



Solano County
Board of Supervisors
Minute Order
March 26, 2013

File Reference No. 13-0231

RE: Consider directing County Counsel to prepare a resolution repealing the Board of Supervisors' right to receive longevity compensation (Supervisor Thomson)

The Solano County Board of Supervisors considered Item 32 and Item 33 as one item.

Supervisor Thomson introduced this item noting that the Board members, over the past four years, have dealt with the the worst of economic and financial times any government in the United States had seen in many years and commended the Board for their good work. Supervisor Thomson noted that the economic recovery was very slow and that budget issues would linger for many years to come. Supervisor Thomson noted that Solano County would be faced with a \$20 million structural deficit in two years and that reductions were necessary to eliminate this deficit. Supervisor Thomson noted that citizens and employees have been asked to live with less service and less take-home pay and felt that it was appropriate for the Board to discuss the merits of reducing their salaries. Supervisor Thomson noted that the public did not like career politicians and requested that the Board repeal longevity pay for members of the Board and elected officials.

Chair Seifert invited members of the public to address the Board on this matter. Comments were received from: 1) George Guynn, Jr., Suisun City; Donald Tipton, unincorporated Vallejo; Thom Bogue, Dixon; Dennis Allen, Fairfield; Bob Challburg, Vacaville; JoAnne Mathis, Fairfield; Earnie Spencer, Fairfield; Earl Heal, Vacaville; Colleen Britton, Vacaville; and Benjamin Davenport, Fairfield; who expressed support for a reduction in the salaries, auto allowance and longevity for members of the Board.

In response to public comments regarding the Board imposing salary and benefit reductions that were not imposed on themselves, County Administrator Birgitta E. Corsello noted that employee salaries had not been cut. Ms. Corsello noted that past practice had been not to roll salaries backwards. However, over the past five years, changes were made regarding who was responsible for paying certain components of the benefit package such as the rate sharing for medical insurance and the employees share of retirement costs. Ms. Corsello noted that the Board of Supervisors, Executive Management and Senior Management led by making those changes first. In addition, the Management Incentive Program was also eliminated for Executive Management and Senior Management which resulted in a substantial reduction in pay. Ms. Corsello noted that, while surrounding cities had implemented furlough days for employees which was a reduction in salary, Solano

County had not used furloughs or salary rollbacks. Ms. Corsello noted that Solano County had taken steps to minimize lay-offs or displacing employees and had balanced the budget despite a substantial loss in revenue. Ms. Corsello noted that the County had addressed and continued to address the structural deficit and that the five year forecast included all positions being filled. Ms. Corsello noted that corrective action had been taken each year to correct the structural deficit and Solano County had a good financial picture with funds in Reserves and Contingencies. Ms. Corsello noted that positions had been reduced which created longer wait times and, in some cases, services being eliminated. Ms. Corsello reported that the economic forecast for Solano County was slow but recovering.

In response to a concern expressed by Supervisor Thomson regarding the elimination of the Management Incentive Plan being backfilled with a Market Study to adjust salaries, Ms. Corsello noted that the County conducted Market Studies for all employees when there were compaction issues. Ms. Corsello noted that the County did have employees that did receive net losses in their earnings.

Supervisor Spering noted that he felt that the salaries and benefits of the Board should be considered through the budget process with a strategy that was considered and measured with measurable results. Supervisor Spering noted that he felt it was imperative to reduce the size of government which was what Solano County had done over the past years and to develop a policy to live within our means.

Supervisor Vasquez noted that the debate of salaries of elected officials was ongoing and that the salaries for the members of the Board were attached to the Judges' salaries as a way to be fair. Supervisor Vasquez noted that prior to reducing the benefits of employees, he volunteered a reduction of three percent to his salary.

Supervisor Hannigan noted that it was important to manage the budget and employees, to attract and retain the talent in the County and provide services to the community. Supervisor Hannigan noted that she made a personal decision to run for public office and to serve her community but that it was a sacrifice as there was more opportunity in the private sector.

Chair Seifert noted that over the past five years her take-home salary continued to decline and that Board members had voluntarily taken a reduction in salary equal to or more than what all employees were being required to accept with the downturn in the economy. In addition, the members of the Board had the responsibility to serve each member of the community, invest in long hours for community events, and commit time to read and prepare for numerous meetings. Chair Seifert noted that it was important to elect well qualified people who could make those commitments. Chair Seifert noted that while she did not support a reduction in the salaries and benefits of the Board of Supervisors, she would support the elimination of longevity compensation for members of the Board.

At the conclusion of discussion, the Board took the following actions:

It was moved by Supervisor Thomson to direct County Counsel to prepare an

ordinance amending Solano County Code section 2-05, subdivision (a), to reduce the annual compensation of the Board of Supervisors from fifty-three percent (53%) of the annual salary paid to Superior Court Judges as prescribed by the legislature to forty-eight percent (48%). Motion died for lack of a second.

It was moved by Supervisor Thomson, seconded by Supervisor Seifert, to direct County Counsel to prepare a resolution repealing the Board of Supervisors' right to receive longevity compensation. Motion failed by a 2-3 vote; Supervisors Hannigan, Vasquez, and Spering voted no.

(Supervisor Spering noted that he opposed consideration of the Board of Supervisors' salaries and benefits outside the budget process with measurable results.)