



BOARD OF EDUCATION COMPENSATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes – Meeting Seven
November 18, 2019
Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street – 2nd Floor
Rockville, Maryland

Attendance

Members Present:

Ting Chau
Jaye Espy, Chair
Jennifer Sawin – By conference call
Mark Spradley, Vice Chair
Jason Washington

Guests Present

None

Staff Present:

Dale Tibbitts, Spec. Asst. to the County
Executive
Beth Gochrach, Office of the County
Executive

1. Call to Order

Chair Espy called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

2. Roll Call

Four of five commissioners were physically present. One commissioner attended by conference call.

3. Adoption of Minutes

The November 4, 2019, minutes were approved with amendments.

4. New Business

- a. Discussion of progress contained in the project tracker

Chair Espy stated that the only thing updated in the tracker was to put in the public survey deadline as tomorrow, November 19. However, staff Tibbitts noted that the survey wasn't posted right away so the deadline was moved to November 24.

Staff Tibbitts had a note from a former Board member that several people have commented that there is not enough background information about the Board member job description to complete the survey. There was a discussion among Commission members about why no description was provided, which was done in part so that individuals completing the survey would express their opinions based on their own knowledge of Board member responsibilities. Also the target audience of the survey is the general public. It was purposely not directed to people or groups that may have more familiarity with the Board. It was suggested that the survey be updated with the Board member's job description, but it was decided that it would be unfair to those people who have already taken the survey, and also wouldn't provide a standardized response.

There was discussion of the questions. It was noted that people are putting comments in the text section of the survey. However, Commissioners can't answer or presuppose what questions

people will ask. It was decided not to change the questions. The Commission will wait for results to come back.

Chair Espy noted that the Commission is collecting a lot of information without a lot of time to synthesize and put it into the report. Chair Espy reviewed items in the project tracker:

- Conversation with Richard Madaleno, Director, County Office of Management and Budget. This is done. The Commission can synthesize his opinions and put in the report, if needed.
- Collecting information on the roles and responsibilities of Board members. This is done. Cm Sawin has taken responsibility for this. See the executive summary which incorporates some of this information. Now the Commission must review what Cm Sawin put together to potentially modify and then insert into the report. The Commission will also use input from interviews with the Board members. Commissioners can accept all the changes online, and also make changes and send to Cm Sawin so she can incorporate the changes into the report.
- Number of students in State of MD. This is done.
- Number of schools in Montgomery County. This is done. Cm Washington can add a column for the top 17 school districts.
- Median income. This is done. They have quintile information.
- School system budget and capital operating budget. This is done. Cm Washington noted that some of the data for capital budgets is not comparable because some are three year and some are annual budgets.
- Board of Education direct staff and salaries. This is in progress. Cm Washington noted that some boards have combined data and some are separated out. Staff Tibbitts has information.
- Teachers' salaries. This is done.
- Identify funds for community engagement or identify if there is a community engagement fund. Cm Sawin couldn't find this information. MCPS provided budgetary information but it wasn't specific to Board members attending community events. It was suggested that the County Council may have money for community engagement. Cm Chau asked if the County Council had a community engagement budget have for Councilmembers. Staff Tibbitts explained that each Councilmember has a budget of about \$400,000 from which to allocate funds for staff, travel, contracts, etc.
- A list of other meetings that Board members attend. Board members spoke about this, but the Commission still has no real list. The Commission needs to provide examples or categories of types of meetings and events Board members attend, for example, high school graduations and the number of schools that the student member visits. Some events are required and some are optional. The report should list and categorize all.
- Peer school system to which MCPS can be compared. This is done. Per Cm Washington there are nine Counties. He re-sent the list to Commissioners.

- Number of Board members who are using the provided health benefits. This is done. Per staff Tibbitts, there are currently three Board members using benefits.
- Discuss staff duties and determine if Board members would prefer to have more of an increase in compensation or less of an increase, but have staff assist them in their duties. Cm Washington noted that some Board members would like to have staff. Chair Spradley noted that it is not really a compensation issue. There had been discussion of adding more Board members to decrease the workload, but more Board members can't be added because each would then require more staff.
- Student compensation. It was suggested that the Commission review the County Attorney's opinion. Students must receive a scholarship and not compensation. The delegation would have to change that portion of the legislation, stating something like: "this is the task you gave us, but we would like you to consider structural changes." Cm Sawin is looking at the amount of the scholarship. The Commission can make suggestions; for example, the compensation can be the same dollar amount but broken down in other ways, especially if the student isn't going to college. Students should have the choice. The tax consequences for the student and family should also be considered. Also to be considered is if the student is taking a gap year and not going to college right away, and if the scholarship should be good for life or similar to the GI Bill, where the scholarship must be used in 10 years. Also to be considered is if the college also offers the student a scholarship, making the Board scholarship redundant and unusable. The student should be able to access the scholarship in a subsequent year. The Commission should also consider the consequences of a stipend versus a scholarship.

b. Discussion of the report

There was further discussion of the report generally. Cm Washington stated that he will handle comparison of salaries. He will edit and make more concise.

Vice Chair Spradley suggested that the Commission consider making a broad statement on diversity such as that 30 years ago the Board members were all male business people. It would also be good to address the fact that, based on the testimony of Board members, this is a full-time position. Cm Sawin said that she added this to the report.

Vice Chair Spradley suggested also adding the cost of living in Montgomery County, which is \$104,000 per family. Cm Sawin said that it is in the demographic summary of the report. Some of the data comes from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission; that data is drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Montgomery Community Survey.

Cm Chau Ting noted that the report should include the full scope of responsibilities of the Board members, including going to meetings, attending quasi-judicial hearings, and meeting with the superintendent.

Vice Chair Spradley asked if the Commission's report should reference the Kirwan report. It was suggested that the Kirwan report might be too hypothetical to be useful in the Commission's report, but it could be referenced. Vice Chair Spradley will come up with some language for the report, with the expectation that there will be additional funding for the schools.

c. Notes from teleconference with Nate Tinbite - current student Board member

On Saturday, November 16, Chair Espy, Vice Chair Spradley and Cm Sawin spoke with Nate Tinbite by teleconference. It was a discussion that was arranged at the last minute.

Mr. Tinbite described to the Commissioners a day in the life a student Board member. He is a high performing student at Kennedy High School. He works at Panera on the early shift that begins at 5:00 AM. He is an extraordinary young man. His duties at the Board include local, state and national events. He recently had a meeting with the U.S. Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos. His role has superseded what people had expected. He is also a student. He is also currently filling out college applications. He reviews Board materials and has attended hearings. He has visited every single middle school and high school in Montgomery County. His Board activities take more than 40 hours per week. He does not have a car. He shares his mother's car.

Mr. Tinbite indicated that he thought the compensation should be \$50,000 for both the student member and the other Board members. He cited the salary of the general assembly. He thought that the current Board salary is very low, especially for the student. It puts other students and citizens at a disadvantage. Students are turned off from serving because of the compensation. According to Mr. Tinbite, students in Prince Georges County get a \$10,000 salary. In Anne Arundel County they get paid weekly. The student member gets \$8,000, the vice president gets \$9,000 and the president gets \$10,000. Getting a weekly stipend is very important for the student member to cover transportation and other expenses. In the D.C. metro area, Montgomery County has the only voting student member.

Mr. Tinbite thinks that if \$50,000 is the compensation for Board members, then that amount should be split between a scholarship and salary for the student, so that the student could have a wage. He thinks a \$5,000 scholarship creates the impression that the work of the student member is less valuable. It's a mistake that the Commission can try to correct. He cited several programs and policies that were enacted, which impacted students across the board, primarily due to the work of the student Board members. He is doing the same work but going above and beyond what other Board members are doing. In order to change this the Commission needs a strong argument for equity.

Regarding the composition of the Board, he said that some are professionals and some are stay at home moms, but outcomes are what should be weighed. His touchpoint is a lot deeper than other Board members because he deals with students directly.

There was a discussion of how many months a student Board member serves. They are usually elected by students in the spring of their junior year. They take office on July 1. They then serve for basically the school year.

d. Commission recommendation for compensation

CM Chau discussed potential compensation for Board members, noting that it's a full-time job. She thought that to recommend less than a \$50,000 salary is not really addressing the problem. But it is also a legitimate concern, if the amount of salary suggested is too high. Money could go to student lunches. \$50,000 - \$75,000 is reasonable, but less than \$50,000 is a waste of time. Cm Sawin agreed with Cm Chau, and suggested \$50,000 - \$60,000 for elected members. For the

student, she suggested 60% - 80% of that. CM Washington suggested 110% of the legislators' salary, which would be \$55,000.

Vice Chair Spradley found Mr. Tinbrite to be very persuasive, and thought that 120% of the delegates' salary would be appropriate. He thought there is a strong argument for equity for the student, and that the student should receive a salary or stipend. Chair Espy thought \$50,000 would be appropriate but could be persuaded to go higher. But less than \$50,000 would be a slap in the face. The salary should really be six figures.

It was suggested that for the student the compensation should be a \$5,000 to \$10,000 stipend and that the scholarship should be \$40,000. Minimum wage is \$13 - \$14 per hour. Compensation should be no less than that. Cm Sawin noted that the Maryland code states the student should receive a scholarship, but doesn't state that it's expressly for one year. She was not sure the delegation would have to change the legislation if commission recommends spreading the scholarship out over four years. That would resolve the issue of the scholarship being nullified by a college scholarship. Cm Washington thought that the student should be able to use the scholarship over a five-year period after graduating from high school. But they should receive a certain amount per year, not one payment upfront. Unlike in other counties, the student member votes on the budget.

There was discussion about whether to decide on a salary recommendation at this meeting or wait until the survey results came in. Commissioners decided to think about it, noting that the Board is responsible for 55% of the County's budget, and the County should have the best and brightest Board members.

e. Delegation hearing and report executive summary

There was discussion about immediate next steps given that the County delegation will be meeting at the County Council for hearings on local and County bills on December 2 and December 9. It was decided that the Commission will meet on November 25 to draft an executive summary that will be ready for the hearing on December 9, when the legislation is scheduled. It was noted that the Commission should sign up now. Cm Washington said he will have exhibits and footnotes done by November 22. All members should review the draft report. Staff Tibbitts will contact Del. Eric Luedtke to be sure the Commission has all dates and deadlines correct.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Gochrach