

## Report to the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council

From the Cherokee Nation Citizens Compensation Committee

In accordance with Legislative Act of 05-11 of the Cherokee Constitution

February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011

### **Members**

The Honorable Judge Robin W. Adair - Chairman (Muskogee, Ok)

Robin Flint Ballenger (Tulsa, Ok)

Timothy D. Brown (Seminole, Ok)

The Honorable A.J. Henshaw (Sallisaw, Ok)

Michael Kelley (Edmond, Ok)

### **Charge**

To set guidelines by which elected Cherokee Nation Officials, specifically the Principal Chief, Deputy Chief, Speaker and members of the Tribal council will be compensated.

### **Procedures**

The four members appointed to this committee by the Principal Chief (Robin Adair and Robin Ballenger) and by the Tribal council (Tim Brown and Michael Kelley) met by teleconference on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 to unanimously appoint our fifth member, the Honorable A. J. Henshaw, retired Judge. Upon Mr. Henshaw's acceptance, we convened in person on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the Council House in Tahlequah, and met well into the afternoon.

We closely examined comparative data for Oklahoma State and local officials, other tribes and governmental entities as well as the private sector and other relevant market information. We reviewed the duties and time commitments of the Chiefs, the Speaker and Council members and carefully weighed the financial practical responsibilities with which they are charged. With the help of Mr. Doug Evans, the executive director of financial oversight for the Nation, we sought to gain an understanding of the financial status of the Nation and its growth and progress over the last decade.

This Committee feels strongly that our Cherokee Nation elected officials hold positions of great and grave responsibility as they govern the country's second largest Indian tribe. The Cherokee Nation has an enormous economic and cultural impact on our state and region. The Council specifically is

charged with a nearly \$600 million budget and oversight of many vital services for our people. The Council is the voice of our citizenry, and its members deserve a salary that will attract the quality of Council members that will safeguard our strength and growth. The Speaker holds administrative responsibilities for the legislative branch of tribal government. It is the unanimous opinion of our committee that it is time to compensate our elected officials in accordance with their value to the Nation.

### **Recommendations**

After deliberations, the committee unanimously agreed on our findings. We respectfully submit the following salary recommendations:

The vehicle allowance currently in force shall be discontinued.

The committee unanimously recommends an 11% annual increase each year for the next four years for the Members of the Council, Deputy Chief and the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. Please find enclosed chart.

The committee also unanimously felt that the Speakers position should receive an increase stipend equal to 1/3 the amount of compensation for Council members. Because of the extra duties required of the Speaker and the Speaker's status as presiding officer of a co-equal branch of tribal government. See enclosed chart.

Each of the committee members greatly values our Cherokee citizenship and we appreciate this opportunity to be of service to the Cherokee Nation.

The committee wishes to thank Shelli Brittain and Doug Evans for their assistance throughout our deliberations.

Respectfully submitted,



The Honorable Robin W. Adair, Chairman

**Attachment A**

**SALARY CHART**

Council Member:	Current:	\$36,450.00
	1 <sup>st</sup> Year:	\$40,459.05
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year:	\$44,910.05
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year:	\$48,850.15
	4 <sup>th</sup> Year:	\$55,333.67
Speaker:	1 <sup>st</sup> Year:	\$53,945.40 (includes stipend)
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year:	\$59,880.07 (includes stipend)
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year:	\$66,466.87 (includes stipend)
	4 <sup>th</sup> Year:	\$73,778.23 (includes stipend)
Deputy Chief	Current:	\$57,241.60
	1 <sup>st</sup> Year:	\$63,538.18
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year:	\$70,527.38
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year:	\$78,825.39
	4 <sup>th</sup> Year:	\$86,896.78
Chief	Current:	\$122,444.00
	1 <sup>st</sup> Year:	\$124,812.84
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year:	\$138,542.25
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year:	\$153,781.90
	4 <sup>th</sup> Year:	\$170,697.91