

FINAL MINUTES
INDEPENDENT CITIZENS COMMISSION

January 7, 2015

The Independent Citizens Commission met Wednesday January 7, 2015, at 8:30 a.m., in Room 151, State Capitol, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Commission members present: Chair-Mr. Larry Ross, Vice Chair-Mr. Chuck Banks, Mr. Mitch Berry, Ms. Barbara Graves, Mr. Stuart Hill, Ms. Brenda James, and Mr. Stephen Tipton.

Chair Ross, called the meeting to order and acknowledged Commission members, Mr. Brandon Robinson, Office of the Attorney General, and Ms. Melanie Jenkins, Commission Staff.

Consideration of Minutes from the December 30, 2015, Commission Meeting

Before the Minutes were approved Commissioner James recommended a few changes to the minutes, and those were given to Ms. Jenkins. A motion was made by Commissioner Tipton and seconded by Commissioner Graves to adopt the minutes as amended. The motion carried without objection.

Judge Brown-Arkansas Judicial Council: (Handout 1)

Judge Brown gave his presentation on expenses (mileage and meals) that Judges would expect to incur. Salaries will be discussed at the January 14th meeting.

Judge Pate Arkansas District Judges Council: (Handout 2)

Judge Pate gave a presentation on the District Judge expenses (mileage and meals). Salaries will be discussed at the January 14th meeting.

Richard Wilson-Assistant Director, Bureau of Legislative Research: (Handout 3)

Mr. Wilson presented comparable information on salaries, expenses and benefits offered to the Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches for each of the 50 states.

Megan Alexander- Auditor of State Office: (Handout 4)

Ms. Alexander gave a presentation on expenses that have been paid in the past to the Executive and Judicial branches.

Speaker Gilliam-Speaker of the House:

Speaker Gilliam presented information to the commission regarding the job and what is required of each including time spent to fulfill members duties.

Senator Dismang: President Pro Tempore: (Handout 4 &5)

Senator Dismang gave a presentation on Per Diem, Mileage expenses along with member monthly expenses, along with a schedule of meetings from years 2013 and 2014.

Brandon Sharp, State Budget Administrator:

Gave clarity and answered questions on the Budget of the State of Arkansas and if the money is available for salary increases for Executive, Legislative and Judicial members. Vice Chairman Bank requested that Mr. Sharp come back to present a report on January 14, 2015 meeting to provide additional information requested by the commission.

Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Graves and Tipton requested clarification from Mr. Robinson with the Attorney Generals office on the timeline given for their initial recommendations. Mr. Robinson stated it is his advice that any proposed adjustments, if there are any, be given by February 2nd for all positions being considered by the commission. Chairman Ross proposed increasing the amount of time the commission meets. The dates agreed upon are as follows January 14, 2015, January 16, 2015, January 26, 2015, January 27, 2015, January 28, 2015, January 29, 2015, January 30, 2015, February 2, 2015. Chairman Ross suggested the timeline of January 16 & 26 the commission concentrate on Arkansas General Assembly's salaries and expenses and make recommendations. January 27 and 28 will concentrate on Constitutional Offices, and January 29 and 30 will concentrate on Judicial positions. Commissioners discussed the criteria needed for making these decisions and request to compare the five states above us and 5 states below us similar in being a Hybrid State, Per Capita Income, and Population, Cost of Living, General Revenue and Expenditures. This data will be collected by the Bureau of Legislative Research.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hill to look at the 21 states with the criteria of Hybrid Legislative body, and contiguous states Per Capita Income, Population, Cost of Living, General Revenue and Expenditures. And that Bureau Legislative Research has per diem, mileage, and salary comparisons of those states. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Berry. Motion carried without objection.

Consideration of the Agenda for January 14th meeting:

Vice Chair Banks recommended that we set the agenda for the January 14th meeting. The agenda was set as follows: Brandon Sharp with DFA, Judge Womack with Arkansas Judicial Council, Mr. Wilson with Bureau of Legislative Research and Mrs. Brownstein. A motion was made by Commissioner Berry and seconded by Commissioner Graves. The motion carried without objection.

Chairman Ross stated that Ms. Jenkins is looking into Bowen School of Law as a possible location. Currently U of A Cammack Village is on hold for January 14th meeting. Commissioner James will also check on the availability of the Little Rock School District at 13th and Markham with possible Live Streaming as an option for a meeting place.

Upcoming meeting dates are as follows:

Wednesday, January 14, 2015 - Location TBD

Friday, January 16, 2015-Location TBD

Monday January 26, 2015- Location TBD
Tuesday January 27, 2015- Location TBD
Wednesday January 28, 2015- Location TBD
Thursday, January 29, 2015 -Location TBD
Friday, January 30, 2015- Location TBD
Monday, February 2, 2015 -Location TBD

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

This meeting can be watched in its entirety at <http://arkansashouse.org> or a copy of the recording can be provided by Melanie Jenkins.