

Staff Report

Subject: Proposed increase to jury duty pay
Author: Mark W. Barnes, Finance Director
Department: Clerk of Courts, prepared by Finance Department
Meeting Date: 1/16/2024
Item Description: Consideration to approve an increase in the daily pay and per diem pay of jurors.

Summary Recommendation:

The Grand Jury convened in December, and through the Clerk of Courts and per Georgia code §15-12-7, the Grand Jury requests and recommends that ECBOC approves increasing jury selection and jury duty pay from \$25 per day to \$40 per day and increasing the daily per diem rate from \$7 per day to \$10 per day.

Executive Summary:

Georgia is one of many states wherein state law does not dictate a fixed amount that counties must pay for jury duty. Rather, Georgia code §15-12-7 dictates the minimum and maximum that juries can be paid: the minimum is \$5 per day and the maximum is \$50 per day. Further, this code section stipulates that any increases in juror compensation must be approved by the governing authority of the county.

Currently, all jurors (and potential jurors undergoing jury selection) are paid \$25 per day, and when they stay after 11:00 AM they are paid \$7 per diem, for a total maximum of \$32 per day. The Grand Jury's proposed new rates are \$40 per day with a \$10 per diem, for a daily maximum total of \$50.

The County first started paying this \$32 daily maximum in 2003. Per the inflation calculator on the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis's website, \$32 in 2003 would equate to \$52.70 in 2023.

The Superior Court spent approximately \$60,000 in juror fees in FY 2023, this proposed increase would bring that to roughly \$90,000 if it had been in effect for that fiscal year.

Bulloch County currently pays \$33 - \$40 per day, depending on various factors.

Chatham County currently pays \$15 for attending jury selection, and \$30 per day for sworn jurors.

Alternatives for Commission to Consider:

1. Approve increasing the daily jury duty pay to \$40, and the daily per diem to \$10.
2. Do not approve any increase.
3. Approve a different increase.
4. Provide staff with direction.

Recommended Alternative:

The Grand Jury recommends Alternative number 1 – Approve increasing the daily jury duty pay to \$40, and the daily per diem to \$10.

Other Alternatives: N/A

Department Review: Clerk of Courts, Finance

Funding Source: General Fund

Attachments: Georgia Code §15-12-7