

On the Subject of Bonuses – In General:

First, we should note that compared to the average salary in Highland County; local government employees have **higher pay, excellent benefits—including medical—**more paid holidays than any other group, and, **the big one, a paid retirement.** There are few, if any, private employers in this county that offer a retirement annuity.

So when it comes to more pay, **how much is enough? Can there ever be enough?**

Bonuses or stipends should be an **incentive for taking on extra duties or for superior performance.** If **everyone gets them,** we're not talking about bonuses or incentives anymore—we're simply talking about more pay. This actually **de-incentivizes** high performers.

As has been stated before, **the County portion of the budget is 88% salaries and expenses associated with employees, keeping the lights on, and other related costs.** Just 12% goes to local programs. **That's it—12%.**

We have **147 employees,** in a county with roughly **2,300 residents—77 of whom are on the County side.** That's simply an amazing number. Again, remember that we're talking about the **best-paid** employees in the County, with **benefits, the most paid holidays off, and a taxpayer-funded retirement.**

After a 15.9% real estate tax increase, giving out **additional bonuses** to those who benefited from that **outsized tax increase** is a slap in the face to the County taxpayer. That includes handing out **across-the-board Christmas bonuses as well—you're** treating one group lavishly (government employees), at the expense of taxpayers.

After doing something like that, you might as well top it off with a **few lumps of coal** in the taxpayer's stocking.