

County sheriff, attorney not satisfied with proposed salaries

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Friday, 22 November 2013 14:54 - Last Updated Friday, 22 November 2013 14:58

Officials: Figures don't reflect workload.

Dawson County Sheriff Gary Reiber was not pleased with the proposed 2015 annual salary for the county sheriff's office set by commissioners last Friday.

At the Dawson County commissioners meeting last Friday, Reiber said communication from the board was poor and short notice given as he said he received the information about his salary last Thursday.

Reiber said he felt the proposed \$71,640 salary didn't reflect compensation for 24-hour dispatch and 911 service.

"This really isn't a fair figure for whoever is elected the next term," Reiber said.

Chairman P.J. Jacobson and Bill Stewart told Reiber that the figures were up for discussion at the time of the meeting.

The commissioners were given short notice too, Stewart said.

"There was no other way we can change the process now because this is how it started."

By law, salaries of elected officials of the county shall be set by the board prior to Jan. 15. Commissioners would like the figures set by Dec. 1.

Friday's discussion was tabled until a meeting on Nov. 27, allowing county official offices to come up with better figures.

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In a related matter, county attorney Elizabeth Waterman said the proposed figure for her office was too low for quality representation.

“If you look at the workload we have it isn’t comparable to counties of our size. It is similar to larger counties (workload),” Waterman said.

She mentioned Buffalo County as a reference to similar workload and said they have eight deputies working cases instead of four like in the Dawson County attorney’s office.

Commissioners proposed a figure of \$85,100 for Waterman with a 3% annual increase through 2018.

“We are doing the job because we love the job, it’s satisfying,” Waterman said. “That will not last forever.”

Waterman said she felt the proposed salary would not attract the kind of people wanted to run the office.

“In the proposed resolution, I think you’re too low,” Waterman said. “In order to attract people with skill and ability to handle what we do here, you simply need to pay substantially more.”

She added that a minimum salary should be \$90,000 noting that the figure is still low.

In other business, commissioners learned that Dawson County jail needs an air-conditioning unit and approved the sheriff’s department to seek bids and negotiate with companies.

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Maintenance personnel Brandon Kjar said service was requested from local companies but no local bids were received.

Kjar said if a bid is received before Jan. 1 the unit could be up and running by April.

On another matter, roads superintendent Jon Mooberry received two bids for the Hammond Bridge project.

Simon Contractors from North Platte proposed a cost of \$328,407 while Midlands Contracting Inc. out of Kearney bid \$206,995.

The matter was tabled until the Nov. 27 meeting, to give Miller & Associates Consulting Engineers of Kearney time to meet with contractors and companies.

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