

**FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
ELECTED OFFICIALS SALARY REVIEW COMMITTEE  
December 17, 2009**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- Pat Kahm, Professional Resource Management
- Joe Edwards, former Lancaster County Commissioner
- Gerry Dimon, (retired) former Vice President of Human Resources for Ameritas
- Jim Gordon, Esq., member of the Lancaster County Budget Monitoring Committee
- Steve Eicher, Pfizer Human Resource Department Director
- Sam Seever, General Counsel for MDS
- Doug McDaniel, BryanLGH Human Services Director

FACILITATOR: Kerry P. Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer

**INTRODUCTION**

Pursuant to NEB. REV. STAT. §23-1114 (Reissue 2007), the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners is required to set salaries for all County elected officials prior to January 15, 2010, a year in which a general election is held. Salaries shall be effective January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2014. The Elected Officials Salary Committee was established by the County Board to provide recommendations regarding appropriate salaries for County elected officials. The Committee is comprised of citizens with expertise in governmental, business, legal and personnel matters.

**PROCESS**

The Committee met a total of four (4) times. Each incumbent elected official was asked to submit to the Committee written information containing a summary of their duties, how their duties have changed during the last four (4) years, and what they believe is a fair salary for their position. Each elected official met with the Committee to discuss this information. The Committee also met with John Cripe, Classification and Compensation Manager for the Lincoln/Lancaster County Personnel Department, and Tim Genuchi, Accountant in the Lancaster County Clerk's Office.

The Committee also reviewed the following materials and reports in formulating its recommendations:

- a. 2011-2014 Minimum Salary Recommendations for County Officials, Nebraska Association of County Officials (October 2009);
- b. Final Report and Recommendations from the Elected Officials Salary Review Committee, dated December 19, 2005;

- c. Lancaster County Board Resolution No. 06-001, Setting Salaries for County Elected Officials for 2007-2010;
- d. Lancaster County Board Resolution No. 02-0052 Adopting Benefits for County Elected Officials;
- e. Nebraska Attorney General's Opinion Regarding Whether Health Insurance Premiums are Compensation for purposes of Art III, §9 of Nebraska Constitution
- f. Elected Official Salary and Benefit Survey, Lincoln/Lancaster County Personnel Department for 2009;
- g. Lancaster County Elected Official Salaries for 1999 through 2010;
- h. Budget and Employee Information for County Elected Officials;
- i. Lancaster County Director Salary Information for 2008-2009;
- j. Lancaster County Board Committee Assignments for 2009;
- k. Lancaster County Organizational Chart;
- l. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index (CPI)- All Urban consumers, Mid-West Region, 1999-2009;
- m. Correspondence from Lancaster County Sheriff Terry Wagner Regarding Salary Compression; and
- n. Correspondence from Richard L. Boucher, Candidate for Lancaster County Attorney.

After meeting with elected officials and reviewing the materials presented to the Committee, an extensive discussion was conducted to identify the most important factors and principles to be considered by the Committee in formulating its recommendations.

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

A number of issues were identified which should be addressed in setting salaries for Lancaster County elected officials, including comparability, change in job duties, and salary compression. However, the paramount concern expressed by every member of the Committee is the state of the economy. It was noted it is inappropriate to raise elected official salaries when real property values are falling, the unemployment rate is increasing, and the national economy is not expected to recover in the foreseeable future. In addition, several elected officials expressed their opinion that salaries should not be increased.

While recognizing the importance of comparability, the Committee was reluctant to recommend market adjustments at this time. With regard to existing salaries, for 2008 and 2009 elected officials received a 2.5% salary increase, which exceeded the actual increase in the CPI. A 2.5% increase is also projected for 2010, again exceeding the CPI. Since existing salaries have stayed ahead of the increase in the cost of living, it was the opinion of the Committee market adjustments could wait until the economy improves.

Another factor taken into consideration is whether there has been a change in duties. Since there were no significant changes during the last four years in the statutory duties performed by any of the elected positions, no salary adjustments are needed to compensate for the performance of additional work.

Finally, the Committee briefly discussed the issue of salary compression between the ranks in the Sheriff's Office, but again determined the this problem should not need to be addressed now because of the economy. It was also noted a compression adjustment was made to the Sheriff's salary four years ago.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing analysis, the Elected Officials Salary Committee hereby makes the following salary recommendations to the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners for the 2011 - 2014 term. For 2011, no salary increase should be given for any Lancaster County elected Official. For 2012, each elected official should receive a salary increase of between not less than 1% and not more than 2%, depending on the cost of living increase for mid-west urban consumers as set forth below. For 2013 and 2014, each elected official should receive an annual increase of the higher of 2% or the cost of living increase for mid-west urban consumers as set forth below.

### SALARIES

OFFICIAL	2011	2012	2013 - 2014
County Attorney	\$132,358	Between not less than 1% and not greater than 2%, depending on the increase in the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics CPI for all Urban Consumers Mid-West Region as published for November immediately preceding January 1, 2012	Annual increase - the higher of 2% OR the increase in the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics CPI for all Urban Consumers Mid-West Region as published for November immediately preceding each January 1 <sup>st</sup> , but with a maximum increase not to exceed 4%.
Public Defender	\$132,358		
Assessor/Reg of Deeds	\$110,908		
Engineer	\$104,747		
Sheriff	\$107,217		
County Treasurer	\$78,212		
County Clerk	\$74,602		
District Court Clerk	\$78,206		
Commissioners	\$37,301		