

Minutes
Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority
Board of Commissioners – Work Session
Thursday, December 10, 2020

A work session of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority's Board of Commissioners was held Thursday, Dec. 10, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. The meeting was via remote attendance by commissioners and members of the public due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Commissioners Present: Robert W. Marans (Remote – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, MI)
 Jaye Quadrozzi (Remote – Farmington Hills, Oakland County, MI)
 Kurt Heise (Remote – Plymouth, Wayne County, MI)
 Steve Williams (Remote – Marine City, St. Clair County, MI)
 Bernard Parker (Remote – Detroit, Wayne County, MI)
 Timothy J. McCarthy (Remote – Grosse Pointe, Wayne County, MI)

Staff Officers Present:
Director Amy McMillan
Interim Deputy Director Michael Lyons
Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock

Absent: Commissioner Rea

1. Call to Order

Chairman Marans called the work session to order at 12:00 p.m.

2. Living Wage Discussion

Director McMillan updated the Board and said a living wage is a minimum of \$15 per hour for employees. She said questions that have come up since the November Board meeting included – cost associated with raising minimum wage, which employees would be affected, information on how it would be funded.

Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock reviewed the reasoning for a living wage, current compensation levels, range of pay and the average pay rate.

Commissioner Marans asked what a provisional employee was. Ms. Franchock explained the differences between the three employee classifications – seasonal, provisional and full-time. She said seasonal employees were summer employees and worked from mid-April to mid-October, were limited to 600 hours per year, do not have to pay social security tax, have multiple pay rates and most start at the bottom of the wage scale. Provisional employees are limited to 1500 per year, not limited to seasonal hours, the majority of provisional employees are at the high end of the pay scale and 47 percent are budgeted at, or above \$15 per hour. Full-time employees are all above \$15 per hour.

Ms. Franchock reviewed alternative plans for provisional staff. She said option one would cost approximately \$600,000 annually and the rate of pay for all staff below \$15 per hour would increase to \$15.35 per hour. Option two would be to increase the rate of pay for all provisional staff by \$4.30 per hour. With this option, the cost is approximately \$1.8 million annually. Ms. Franchock said other options could be developed such as adjusting seasonal and provisional scales. Bringing the bottom of the seasonal wage up to \$15/hour with wage scale compression would add another \$600,000 annually; without compression another \$900,000 annually. Alternative scales with some compression but not total compression could be developed as a middle road. There would also be increases in employer cost for FICA, workers comp insurance and seasonal pension.

Commissioner Parker asked what the cost was to raise provisional pay rates. Ms. Franchock said \$600,000 to increase pay rates to \$15.35 per hour, \$1.8 million to increase pay rates by \$4.30 an hour.

Commissioner Williams said the two main sources of funding is tolling and taxpayer dollars and he cannot vote to spend more of the public's money. He said we would be asking for trouble by raising wages with public money.

Commissioner Parker said we need to move wages to a living wage because without a living wage it makes it difficult for people to live on. We (the Metroparks) say we are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion yet we are not equitable in wages. Other municipalities have adopted a living wage. The Metroparks have a substantial amount of money in reserve to use and it won't hurt the Metroparks financially.

Commissioner Marans asked if the \$600,000 was only for provisional employees. Ms. Franchock said yes.

Commissioner Quadrozzi said she shares Commissioner Williams sentiment and doesn't support \$15 per hour for seasonal for provisional employees. Staff is working to recruit new employees through DEI efforts and she said she was concerned how raising rates will do to the other end of the wage scale.

Commissioner McCarthy said he does not support a living wage as additional costs such as FICA has not been included. He said if approved, it will be in the base and the cost will rise. He said it's a nice idea but not practical.

Commissioner Marans said he agrees with Commissioner Quadrozzi's arguments and does not support increasing for a living wage.

Ms. McMillan said discussions were held over the summer with staff and there was not an overall consensus. Staff is focusing efforts on diversifying the employee pool and staff is working to develop diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the hiring process.

Commissioner Marans asked if the increase in applicant pool was only for full-time positions. Ms. McMillan said yes. She also said there will be retirements over the next couple of years both in the parks and at the administrative office that will need to be filled.

Commissioner Parker asked what the percentage of non-white provisional staff. Ms. McMillan said she will send the information to the Board.

Commissioner Williams said the Metroparks have raised entry fees three times in the past several years and that patrons are trading daily passes for annual permits because they do not want to pay full price for permits. Ms. McMillan said staff is making a genuine effort for people that pay taxes whether or not they visit the parks. She said the Metroparks want to make sure that we are providing access to everyone that wants to visit.

3. 2021 Behind the Scenes Budget Overview

Ms. McMillan reviewed the budget process and requested feedback from the Board on how staff is doing with DEI efforts. She said the budget looks different and is easier to follow. She said when developing the budget, staff looks at the prior year to set budget figures. Since 2020 was such a difficult year, staff used 2019 budget figures.

Ms. Franchock said staff looked at 2019 budget numbers for both revenue and expenses.

4. Public Participation

None.

5. Motion to Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Heise, support from Commissioner Williams that the Board of Commissioners adjourn the work session.

Motion carried unanimously.

The work session adjourned at 12:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn M. Athayde
Recording Secretary