

June 26, 2023

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for employee salary review on June 26, 2023, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Letcher, Commissioner Hammons, and Lincoln County Administrative Assistant Jennifer Brown and Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown.

10:00 AM Lincoln County **Employee Salary Discussion**: Present were Forester Jennifer Nelson, Director of Finance Wendy Drake.

Commissioner Letcher called the meeting to order. Commissioner Hammons provided a breakdown of employee base salary increase %, Yearly Increase and Total Budget. Commissioner Teske reminded the board they'd agreed to review the starting pay scale for county clerks being a 7 rather than 6. Commissioner Hammons advised the Deputy County Attorney pay was also to be discussed. Commissioner Teske commented on the 6.9% insurance increase. Commissioner Hammons questioned the permissive levy covering the increase in insurance benefits. Wendy advised it will cover most but not all of the increase. Commissioner Letcher commented of no additional duties other than what the Assistant Deputy Attorney hired for. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to open the starting unoccupied Deputy County Attorney position at \$65k as opposed to the current \$55k and increase the occupied Deputy County Attorney position by the standard to be set in the next discussion. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.

Commissioner Letcher advised of need to determine any COLA increase to employee base salary. Commissioner Teske advised the starting wage for county clerks is grade 6 and the request is to have this changed to start at grade 7. Commissioner Letcher questioned who is currently in grade 7. Wendy advised the increase would put entry level clerks on the same scale as current administrative grade 7 personnel. Commissioner Teske commented that boosting the entry level creates a scenario where you have to increase additional grades. Wendy suggested increasing grade 6 with COLA. Commissioner Hammons questioned where COLA would put a grade 6 specifically. Commissioner Teske commented that the county insurance coverage is a big incentive. Wendy advised after 6 months a grade 6 is \$16.81 and a grade 7 is \$17.66. Commissioner Letcher calculated how 4% would affect grades 6 & 7. Commissioner Teske advised a 4% on up encroaches on grade 7 making it not a necessary move to change the grade structure based on everyone else getting bumped up as well and this would complicate things in an office structure. Commissioner Letcher advised Marsha's request included the 1st quarter real estate sales have slowed. Commissioner Teske commented that housing is an issue for entities throughout the county complicating filling positions.

Commissioner Teske commented that the elected officials pay are attached by MCA to Sheriff Deputies increase in pay thus making any decision to not take a raise would affect them directly as they are based on the Sheriff's salary. Commissioner Teske advised the June 20th County Compensation Board; Citizen's section of the board motioned to approve a 4.7% COLA increase and suggests starting the discussion there to be fair to the rest of the employees. Commissioner Teske stated one of the discussions last year was the Sheriff deputies got the same % as the rest of the employees plus the annual 1% statutory increase. Commissioner Teske advised a 4.7% increase was voted and agreed to and recommends starting the discussion there. Commissioner Hammons agreed while suggesting 5%. Commissioner Teske commented that the 1% employees get every 5 years the Sheriff office by statute gets every year. Commissioner Letcher advised a 4.7% means 5.7% to Sheriff Deputies. Commissioner Hammons advised 5% is still under the Sheriff Deputies. Commissioner Teske clarified the deputy pay does not have to be tied to the rest of the county employees. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to raise employee base rate by 5%. Second by Commissioner Teske. Commissioner Letcher asked for any further discussion. Commissioner Teske advised everyone needs to understand this includes a 6.9% insurance hike on top of the 5% and if this insurance increase continues employees may have to contribute dependent coverage. Motion carried.

Jennifer questioned longevity pay and the 5-year additional 1% is something set by County or State. Wendy advised this is set by County and effective on the employee anniversary. Jennifer stated the county should consider a shorter longevity time period and that it be tracked automatically. Commissioner Teske advised a refresher email may need to go out to remind Department Heads to request longevity for qualified employees.

10:52 a.m. **Adjourn**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Josh Letcher, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Corrina Brown, Clerk of the Board