

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

TO: Milwaukee County Chairman Theo Lipscomb

FROM: Mike Blickhahn, Director Compensation and HRIS *MB.*

DATE: February 9, 2016

SUBJECT: **Request to establish annual salaries for Constitutional Officers to be elected in 2016 and to amend Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances pertaining to the compensation for Register of Deeds, Treasurer and County Clerk.**

Request

The Department of Human Resources is requesting that the Board adopt the attached resolution and ordinance amendment to Chapter 17.98 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances. The item seeks to adjust the compensation for the three County Constitutional Officers (Register of Deeds, Treasurer, and County Clerk) to be elected in 2016. Pursuant to state law, any change to the compensation for these elected positions must be established by Board resolution or ordinance prior to the date when nomination papers may be circulated. For these three positions, that date is April 15, 2016.

Summary

The Compensation Division reviewed the available information regarding the annual salaries for elected officials. As you may remember, over the past few years the County Board adjusted the salaries of the several elected officials including the Sheriff and Clerk of Circuit Court, based upon Human Resources' recommendations. However, for at least eight years, the County has not changed the salaries of the County Clerk, Treasurer or Register of Deeds positions. Currently, these three positions all are paid the same annual salary: \$83,775.95.

The Compensation Division has been reviewing the available information for these positions based on two different approaches:

1. State of Wisconsin data that is submitted every year from almost all counties.
2. List of comparable counties across the United States, as provided to us by the Audit Division. Requests were sent to 10 counties for the current leadership structure, responsibilities and corresponding salaries for these elected positions.

A summary of each data set is provided below:

1. In the State of Wisconsin, only one county, Dane, pays a higher annual salary for these positions than Milwaukee County currently provides. It is important to note that Dane may be an outlier, several other counties with urban areas pay less than Milwaukee County does for these positions, including Waukesha, Kenosha, and Racine. While the population and productivity volumes of Milwaukee County may be above the other counties in Wisconsin for these positions, it is not accepted compensation practice to use one data point, such as Dane County, to rationalize a significant pay increase.
2. The review of available information for comparable counties provided limited effective results. This is due to the fact that there is significant variation across the United States in the structure of county governments, there were several counties that don't have these elected positions, or have different responsibilities for these positions.

Recommendation

After having reviewed and considered all available information, the Compensation Division recommends providing these three elected positions a 5% increase. This 5% represents a 1% per year for the four-year term of these elected officials, plus an additional 1% increase in consideration of the fact that no increases occurred during the past several years. This increase is further supported by overall changes in the economy during the past 8 years. This would move the annual salary for these positions to \$87,964.75 for the duration of the next term of office.

Also, the need to approve this increase now is important, as the salary for these positions will be "frozen" during the upcoming four-year term.

The appropriate fiscal notes and resolution are attached to reflect this recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration.

CC: Chris Abele
Raisa Koltun
Kerry Mitchell
Steve Kreklow
Kelly Bablitch