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JACK LOUWS
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

To: Whatcom County Council
From: Whatcom County Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials
Subject: Elected Official Salary Schedule for 2016 and 2017
Date: April 16, 2015

Starting in January 2015, the Whatcom County Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials has met multiple times in order to complete its task of setting the 2016 and 2017 salaries for elected officials.


The Commission has used information from comparable jurisdictions, considered the unique challenges of some of our local offices, and considered written and oral testimony from elected officials and the general public. Members of the Commission have actively participated in the process and shared their unique perspective in the discussions that led to the Commission's salary placements.

Attached please find the Salary Commission's salary placements for Whatcom County elected officials for 2016 and 2017. These salary placements are forwarded to the Council with a unanimous vote from the nine remaining members of the Commission. Commission member Jesse Berg moved out of District 3 and resigned from the Commission.

It has been an honor to be selected and serve on the Salary Commission for Whatcom County.


Allan Jensen, Commission Chairman
(Organized Labor)


Robert Carmichael – Legal Profession


Brian Lydiard – Business


** unavailable for signature*
Thom Fischer – District #1


Mike Arbiter – District #2

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Peter Schroeder – District #3


George Plucinski – District #2


Kara Turner – Personnel Management


Kristi Birkeland – District #1

Whatcom County Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials

Salary Placements April 16, 2015

Position	Current Salary 2015	2016	2017
Assessor	\$101,148	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1% COLA • Adjustment: \$0 • Total: \$102,159 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.2% COLA • Adjustment: \$0 • Total: \$104,407
Auditor	\$101,148	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1% COLA • Adjustment: \$0 • Total: \$102,159 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.2% COLA • Adjustment: \$0 • Total: \$104,407
Treasurer	\$101,148	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1% COLA • Adjustment: \$0 • Total: \$102,159 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.2% COLA • Adjustment: \$0 • Total: \$104,407
Sheriff	\$129,060	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1% COLA • Adjustment: \$1,649 • Total: \$132,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.2% COLA • Adjustment: \$0 • Total: \$134,904
Prosecuting Attorney	\$156,360	January 1 st salary, to match the salary established for Superior Court Judges as set by the State of Washington	January 1 st salary, to match the salary established for Superior Court Judges as set by the State of Washington
County Executive	\$153,865	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1% COLA • Adjustment: \$0 • Total: \$155,404 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.2% COLA • Adjustment: \$0 • Total: \$158,823
County Council	\$24,705	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1% COLA • Adjustment: \$5,048 • Total: \$30,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.2% COLA • Adjustment: \$0 • Total: \$30,660

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA):

- The Salary Commission used *the Consumer Price Index - All Urban Consumers - West Urban* to establish the actual and projected rate of inflation. This is the same index used by the previous Salary Commission. See Attachment A.
- For 2016, the Commission established a 1% percent COLA for all positions. This is based upon the 2.3% COLA applied to the elected positions for 2014 and 2015 exceeding the actual rate of inflation (2013 - 1.48% & 2014 - 1.86%). While the Commission preliminarily established the 2016 COLA at 0%, upon reflection it was changed to 1%, which more accurately reflects the actual difference.
- For 2017, the COLA rate of 2.2% is established.

Assessor, Auditor, Treasurer: The Commission researched the compensation for these positions at other Washington State counties, using the following for benchmarks:

- Assessed Value
- Population
- Number of Employees
- Budget

In each benchmark category, the Counties that were four larger and four smaller than Whatcom County were used for comparison. In all cases, positions are currently above market comparables. See Attachment B.

Based on those comparisons, the Commission concludes no adjustment for these positions is necessary, except for projected inflation.

Sheriff: The Commission researched the compensation for this position at other Washington State counties, using the following for benchmarks:

- Assessed Value
- Population
- Number of Employees
- Budget

In each benchmark category, the Counties that were four larger and four smaller than Whatcom County were used for comparison. See Attachment B. In addition, because the City of Bellingham is a large population center within Whatcom County, the Bellingham Police Chief compensation and duties were used as a comparable.

Because duties for sheriffs vary somewhat by county, the specific scope of duties for the Whatcom County Sheriff was then weighed. Considering the Whatcom County Sheriff's scope of duties also includes managing the county jail and that Whatcom County abuts an international border, as well as the comparison to the City of Bellingham Police Chief, the Commission determined a salary adjustment for 2016 is warranted, as reflected in the table.

Prosecuting Attorney: Other county salary commissions and the state salary commission tie Prosecuting Attorney compensation to Superior Court Judge compensation. That model of compensation was persuasive to the Commission. Thus:

Effective every January 1st, the salary paid to the Prosecuting Attorney shall be equal to the January 1st salary paid to Superior Court Judges, including adjustments thereto, as determined by the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials under Article XXVIII of the Washington Constitution and Chapter 43.03 RCW.

County Executive: Whatcom County's management structure (County Executive and seven County Council members) is somewhat unique. Therefore, the County Executive position was compared to other governmental executives within Whatcom County, as well as three other Washington counties with similar Executive/Council forms of government. Based on those comparisons and taking into account the size of the other

comparable counties, the Commission determines no adjustment is necessary except for projected inflation.

County Council: Whatcom County's management structure (County Executive and seven County Council members) is somewhat unique.

The County Council is the legislative body for Whatcom County. The Council members have broad areas of responsibilities requiring significant knowledge and research, make impactful decisions affecting all citizens of Whatcom County, and have an ambitious meeting schedule requiring a significant time commitment. While the position has historically been considered part-time, it is apparent the duties require more than 20 hours per week on average and sometimes significantly more.

Based on the criticality of the County Council duties and reflecting the expanding time commitment necessary to appropriately carry out their duties, the Commission determines a salary adjustment for 2016 is warranted, as reflected in the table.

ATTACHMENT A

Consumer Price Index - All Urban Consumers

<u>Year</u>	<u>Annual</u>	
2002	184.7	
2003	188.6	2.11%
2004	193.0	2.33%
2005	198.9	3.06%
2006	205.7	3.42%
2007	212.230	3.17%
2008	219.646	3.49%
2009	218.822	-0.38%
2010	221.203	1.09%
2011	227.485	2.84%
2012	232.376	2.15%
2013	235.824	1.48%
2014	240.215	1.86%

2005-2014

2.22% 10-year avg

Summary Elected Official 2014 Salary Comparison

	Assessor	Auditor	Executive	Prosecuting Attorney	Sheriff	Treasurer
Population	\$ 7,636	\$ 7,636		\$ 12,238	\$ 8,812	\$ 7,636
Assessed Value	\$ 6,593	\$ 6,593		\$ 10,594	\$ 7,814	\$ 6,593
Annual Expenditures	\$ 7,367	\$ 7,367		\$ 12,094	\$ 8,650	\$ 7,367
Full-Time Employees	\$ 7,615	\$ 7,615		\$ 12,242	\$ 8,748	\$ 7,615
Average:	\$ 7,303	\$ 7,303		\$ 11,792	\$ 8,506	\$ 7,303
Whatcom County:	\$ 8,239	\$ 8,239	\$ 12,534	\$ 12,651	\$ 10,513	\$ 8,239

Salary Difference	\$ 936	\$ 936		\$ 859	\$ 2,007	\$ 936
Percentage Difference	12.82%	12.82%		7.28%	23.60%	12.82%

Background data may be viewed within the Salary Commission's February 19, 2015 packet, available on the Whatcom County website.