

**Minutes of Meeting  
Elected Officials  
March 16, 2022  
9:00 a.m.**

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chris Fillios, Commissioner Leslie Duncan and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda items. Also present were Assessor Bela Kovacs, Clerk Jim Brannon, KCSO Sheriff Robert Norris, Treasurer Steve Matheson, Chief Deputy Treasurer Jill Smith, Chief Deputy Clerk Jennifer Locke, Finance Director Dena Darrow, Staff Accountant – Budget Brandi Falcon, KCSO Undersheriff Dan Mattos, KCSO Captain Brett Nelson, KCSO Lieutenant William Klinkefus, KCSO Detention Deputies Nick Kerfoot, Patrick Silbernagel and Evan Smit, Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud, HR Generalist – Employee Relations Kimberley Van Slate, BOCC Communications Coordinator Jonathan Gillham and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were Kootenai County Residents Jeffrey Perkins, Bruce Mattare and David Denton.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business:**

**Communicating and Reporting Regarding Elected Officials – Jim Brannon/Bob Norris  
(Discussion)**

Prosecutor Barry McHugh entered the meeting at 9:01 a.m.

Clerk Jim Brannon called attention to the fact that the other Elected Officials did not work for the Board of County Commissioners; they were answerable to the citizens of Kootenai County. Since this was the case, he suggested that the BOCC consult with individual Elected Officials before they request data or other information from a particular department.

Human Resources (HR) Generalist – Benefits & Compensation Dorothy Cross entered the meeting at 9:02 a.m.

Clerk Brannon supported his point using the recent example of a BOCC staff member requesting information directly from the Payroll Department without consulting him. He stated that this resulted in release of information to the Coeur d’Alene Press which was not fully accurate and said that, had he been contacted, the correct information would have been received. He criticized their lack of using proper channels and said the news release could create a negative impression of employment at the County.

Clerk Brannon pointed out that the specific case he referenced related to KCSO Patrol Deputies being sent to fill open shifts at the Jail and the impact on overtime figures. He stated that his Payroll staff had specifically warned the BOCC employee that they were “not overly confident in this Patrol Deputies OT bill to the Jail.” He said he discussed the article in the newspaper with the Sheriff. Looking into the matter, he said they found

that, although a number of Deputies had served shifts at the Jail, no specific coding existed in the Payroll system to track the specific data that had been demanded. He said that, had the request not been presented as a rush item and had it gone through proper channels, the error would not have occurred.

KCSO Sheriff Robert Norris asked Clerk Brannon whether he was able to freely send staff from the Recorder's Office, for example, to Elections, should a need arise.

Clerk Brannon said he could.

Sheriff Norris asked Clerk Brannon to confirm that he was able to interchange employees between departments in order to reduce overtime costs which were ultimately paid by taxpayers.

Clerk Brannon said this was correct. He remarked that Sheriff Norris had successfully done this at the Jail and at 911, saving the taxpayers about \$20,000.

Clerk Brannon explained how the calculations of turnover reported for the County also delivered misleading impressions. He said that temporary employees and retirements were not factored into them appropriately. He pointed out that the figures were not checked by anyone before being released and remarked that he had brought this problem up about three years ago.

Chairman Fillios replied that the report was not disguising anything. He stated that it showed that the BOCC turnover rates were the highest in the County.

Clerk Brannon said that the report actually showed the Assessor's Office as having the highest turnover, with the BOCC second.

Clerk Brannon said he failed to understand the objective of the report. He said that, if the County were looked at as a whole, with its more than 800 employees, the statistics were more accurate than breaking them down by Elected Official.

Chairman Fillios stated that he would consult with the person who compiled the report before offering a response to Clerk Brannon.

Assessor Bela Kovacs voiced agreement with Clerk Brannon's points. He said he agreed with the need to include the Elected Officials when data on their departments was requested and that data should be reviewed before being released. He urged the Commissioners to work together with the other Elected Officials on these things.

In closing, Clerk Brannon stated that he vehemently objected to information from his departments being disseminated before he was able to review it.

Sheriff Norris mentioned other agencies which offered better pay to their staff than KCSO received and reiterated his previous statements about the difficulty in attracting and retaining employees.

Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud said that she would be glad to cooperate with any requests for turnover information from Elected Officials.

### **Overview of the Salary Survey Findings – Sylvia Proud (Discussion)**

Ms. Proud reviewed the results of the salary survey. She said the information would be used to recommend compensation adjustments based on market trend data in the matrices for the General Pay Plan, Attorney Pay Plan, Chief Deputy Pay Plan, Sworn Officer Pay Plan and for Elected Officials. She touched on the provisions of Compensation Policy 120 and the County's Total Rewards Philosophy which included consideration of compensation, benefits and work/life balance.

Ms. Proud listed the entities which had been selected to establish appropriate market rates in Kootenai County: Ada County, Bonner County, Canyon County, Spokane County, Boise, Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls, Spokane and Spokane Valley. She stated that these entities had been agreed upon by the Elected Officials.

Kootenai County Resident William Le entered the meeting at 9:24 a.m.

Ms. Proud said that AmeriBen had conducted the External Market Compensation Survey, a Cost of Living Comparison, a Cost of Labor Comparison and developed reports the County could use to analyze market trends. She explained the structure of the surveys, including a description of how equivalent positions used as benchmarks were identified.

Ms. Proud reported that, as a whole, current pay rates for benchmarked positions were about 6.5% below market. She explained that the results showed some positions below, some at and some above market rates. She said actual average pay of Kootenai County employees compared to average actual pay of market employers had a variance of -11%. Historically, she noted that a 2013 study had shown a -16% variance and a 2019 study had shown a -8% variance. She pointed out, however, that the entities used for comparison in the 2013, 2019 and 2022 studies were not the same.

Ms. Proud then addressed the cost of living and cost of labor analyses. She remarked upon the effects caused by the current labor shortage and high inflation and described the next steps the County planned to take. She stressed that mid-year adjustments would be determined for Detention Deputies and 911 Emergency Communications Officers (ECO). She indicated that the full recommendations would be presented at the HR meeting scheduled for April 14, 2022.

Sheriff Norris voiced his dissatisfaction at learning that the entire wage study was not to be made available to the Elected Officials. Ms. Proud explained that the study contained proprietary information, so HR was not allowed to release it or permit copies to be made, but that the relevant portions would be reviewed with each Elected Official in individual meetings.

Sheriff Norris commented that he was not aware the \$300,000 referenced as set aside for his department included both Deputies and ECOs. He stated he had thought the money was set aside just for Detention Deputies.

Commissioner Duncan stated that, even if those two areas did prove to be at market, she would still be willing to look ways to fill the empty positions. She reminded those present that those employees would be receiving \$500 per month retention bonuses for four months.

Chairman Fillios exited the meeting at 9:41 a.m. He indicated that Chair Pro Tem Duncan should carry on.

- D. Public Comment:** This section is reserved for citizens wishing to address the Board regarding a County related issue. Idaho Law prohibits Board action on items brought under this section except in an emergency circumstance. Comments related to future public hearings should be held for that public hearing.

Kootenai County Resident Jeff Perkins offered his impressions of wage competition and market rates.

KCSO Sergeant Zachary Sifford stated that he was President of the Kootenai County Sheriff's Employee Association. He expressed the frustrations experienced by the members since the last study.

KCSO Detention Deputy Nick Kerfoot stated that he was Vice President on the Detention side of the Sheriff's Employee Association. He said that the \$300,000 had been set aside for the Detention Deputies only, originally, and that the information was on the record. He indicated that his members were confused by the inclusion of ECOs in spite of this. He said he did not think that money should be split.

Chair Pro Tem Duncan stated that they did not know, at this point, whether Detention would require the entire \$300,000. She said that if Detention needed the full amount or more and the ECOs also needed more funding, those needs would be addressed.

- E. Adjournment (Action):** Chair Pro Tem Duncan adjourned the meeting at 9:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

BOCC SIGNATURE

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk