

MINUTES
of the
LEGISLATIVE CONSUMER COMMITTEE
September 13, 2012
Montana Consumer Counsel Conference Room
Telephone Conference Call

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Senator Terry Murphy, Chairman
Representative Pat Noonan, Vice Chairman
Representative Mike Cuffe
Senator Mitch Tropila

STAFF PRESENT

Robert A. Nelson, Consumer Counsel
Heather Voeller, Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Murphy.

ECONOMIST POSITION AND SALARY RECOMMENDATION

Bob gave a brief description and explained that we conducted interviews and had follow-up interviews that Larry Nordell, Paul Schulz and Bob all participated in. Our recommendation is that we hire Jaime Stamatson who is currently working for the Kansas Corporation Commission. He has been with the Kansas Commission for the last four years and has a BA and Masters degree in Economics from Kansas State University. Bob recommend a starting salary of \$63,000 per year and a twelve month probationary period at the end of which, the salary would increase to \$68,000.

MOTION: Representative Noonan moved to approve the recommendation.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

STAFF SALARIES RECOMMENDATION

Bob explained that it has been a long time since staff has had career progression increases. Because of this he is requesting an increase of \$4,000 in salaries for Paul Schulz, Mary Wright and himself. With respect to other agencies and specifically in the Legislative Agencies within the last six to twelve months, there have been at least 38 of these career merit type increases so this request is not

unusual. Those increases have ranged upwards over 20%. Most have been 3 to 4% but quite a few have been over 10%.

Senator Murphy asked when the salary increases would go into effect. Bob requested in the current pay period which began September 8th.

Representative Cuffe stated that he is not in favor of granting raises. The previous session decided to hold the line on increases and he realizes that there are some agencies that have found a way around that decision, but his opinion is that he is not in favor of it.

MOTION: Senator Tropila made a motion to move consideration of discussion of the pay raises to the next Committee meeting in December.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

_____, Robert Nelson, Consumer Counsel

Accepted by the Committee this ____ day of _____, 2012

_____, Chairman.