

Item 9



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: July 9, 2013

Prepared By/Phone Number: Diana Ramirez, (512) 854-9694

Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head: Leslie Browder, County Executive, Planning and Budget

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "JB".

Commissioners Court Sponsor: Judge Samuel T. Biscoe

AGENDA LANGUAGE: CONSIDER AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO PROPOSE FY 2014 SALARIES FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- A. PROPOSED CALENDAR FOR SETTING ELECTED OFFICIALS SALARIES**
- B. COMPOSITION OF GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE**
- C. PROPOSED ELECTED OFFICIALS SALARIES**
- D. PUBLIC ADVERTISEMENT FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS SALARIES**
- E. PUBLIC HEARING ON ADVERTISED SALARIES**

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:

Please see attached documentation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: Please see attached documentation.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: Please see attached documentation.

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING: Please see attached documentation.

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

Leslie Browder – Planning and Budget Office, (512) 854-9106

Jessica Rio – Planning and Budget Office, (512) 854-9106

County Judge's Office, (512) 854-9555

AGENDA REQUEST DEADLINE: All agenda requests and supporting materials should be submitted as a pdf to the County Judge's office, agenda@co.travis.tx.us by **Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m.** for the next week's meeting.



PLANNING AND BUDGET OFFICE
TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

700 Lavaca Street, Ste. 1560
Austin, Texas 78701

P.O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of Commissioners Court

FROM: Diana A. Ramirez, Assistant Budget Director 

DATE: July 3, 2013

RE: Consider and take appropriate action regarding FY 2014 Salaries for Elected Officials

Every year, Commissioners Court takes formal action to set the salaries of elected officials for the coming fiscal year. Several actions Commissioners Court took last year are reflected in the options being forwarded by the Planning and Budget Office (PBO) for Court consideration.

During the FY 2013 budget process, the Human Resources Management Department (HRMD) recommended the following actions and the Court approved them.

1. Tie any salary increases for elected officials who are not subject to a state-mandated salary cap to proposed salary increases for classified employees.
2. Discontinue the link of the salaries of the Justices of the Peace to salaries of District Judges. The salaries of District Judges have state-mandated salary caps, but Justice of the Peace salaries do not.

We are finalizing the draft advertisement and will circulate it to the Commissioners Court as soon as we have completed it. The draft advertisement that lists the proposed salaries for elected officials will include the salaries for all elected officials in Travis County. The proposed salaries of the District Judges, County Court at Law Judges, and the Probate Judge are not legally required to be included in the advertisement. Travis County has historically included the proposed salaries for all elected officials.

To prepare for this agenda item, PBO has worked with the County Attorney's Office, the Auditor's Office, and HRMD to ensure that the information and options presented meet legal requirements.

A. Approve the proposed calendar for setting elected officials salaries.

The proposed calendar for setting elected officials salaries anticipates Commissioners Court consideration of the item during two voting sessions, July 9 and July 16, which is the normal timeframe followed in past years. The Court's vote to advertise proposed salaries for elected officials – currently scheduled for July 16 – triggers statutorily mandated processes that would

result in Commissioners Court setting the salaries for elected officials on August 6 and the grievance process ending on August 27.

B. Approve composition of members of Grievance Committee.

With advice from the County Attorney's Office, PBO is recommending that Commissioners Court approve the composition of the grievance committee. Section 152.014 of the Local Government Code says that the committee composition may follow one of two options. One option is that the committee is comprised of the County Judge, Sheriff, County Tax Assessor-Collector, County Treasurer, County Clerk, District Clerk, County Attorney or Criminal District Attorney, and a sufficient number of public members to provide nine voting members. The second option, and the one that the Commissioners Court has chosen in the past, is a committee of nine public members, with the County Judge serving as the nonvoting chairman of the committee.

In the past, the Commissioners Court's selection of the public members served as the selection of the second option. This year, PBO has been advised of the need for a discrete vote by Commissioners Court for the selection of a public member grievance committee. The County Clerk's Office has a separate item on the agenda for the drawing of names from the Grand Jury pool for this purpose.

C. Consider and take appropriate action to propose elected officials salaries for FY 2014.

For the first time since FY 2007, the State Legislature has increased the maximum salary for District Judges for FY 2014. The State portion of District Judges salary is increasing from \$125,000 to \$140,000. The County portion of District Judges salary may also be increased from \$15,000 to a maximum of \$18,000. The District Judges are requesting and PBO recommends the \$3,000 increase since this is the first increase for these officials in seven years.

The draft advertisement listing the proposed salaries for elected officials will not include the proposed salaries for County Court at Law Judges. The County Attorney's Office has asked for this section to be discussed in Executive Session.

PBO will present an updated advertisement on July 16 after receiving guidance from Commissioners Court. In addition, PBO will present Commissioners Court with the estimated cost to the County of the proposed salaries included in the advertisement. Please note that these changes will also impact the salaries of the eight Associate Judges, whose salaries are linked to the District Judges salaries. Associate Judges salaries are set at 80% of District Judges salaries. If Commissioners Court sets the District Judges salaries at \$158,000, the Associate Judges salaries would be increased to \$126,400.

The draft advertisement will include a proposal of a 3% increase for all other elected officials, except the District Attorney. The District Attorney has indicated that she will not accept an increase to the County portion of her salary. The draft advertisement shows the State portion of her salary increasing as per the actions of the Texas Legislature and Governor Perry, and the County portion of her salary remaining the same.

In addition, while the salary of the office of Commissioner, Pct. 3 is proposed to be set at \$98,463, Commissioner Daugherty has requested that his salary remain at \$90,109, the salary set for County Commissioners in FY 2010. Commissioner Bruce Todd, who is serving the unexpired Precinct 2 term, agreed to receive \$1 in salary when appointed. Footnote 9 to the advertisement explains this.

As the advertisement will state, these salaries are the maximum salaries for each office. An elected official may elect to take a salary lower than the maximum without requesting a footnote in the advertisement.

PBO is working to include in the Preliminary Budget a reserve for a possible 3% compensation increase for classified employees. PBO also is working to include a funding to cover the proposed salary increases for elected officials.

PBO will ask Commissioners Court to take action on this portion of the item on July 16.

D. Approve the public advertisement for elected officials salaries.

PBO will request that Commissioners Court approve the public advertisement of the proposed salaries for elected officials on July 16. This will allow the advertisement to be placed and appear in the Austin Chronicle on July 25, thereby starting the clock on the remainder of the salary setting process.

E. Set the public hearing date on the advertised elected officials salaries.

On July 16, PBO will request that Commissioners Court set the public hearing date on the advertised elected officials salaries for August 6. PBO will ask Commissioners Court to set elected officials salaries on August 6 after the public hearing. After the vote the County Judge's Office will notify elected officials of their FY 2014 salaries. This notice will start the statutorily mandated timeframes for filing and considering a salary grievance.

cc: Leslie Browder, Jessica Rio, Travis Gatlin, PBO
Todd Osburn, HRMD
Barbara Wilson, County Attorney's Office
Melissa Velasquez, County Judge's Office
Bernadette Gutilla, Paul Lyon, Auditor's Office
Elected Officials

Elected Officials Salary Setting Calendar Fiscal Year 2014 Salaries

Commissioners Court discusses salaries for elected officials.	July 9 - 16
Commissioners Court votes to have 9 public members on the Grievance Committee.	July 9
Commissioners Court draws names for Grievance Committee.	
Commissioners Court votes to advertise proposed salaries for elected officials and approves ad for Public Hearing.	July 16
Ad appears in Austin Chronicle.	July 25
Commissioners Court holds public hearing on proposed salaries for elected officials.	August 6
Commissioners Court sets the salaries for elected officials.	
County Judge's Office provides written notice of salaries to each elected county and precinct officer.	
Deadline for elected official to file a grievance with the County Judge's Office. (5 business days after notice from the County Judge).	Aug 13, 5:00pm
If a grievance is received, the Grievance Committee must be convened within 10 days after the grievance is received to hear the grievance and develop a recommendation. Date ranges are the earliest and latest date a grievance can be reviewed by the Committee, based on the dates of receipt.	Aug 7 – Aug 23
Commissioners Court considers and acts on Grievance Committee's decision(s).	Aug 27
Fiscal Year 2014 Budget scheduled for adoption.	Sep 24