human Resources Director, presented the resolution that would set the salaries for certain elected officials at the approval and recommendation of the Compensation Board for mid-year salary adjustments at 3.5 percent. She explained the percentages of pay based on the Sheriff's salary in some positions in the Sheriff's Office and noted they do not get an increase unless the Sheriff does.

Staff recommends approval of the resolution.

No public comment was received.

A motion to Approve was made by Commissioner Rolfe and seconded by Commissioner McCormick. The motion Passed on a 2-0 vote.

Request for Lewis and Clark County to Participate in the National Opioid Settlement and Designation of an Authorized Representative. (Ann McCauley)

Ann McCauley, Grants and Purchasing Director, presented the request to participate in the National Opioid Settlement and to designate herself as the authorized representative to receive the settlement participation agreements.

On July 21, 2021, the National Prescription Opiate Multidistrict Litigation (MDL) Plaintiffs' Executive Committee, several State Attorneys General, and four major defendants announced agreement on terms of proposed nationwide settlements to resolve all Opioids litigation brought by states and local political subdivisions against the three largest pharmaceutical distributors: McKesson, Cardinal Health, AmerisourceBergen, and manufacturer Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and its parent company Johnson & Johnson. If agreed and adopted, these settlements will provide substantial funds to states and subdivisions for abatement of the opioid epidemic across the country and will impose transformative changes in the way the settling defendants conduct business.

A letter from the Montana Attorney General's Office was received stating the state is a participant in the National Opioid Settlement and recommended local governments sign on to participating agreement so Montana could receive the maximum benefit.

Staff recommends approval of the request to participate in the National Opioid Settlement.

The deadline for states and local governments to sign the Participation Agreements for Distributor and Janssen Settlement Agreement is January 2, 2022. It is proposed that Ann McCauley, County Grants and Purchasing Director, be the authorized representative and the point of contact with the Montana Department of Justice, County legal staff, and other involved stakeholders throughout the settlement process.

No public comment was received.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rolfe to accept Lewis and Clark County's participation in the National Opioid Settlement and designate Ann McCauley as the authorized representative and point of contact. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCormick. The motion Passed on a 2-0 vote.

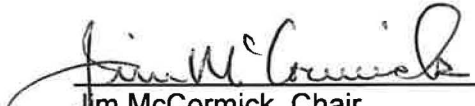
Public comment on any public matter within the jurisdiction of the Commission that is not on the agenda above.

Adjourn


There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:33 am.

Meeting minutes approved on 11.22.22

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Jim McCormick, Chair



Tom Rolfe, Vice Chair



Andy Hunthausen, Member

ATTEST:



Amy Reeves, Clerk of the Board