



BLAIR COUNTY SALARY BOARD

c/o Blair County Controller, 423 Allegheny St., Ste 141, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

Blair County Salary Board Meeting of September 25, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioner's Public Meeting Room.

Board Members in Attendance: Commissioner David Kessler, Commissioner Laura Burke, Controller A.C. Stickel, Commissioner Amy Webster,

Board Members not in Attendance:

Quorum: Present

Non-Board Members in Attendance: Treasurer James Carothers¹, Public Defender Russell Montgomery (via phone)², District Attorney Peter Weeks (via phone)³, President Judge Wade Kagarise, Barb Bosar, Lindsay Dempsie, Sam Dunkle, Mindy Hostler, Melena Koegler, Cathy Lythgoe, Brandon Meck, Tracy Mosel-Miller, Glenn Nelson, Sherry Socie, Shannon Tucker, Angela Wagner, Brian Walters

Media in Attendance: Kay Stephens: Altoona Mirror

Call to Order: Commissioner Kessler called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Moment of Silent Refection: Led by Commissioner Kessler.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: Led by Commissioner Kessler.

Roll Call: The roll was called by Commissioner Kessler. District Attorney Pete Weeks and Public Defender Russel Montgomery joined via phone.

Call for Public Comment: President Judge Wade Kagarise: Why have court items been left off of this agenda and does the board have the right to do so? Who is working on the new salary study and what progress have they made? The Salary Board should make public policy on how and what circumstances the agenda will be created and how items appear on it so this doesn't happen again in the future.

Kay Stephens – Altoona Mirror: If there is some response to the Judge's comments? If the Judge didn't ask early enough for his items?

District Attorney Pete Weeks: Why has no one has responded to his salary study research? Why is there a difference in treatment between the District Attorney's office and the Public Defender's office?

Commissioner Kessler: The salary study: We took the advice of department heads and elected officials to do it ourselves. It is an enormous amount of data to process and I ask for patience. As far as CYF and the Public Defender's office the bonuses are entirely grant funded and just because everyone can't receive them doesn't mean we should penalize those who can. To what Judge Kagarise has brought up we are also going to address that. There will be discussion with all members

¹ The Treasurer is a voting member for related items.

² The Public Defender is a voting member for related items.

³ The Public Defender is a voting member for related items.

of the Salary Board about procedure and how it's going to be addressed. I apologize for any confusion it might have caused.

Controller Stickel: I typically it believe it is public comment not public discussion, however since there already seems to be discussion I'll respond to the public. Judge, there was nothing inherently evil about the decisions that were made. I wasn't aware some of your items were time sensitive so I apologize. This matter simply came down to timing and needing to have the agenda posted. We are working on confirming information from the data collected for the salary study and what we have to make like positions and grades in line with each other and other fifth class counties. We will then work with finance and the commissioners to see what they feel tax payers can afford. Salaries in Blair County have been below market, whether it be other fifth class counties or the central job market in our County, for decades. That is due to the actions of people who have been here and gone long before any of us we got here. We're not going to fix it overnight. Taxpayers are the ones who have to pay for it. They have to understand that if we can attract better people by paying better wages it will be much more efficient and productive. In response to the District Attorney, we are trying to retain equity because there aren't different department employees there are County employees. I welcome grant funding with retention, and we have done better with bonuses than we have increasing a change to salary.

Commissioner Kesslering: I appreciate the comments that were made, and even though as a board we don't have to make comments I think the transparency is necessary. I also believe when elected officials and department head come to us with questions we need to answer them.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Commissioner Kesslering and seconded by Controller Stickel that the minutes from the August 28, 2024, meeting be approved. The motion was unanimously carried.

Positions:

7.

Department	Treasurer's Office		Presented By:	Treasurer Jim Carothers	
Type	Set Rate			# of Positions	1
Position	Deputy – Treasurer			Position #	124502
Pay Grade	S4	Rate or Range	\$40,009.06 - \$43,209.90		
Union	Nonunion			FLSA Status	Excluded
PT/FT Status	Full-time		Schedule	35 hours per week	
Salary	\$1,683.68	bi-weekly	\$43,775.68	annually	
Funding Source	General Fund - budgeted at this rate.			Primary Org Code	
Effective Date	9/2/2024				
Reason	To reinstate Brenda Bryan at her previous rate.				
Comments					

A motion was made by Treasurer Carothers and seconded by Commissioner Kesslering to set the rate for the position as stated. The motion was unanimously carried.

8.

Department	District Attorney	Presented By:	District Attorney Peter J. Weeks	
Type	Set Rate		# of Positions	2
Position	Chief Detective and Detective		Position #	205201/205101
Union	Nonunion	FLSA Status	Nonexempt	
PT/FT Status	Full-time	Schedule	35 hours per week	
Funding Source	General Fund – See “Comments” section.		Primary Org Code	
Effective Date	8/23/2024			
Reason	Detective hours worked for special operations/details designated for other county law enforcement shall be paid time and a half rate and the county will be reimbursed by grants or Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General.			
Comments				

This item was tabled for more discussion to be had on the matter.

9.

Department	Public Defender	Presented By:	Chief Public Defender Russell Montgomery	
Type	Other - Retention Bonus		# of Positions	1
Position	Administrative Staff Supervisor		Position #	202401
Union	Nonunion	Exempt Status	Nonexempt	
PT/FT Status	Full-time	Schedule	35 hours per week	
Funding Source	General Fund – See “Comments” section.		Primary Org Code	
Effective Date	9/25/2024			
Reason	Request approval to pay Tracy Mattern a \$2,500 retention bonus.			
Comments	This bonus was approved in and will be paid for by the Indigent Defense Grant.			

A motion was made by Public Defender Montgomery and seconded by Commissioner Kessler to approve retention bonus for the position as stated. The motion was unanimously carried.

10.

Department	Public Defender	Presented By:	Chief Public Defender Russell Montgomery	
Type	Other - Retention Bonus		# of Positions	1
Position	Case Manager		Position #	331505
Union	Nonunion	Exempt Status	Nonexempt	
PT/FT Status	Full-time	Schedule	35 hours per week	
Funding Source	General Fund – See “Comments” section.		Primary Org Code	
Effective Date	9/25/2024			
Reason	Request approval to pay Kelly Moyer a \$2,500 retention bonus.			
Comments	This bonus was approved in and will be paid for by the Indigent Defense Grant.			

A motion was made by Public Defender Montgomery and seconded by Commissioner Kessler to approve retention bonus for the position as stated. The motion was unanimously carried. Ms. Moyer has been with the County since she was 18.

11.

Department	Public Defender	Presented By:	Chief Public Defender Russell Montgomery	
Type	Other - Retention Bonus		# of Positions	1
Position	Legal Assistant		Position #	121601
Union	Nonunion	Exempt Status	Nonexempt	
PT/FT Status	Full-time	Schedule	35 hours per week	
Funding Source	General Fund – See “Comments” section.		Primary Org Code	
Effective Date	9/25/2024			
Reason	Request approval to pay Marina Bennetti a \$2000 recruitment bonus.			
Comments	This bonus was approved in and will be paid for by the Indigent Defense Grant.			

A motion was made by Public Defender Montgomery and seconded by Commissioner Kessler to approve recruitment bonus for the position as stated. The motion was unanimously carried.

12.

Department	Children, Youth and Families	Presented By:	Shannon Tucker & Mindy Hostler	
Type	Other		# of Positions	
Position	Nonunion Positions		Position #	
Union	Nonunion	FLSA Status		
Funding Source	CYF Fund – See "Comments" section		Primary Org Code	
Effective Date	10/11/2024			
Reason	Retention Incentive for non-union CYF employees.			
Comments	<p>Blair County was awarded \$150,000 in Family First Transition Funds. Due to turnover at Blair County CYF and the state of the agency, we are asking for a retention incentive for all CYF employees. As per Subpart 2, this retention incentive is for all employees whose daily work is in some way related to preventing unnecessary separation of children from their families, improving the quality of care and services to children and their families, and ensuring permanency for children by reuniting them with their parents, by adoption or by another permanent living arrangement. Everyone, from Supervisors, fiscal, clerical to Case-aids, is working diligently to contract with providers, transport children and families to necessary doctor appointment and court hearings, support adoptive families by providing support as necessary so that they can make a lifetime commitment to our children, ensure safety in homes, and address problems of families who children have been placed in foster care so that reunification may occur. This retention incentive will be 100% paid for by the federal government. Our proposed one-time payment retention incentive for all non-union employees is as follows: Supervisors: 3,000 each (Sandra, Mindy, Shannon, Julie, Allison, Nicholas, Olivia, and Karlee): \$24,000 Fiscal: 1,500 each (Sonya): \$1,500 \$25,500 TOTAL All union staff will be addressed through a union contract side letter</p>			

After some discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Kessler and seconded by Commissioner Webster to approve retention bonus for employees in good standing in the positions as stated. The motion was unanimously carried.

13.

Department	Fort Roberdeau	Presented By:	Director Glenn Nelson	
Type	Other - Status Change		# of Positions	1
Position	Historic Site Assistant II		Position #	206601
Pay Grade	H2	Rate or Range	\$11.03 - \$12.13	
Union	Nonunion	Exempt Status	nonexempt	
PT/FT Status	Full-time		Schedule	35 hours per week
Funding Source	Fort Fund – will be added to 2025 budget		Primary Org Code	
Effective Date	1/1/2025			
Reason	Restoration of the Historic Site Assistant II position to the Full-time nonexempt hourly status.			
Comments	This position currently exists as a 1500 hour/anniversary year position, with the incumbent expected to meet or exceed those hours. No change is currently being requested to the hourly rate.			

A motion was made by Commissioner Kessler and seconded by Commissioner Webster to approve the status change for the position as stated pending approval of the 2025 budget. The motion was unanimously carried.

14.

Department	Commissioner's Office	Presented By:	Commissioner's Office	
Type	Set Rate		# of Positions	1
Position	Chief Clerk		Position #	123901
Pay Grade	S15	Rate or Range	\$72,054.06 - \$77,828.58	
Union	Nonunion	FLSA Status	Excluded	
PT/FT Status	Full-time		Schedule	35 hours per week
Salary	\$2,846.15	bi-weekly	\$74,000.00	Annually
Funding Source	General Fund - budgeted at this rate.		Primary Org Code	
Effective Date	9/3/2024			
Reason	Setting the rate of newly hired incumbent Sherry Socie			
Comments	Sherry's wage for this position was previously suggested and placed onto a consent agenda at a flat \$74,000. As this wage is in excess of the hiring minimum for the position of \$72,054.06, this request is for the Board to approve a rate above said hiring minimum.			

A motion was made by Commissioner Kessler and seconded by Commissioner Webster to set the rate for this position as stated. The motion was passed with three yays and one nay from Commissioner Burke.

15. Overtime Report was provided for all board members and presented by Controller Stickel. The County has used 89.5% of its overtime, but we also have a high vacancy rate.

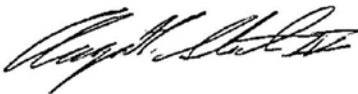
16. Vacancy Report was provided for all board members and will be kept on file with the minutes. Currently there are 138 vacancies.

Commissioner Kessler asking on behalf of the courts for a special to address Court items not included on the agenda and to have a decision made to how items get submitted and placed on the agenda so this does not happen again in the future.

17. Adjournment. The meeting was called to adjourn at 10:00 a.m. by Commissioner Kessler and seconded by Controller Stickel. The motion was unanimously carried.

The next regular Salary Board Meeting will be October 9, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.
in the Commissioner's Public Meeting Room

Respectfully Submitted,



August C. Stickel IV
Secretary