


**To:** Whatcom County Council  
**From:** Whatcom County Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials  
**Subject:** Elected Official Salary Schedule for 2018 and 2019  
**Date:** April 20, 2017

Starting in January 2017, the Whatcom County Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials met multiple times in order to complete its task of setting the 2018 and 2019 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 2018 and 2019.

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


  
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Brian Lydiard, Commission Chairman  
(Business)

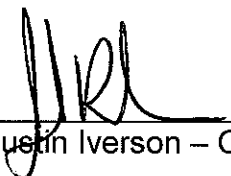
  
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Todd Morris – Citizen at Large

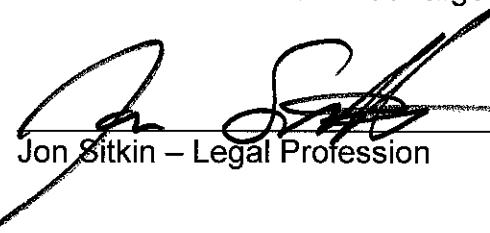
  
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Mike Arbiter – Citizen at Large

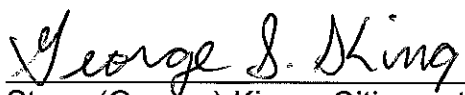
  
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Jason Russell – Citizen at Large

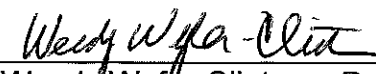
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kristi Birkeland – Citizen at Large

  
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Diana Schmidt – Citizen at Large

  
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Justin Iverson – Organized Labor

  
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Jon Sitkin – Legal Profession

  
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Steve (George) King – Citizen at Large

  
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Wendy Weyer-Clinton – Personnel  
Management

# Whatcom County Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials

## Salary Placements April 20, 2017

Position	Current Salary 2017	2018	2019
Assessor	\$104,407	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.9% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$0</li> <li>• Total: \$106,391</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.0% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$0</li> <li>• Total: \$108,519</li> </ul>
Auditor	\$104,407	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.9% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$0</li> <li>• Total: \$106,391</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.0% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$0</li> <li>• Total: \$108,519</li> </ul>
Treasurer	\$104,407	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.9% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$0</li> <li>• Total: \$106,391</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.0% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$0</li> <li>• Total: \$108,519</li> </ul>
Sheriff	\$134,904	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.9% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$985</li> <li>• Total: \$138,452</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.0% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$779</li> <li>• Total: \$142,000</li> </ul>
Prosecuting Attorney	\$165,870	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.9% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$0</li> <li>• \$169,022</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.0% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$0</li> <li>• Total: \$172,402</li> </ul>
County Executive	\$158,823	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.9% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$7,181</li> <li>• Total: \$169,022</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.0% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$0</li> <li>• Total: \$172,402</li> </ul>
County Council	\$30,660	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.9% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$0</li> <li>• Total: \$31,243</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.0% COLA</li> <li>• Adjustment: \$0</li> <li>• Total: \$31,867</li> </ul>

### 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 previous Salary Commissions. See Attachment A.
- For 2018, the Commission establishes a 1.9% percent COLA for all positions. This is based upon the average of the last 10 years, 2007 through 2016.
- For 2019, the Commission establishes a 2.0% COLA. This is based upon the rounded 1.9% COLA from Attachment A, rounded to 2.0% to reflect inflation may increase slightly in future years.

**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, Whatcom County positions are currently above market comparables. See Attachment B.

Based on those comparisons, the Commission concludes the compensation for these positions shall increase per the COLAs established by the Commission.

**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 also considered.

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, the diverse population served, and the large territory overseen, the Commission concludes salary adjustments in 2018 and 2019 are warranted, in addition to the COLAs established by the Commission. As reflected in the table, these adjustments increase the Sheriff's salary to \$142,000 by 2019.

**Prosecuting Attorney:** Prior county Salary Commissions matched the Prosecuting Attorney's compensation to Superior Court Judge compensation. For 2018 the State is increasing Superior Court Judge compensation by 4%, which the Commission feels exceeds what is warranted in Whatcom County. Therefore, for 2018 and 2019, the Commission concludes the Prosecuting Attorney compensation shall increase per the COLAs established by the Commission.

**County Executive:** Whatcom County's government 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. Additionally, three other Washington counties with similar Executive/Council forms of government were considered to see how they compensate their County Executive relative to their Prosecuting Attorney.

Considering the scope of management responsibility of the County Executive, the Commission determines it important to adjust the Executive's compensation to re-establish its historical placement. Prior to the Prosecuting Attorney's compensation being tied to Superior Court Judge compensation, the Executive compensation was equal to or above the Prosecuting Attorney's compensation. Therefore, the Commission concludes the Executive compensation shall match the Prosecuting Attorney's compensation for 2018, and then adjust per the COLA established by the Commission for 2019.

**County Council:** Whatcom County's government 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 powers requiring knowledge and research about many facets of County government in order to make impactful decisions affecting all citizens of Whatcom County.

Prior Salary Commissions adjusted compensation for the County Council over the last few years to appropriately reflect the demands of the position. Therefore, the Commission concludes no further adjustment to these positions is currently needed, and that the compensation for these positions shall increase per the COLAs established by the Commission.

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Consumer Price Index - All Urban Consumers**

**Original Data Value**

[http://data.bls.gov/pdq/SurveyOutputServlet?data\\_tool=dropmap&series\\_id](http://data.bls.gov/pdq/SurveyOutputServlet?data_tool=dropmap&series_id)

**Series Id:** CUUR0400SA0, CUUS0400SA0

**Not Seasonally Adjusted**

**Area:** West urban  
**Item:** All items

Year	Annual
2002	184.7
2003	188.6
2004	193.0
2005	198.9
2006	205.7
2007	212.230
2008	219.646
2009	218.822
2010	221.203
2011	227.485
2012	232.376
2013	235.824
2014	240.215
2015	243.015
2016	247.705

**2007-2016**      **1.88% 10-year avg**

ATTACHMENT B

Summary Elected Official 2016 Salary Comparison

	Assessor	Auditor	Executive	Prosecuting Attorney	Sheriff	Treasurer
Population	\$ 7,889	\$ 8,047	\$ 13,271	\$ 13,136	\$ 9,340	\$ 8,047
Assessed Value	\$ 7,031	\$ 8,071	\$ 13,271	\$ 13,086	\$ 9,478	\$ 7,774
Annual Expenditures	\$ 7,889	\$ 8,047	\$ 13,271	\$ 13,136	\$ 9,340	\$ 8,047
Full-Time Employees	\$ 7,889	\$ 8,047	\$ 13,271	\$ 13,136	\$ 9,340	\$ 8,047
Average:	\$ 7,675	\$ 8,053	\$ 13,271	\$ 13,123	\$ 9,374	\$ 7,979
Whatcom County:	\$ 8,513	\$ 8,513	\$ 12,950	\$ 13,551	\$ 11,000	\$ 8,513

Salary Difference	\$ 838	\$ 460	\$ (321)	\$ 428	\$ 1,626	\$ 534
Percentage Difference	10.92%	5.71%	-2.42%	3.26%	17.34%	6.70%