

Wilco Commissioners discuss cost-of-living raises

Staff recommends 5 percent raises for commissioners, county elected officials

By KATE THURMUND

Wilco commissioners heard results of an annual salary study Tuesday. The results and recommendations were presented by Rebecca Clemons, director of human resources.

This salary study reviewed 91 positions of 68 different classifications in the county. It utilizes information from the Dallas and Houston area markets, according to the presentation.

The total number of positions with grade changes was 63, and the total number of classifications after salary study was 65. The projected total fiscal impact is \$111.821.

Ms. Clemons said action on the information should be treated with caution given the current fiscal climate of the county.

"Based on reports that are coming out, some are saying we're near a recession and some are saying we're already in a recession," she said. "I do want to be mindful of the balance of giving employees increases with the cost of living increases that are going up. But we also want to be very cautious because at some point, it's going to fall and those numbers will start to decline again. We want to make sure we are not in a situation where we have to look at salary cuts or layoffs similar to what happened in 2008-2010."

The only item on the agenda from the presentation was the salary of elected officials. Ms. Clemons recommended a flat 5 percent cost-of-living raise, which passed by popular vote, but she also put forth the proposal of adding elected officials to the Salary Study Cycle 6 next year, which drew some hesitance from Mr. Gravel.

"I don't know that I'm going to be supportive of putting elected officials in this," he said. "[They] know what they get paid when they take the job. When you're in this position, you're here to serve the people of Williamson County. It doesn't make a difference what the Travis County or the Burnet County Judge makes. I think it's

unnecessary; it's about our employees."

Precinct 4 Commissioner Russ Boles argued that the study could yield valuable information about entities other than commissioners court where adjustments would behoove the people running those offices.

"There are some elected officials who manage many employees and those offices are changing rapidly," he said. "Tax assessor collectors, the sheriff's office, the county attorney—those positions and their duties are changing."

He also pointed out that the study would take place next year, not immediately. Precinct 1 Commissioner Terry Cook also agreed

with Mr. Boles that the study could be of benefit, even if no changes needed to be made.

"Just because you've done the study doesn't mean you have to take action," she said.

Mr. Gravel conceded that adding officials to the study might have the potential to keep employees with Williamson County who might be tempted by nearby counties' benefits.

"There are some elected officials who could relocate for better salaries," he said. "Perhaps we should consider it."

The commissioners plan to vote on August 9 on the budget order, and will examine participating in the salary study next fiscal year.

Art quilts illustrate life's experiences and emotions

Cindy Loos' exhibit "Textiles = Art" opens August 16 in the Georgetown Public Library and will feature art quilts that Ms. Loos has made in the last 10 years. She will give a talk about her work and the exhibit at her opening reception on August 19, on the library's second floor.

Ms. Loos has gone from making traditional quilts in her early life to making art quilts in the past 20 years. In the last decade her style has shifted from realistic quilts to her current, more abstract style. She creates works that come from life experiences and tries to capture the feelings and emotions from those experiences. Topics include the plight of the Indiana bat, rest after a long hike in the woods, an outdoor evening concert; these are some of the pieces that she has documented and translated into textile form.

One of her pieces, "About Melbourne," is an abstraction about the city of Melbourne, Australia, where she visited in 2019. She said, "The city of Melbourne was a meld of sophistication and laid back comfort, and I tried to show that feeling in this quilt with the bright scaffolding grids upon the neutral background. The quilt has an ease about it punctuated with bright city colors."

Ms. Loos lives in Georgetown and has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Ohio University. She spent much of her early years making traditional quilts while nurturing and raising a family. In more recent years she

BIBLIOFILES

Dana Hendrix

has had more time to devote to her early love, art. She began to blend her love of textiles and her art to create the pieces that will be in this exhibit. She has shown works nationally and internationally in prominent quilt shows, as well, and the library is fortunate to host her exhibit.

At any given time, the library may have up to four exhibits going on, and this summer is no exception. Thank you to everyone who came out to vote for their favorites among the 65 pieces in the Texas Society of Sculptors show. The awards were announced on July 17. The People's Choice Award contest was very, very close, but in the end the ribbon went to "Intrusion" by Ronnie Wells (#3). And the Librarians' Choice Award went to "Maw" by Lee Edwards (#34).

All other prizes were determined by this year's juror, expert stone carver Stuart Simpson of Austin Stone Carving. Cash awards were funded by the City of Georgetown Arts and Culture Board. The winners were:

First Place: "Subdural" by Harry Angel (#42)

Second Place: "Seated Woman" by Cass Hook (#55)

Third Place: "Memento" by Dawn Raines (#16)

Honorable Mention, Metal: "Calf Dashing to Mother" by Raghav Kaneria (#9)

Honorable Mention, Stone or Wood: "The Pleasant Lady" by Jim Woodruff (#19)

Honorable Mention, Mixed Media: "The



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Outlook" by Benjamin Bjork (#30)
Congratulations to all the winners. The TSOS sculpture show continues into September, and award winners are marked with ribbons. In the Library Lobby, visitors can pick up a numbered list of all sculptures in the show to make sure they see everything.

See you at the library!

Dana Hendrix coordinates art exhibits and serves as the Technical Services Librarian at the Georgetown Public Library.

Art in the library

Through August 14: Williamson County Art Guild: Colors of the Rainbow Exhibit (Second Floor Bridge and Hall Galleries)

August 16-September 25: Cindy Loos: Textiles = Art exhibit (Second Floor Bridge and Hall Galleries)

August 19, 4-6 p.m.: Cindy Loos Reception and Artist Talk (Second Floor Bridge and Hall Galleries)

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