

## San Antonio Express-News (TX)

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### **Comal bosses want 8% raise to 'catch up'** *Roger Croteau EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER*

NEW BRAUNFELS -- While Comal County employees and all other elected officials are slated to receive 5 percent pay increases in the 2006 county budget, county commissioners are considering giving themselves 8.67 percent.

Commissioner Jack Dawson said the raise would bring commissioners up to the average salary of county commissioners in the 18 Texas counties with populations between 50,000 and 100,000.

"All we're trying to do is catch up," Dawson said.

Dawson said his analysis of elected officials' salary figures provided by the Texas Association of Counties shows the pay of most other Comal County officials either at or above the average of similar-size counties.

Constables would need about the same raise as is being proposed for commissioners to be brought up to the average, but commissioners are considering a 5 percent raise for constables.

County Judge Danny Scheel proposed the raises in a public notice published Sunday.

The Commissioners Court can approve lower salaries than those listed in the public notice, but to go higher they would have to delay the budget process by publishing a new notice.

Under the proposed raise, commissioners would see their salaries go up \$3,738, from \$43,107 to \$46,845. A 5 percent raise, the same as all other county employees, would bring their salaries to \$45,262.

Commissioner Jan Kennady said she will not accept any raise, a promise she made on the campaign trail.

Commissioner Jay Millikin said he wants to roll the raise back to 5 percent at a budget workshop planned for Tuesday.

"I told (County Sheriff) Bob Holder 'no' when he wanted larger raises for his employees, and giving myself 8 1/2 percent just doesn't wash," Millikin said.

**Commissioner Greg Parker said he understands it may upset some people if commissioners give themselves the biggest raises in the county.**

**"Some of us are willing to look bad in order to do the right thing," he said.**

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