

Memo To: Dan Bittinger II, Chairperson
Woodbury County Board of Supervisors
From: Woodbury County Compensation Board
Date: February 7, 2025
Re: Recommended Compensation Schedule for Elected Officials

The Woodbury County Compensation Board met at 5:30 p.m. on February 6, 2025, to discuss the compensation schedule for elected officials in FY 25-26.

The Compensation Board unanimously recommends that the salary of each elected official be increased as follows:

- Treasurer: 4%
- Sheriff: 5%
- Auditor: 4%, plus a \$5,000.00 stipend
- County Attorney: 8.5%
- Supervisors: 4%

Iowa Code § 331.907(1) was amended, effective July 1, 2024, to add the requirement that Compensation Boards provide information explaining the rationale for their recommendations. At the meeting last night, the Board reviewed salary data provided by ISAC (Iowa State Association of Counties), which includes the current salary for every elected official in each of Iowa's 99 counties, and discussed appropriate comparators, as it relates to each elected official in Woodbury County. Members provided information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics regarding inflation and cost of living adjustments.

As it relates to specific individual recommendations, the Auditor's representative shared data, not only from Iowa, but also from the neighboring states of Nebraska and South Dakota. In addition, the Board discussed the fact that Woodbury County, like several other counties in Iowa, does not have a Budget Director. Most, if not all similarly situated counties provide a stipend to Auditors who assume this additional responsibility. Those stipends range in value from \$500.00 - \$7,500.00.

Woodbury County ranks 7th in population, but our County Attorney's salary is 10th. The Board of Supervisors are well aware of the staffing issues in that office, most (if not all) of which relate to pay and the ability to recruit and keep attorneys. These staff shortages have resulted in doubling what, historically, has been considered a normal workload. There is also a direct impact on the County Attorney and his First Assistant in terms of allocating time between case assignments and office management. The recommended increase is intended to help address this situation.

The salaries paid to members of the Board of Supervisors have been a concern to the Compensation Board for many years. Woodbury County is the 7th largest county in Iowa, but the Board member salaries rank 37th. In addition to the factors considered above, the 4% recommendation is intended as a first step in addressing this issue.

Finally, as it relates to the Sheriff, the legislative criteria for determining a salary for that office differs from the criteria evaluated for other elected county officials. The primary focus is on the salary of city police chiefs in cities with populations similar to the population of the county in which they are located. Polk (Des Moines), Linn (Cedar Rapids), Johnson (Iowa City), Scott (Davenport) and Woodbury (Sioux City) are examples of counties/cities where the salaries of sheriffs and police chiefs are nearly identical. The current recommendation is intended to preserve the status quo.