



Parliamentary Question

**Minister for Housing and Local Government
Honourable Maciu K. Nalumisa**

Parliamentary Question 271/2024

**Parliament
Government Buildings
SUVA**

Monday: 2 December 2024

Written Question

Hon. Premila Kumar to ask the Minister for Local Government – Can the Minister inform the Parliament on the following for each Municipal Council from January 2024 to date:

- a) List of Councils currently run by an Executive Chair including the salary levels and the dates of appointment; and**
- b) Total expenditure (inclusive of allowance /salary, travel allowance, meals, and accommodation) for Special Administrators and Executive Chairs**

Mr. Speaker Sir, pursuant to Standing Order 45(3), I provide this written response to question 217/2024.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I wish to respond to the question that by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, the Special Administrators were appointed in December 2023, to implement the much-needed constructive reforms in local government. The appointments were purely based on merit and through a due diligence process.

Locals with an understanding of community needs were chosen as Special Administrators. Under the direction of the Special Administrators, the Municipal Councils have been functioning autonomously.

The salary and entitlements of Special Administrators as per the Higher Salaries Commission Act 2023, is determined by the Higher Salaries Commission. The Special Administrators salaries determination is based on the size of the Councils, which is small, medium and large. In addition, the salary of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and acting CEO is also determined by the Higher Salaries Commission.

Part A

List of Councils currently run by an Executive Chair including the salary levels and the dates of appointment.

The Municipal Councils currently have Special Administrators who are acting as Chief Executive Officers.

The Councils where a Special Administrator is acting at CEO are: Suva City Council, Nasinu Town Council and Tavua Town Council. There are no Executive Chairs, as noted in the Hon. Member's questions, as the Ministry do not consent to the creation of a new position within the Council Structure.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the dates and salary level of the Acting CEOs are as follows. This salary is calculated similar to the civil service acting, that is, 95% of the difference of the salary of the Special Administrator and the CEO is added to the base salary of the Special Administrator.

1. **Suva City Council**

- Acting CEO: Mr. Tevita Boseiwaqa
- Date of Appointment: 4 July 2024
- Salary as approved by the Higher Salaries Commission: annual remuneration of \$159,386.

2. **Nasinu Town Council**

- Acting CEO: Mr. Felix Magnus
- Date of Appointment: 4 July 2024
- Salary Level: annual remuneration of \$79,549.80

3. **Tavua Town Council**

- Acting CEO: Mr. Sireli Korovulavula
- Date of Appointment: 22 October 2024
- Salary Level: Acting Salary for Acting CEO is not yet implemented as approval from Higher Salaries Commission is still pending. He is only paid the SA Allowance of \$12,000/annum until the approval from the Higher Salaries Commission

Mr. Speaker Sir, the rationale for appointing the Acting CEOs for the Councils was essential to ensure the streamlining of municipal services, improving infrastructure development, strengthening the revenue streams, bringing about financial stability, preparation of annual accounts and publication of Annual Reports.

Mr. Speaker Sir, prior to the appointment of the Acting CEOs, the Ministry had sought legal advice from the Office of the Solicitor-General on the legal implications of the same.

The decision to appoint Acting Chief Executive Officers for the three Councils is an interim arrangement only. The appointment will end as soon as the Councils are able to recruit a qualified and suitable CEOs to lead the respective organisations. The

Ministry of Local Government and the Municipal Councils understand the need to fill the substantial positions in a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker Sir, as such, the Municipal Councils have engaged the services of KPMG Advisory (Fiji) Pte Limited, as the Recruiting Agency to support the Councils in the recruitment of the Chief Executive Officers. The service of the local executive recruitment firm is to assist the Municipal Councils in the end-to-end selection and recruitment process for the positions of Chief Executive Officers. This independent and transparent process is to enable the Councils to recruit personnel who have the skills and experience required for the position.

The recruitment process is planned to start this month and is anticipated to be concluded by early 2025. The Ministry is hopeful that the Municipal Councils will be able to recruit visionary applicants who can contribute towards the reforms and success of the Councils amongst other priority areas of the Councils.

Part B

Total expenditure (inclusive of allowance /salary, travel allowance, meals, and accommodation) for Special Administrators and Executive Chairs

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Special Administrators are entitled to allowances, which are paid monthly. The allowances are based on the size of the Municipal Councils. The Special Administrators are also entitled to meal and travel allowance for out of town or city expenses for any meetings such as local government forums, payable by the Councils.

It is worth noting that the Large and Medium Councils pay the allowances from the Council funds whilst the Ministry pays for the Special Administrators of the Small Councils.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the total expenditure for Special Administrators and Acting Chief Executive Officers for the 13 Municipal Councils from January to November 2024 amounts to \$944,670.68.

The table below provides the total allowances paid to the Special Administrators from January to November 2024 by the Ministry:

Table 1 – Allowances paid by Ministry of Local Government for Special Administrators of Small Councils

Name of Councils	Date of Appointment	Total Salary paid out from Jan - Nov 2024
Levuka	27th December 2023	31,416.16
Rakiraki	27th December 2023	21,838.27
Tavua	27th December 2023	40,334.52
Sigatoka	27th December 2023	29,640.21
Savusavu	27th December 2023	26,018.16
Lami	27th December 2023	23,467.34
Total		172,714.66

The total amount (January to November 2024) paid to the Special Administrators of the Small Councils is **\$172,714.66**. This is the allowances paid to these Special Administrators by the Ministry of Local Government.

Mr. Speaker Sir, as alluded to earlier, the Special Administrators are paid allowances for meals and travels for out of station visits as well. This is paid by the Municipal Councils from the Council funds.

The table below consists of the above allowances paid to the Special Administrators of the 13 Municipal Councils:

Table 2 – Allowance Paid to Special Administrators by Councils

Name of Municipal Council	Salary/ Allowance	Meals	Travel	Accommodation¹	Total
Suva City Council	\$109,634.63	\$495.00	\$9,295.45	\$ 945.00	\$120,370.08
Lautoka City Council	\$75,747.80	\$450.00	\$2,665.60	\$5,315.00	\$84,178.40
Nasinu Town Council	\$90,750.00	\$2,538.00	\$3,800.00	\$13,200.00	\$110,288.00
Nadi Town Council	\$39,416.67	\$1,060.50	\$4,303.47	\$959.30	\$45,739.94
Ba Town Council	\$55,916.63	\$593.94	\$1,063.29	\$569.57	\$58,143.43
Labasa Town Council	\$55,916.63	\$5,954.90	\$5,982.50	\$3,050.00	\$70,904.03
Nausori Town Council	\$48,033.48	-	-	\$3,711.64	\$51,745.12
Savusavu Town Council	\$26,018.16	\$1,505.00	\$4,427.60	\$1,943.00	\$33,893.76
Lami Town Council	\$23,467.34	-	\$80.00	\$2,030.00	\$25,577.34
Levuka Town Council	\$31,416.16	\$950.00	\$490.00	\$1,771.00	\$34,627.16
Rakiraki Town Council	\$21,838.27	\$930.00	\$1,210.00	\$2, 355.00	\$23,978.27
Sigatoka Town Council	\$29,640.21	\$970.00	\$230.00	\$2,641.05	\$33,481.26
Tavua Town Council	\$40,334.52	\$1,074.00	\$188.06	\$839.65	\$42,436.23
TOTAL					\$735,363.02

Mr. Speaker Sir, the total allowance (meals, accommodation, travel) paid by the Councils amounts to **\$735,363.02**. The said amount is from January to November 2024.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the allowances of the Special Administrators of the 13 Municipal Councils have been approved by the Higher Salaries Commission as required under the Higher Salaries Commission Act 2023. Needless to say, the appointment letters and the relevant documents issued to these Special Administrators had been vetted by the Office of the Solicitor General to ensure there were no adverse legal implications of the process.

¹ Meals, travel and accommodation – is only paid for out of station events or meetings. Out of station events or meetings – are any official event or meeting that the Special Administrator attends, which is approved by the Board and is outside of the municipality that the Special Administrator is appointed in.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the salaries and allowances paid to the Acting Chief Executive Officers are different from the allowances paid to the Special Administrators.

The table below provides the salaries and allowances of the Acting Chief Executive Officers:

Table 3:

Name of Municipal Council	Salary	Allowances	Total
Suva City Council	\$92,305.66	\$6,305.00	\$98,610.66
Nasinu Town Council	\$90,750.00	\$19,538.00	\$110,288.00
Tavua Town Council	-	\$409.00	\$409.00
TOTAL	\$183,055.66	\$26,252.00	\$209,307.66

Mr. Speaker Sir, the three Councils have paid a sum of **\$183,055.66** as salaries to the Acting Chief Executive Officers and a total of **\$26,252.00** as allowances. The allowances comprise of the following:

- a. Official vehicle – for official duties and reasonable personal use.
- b. Mobile phone – for official use.
- c. Internet – for official use.
- d. Allowance for official travels.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the response to the written question is respectfully submitted.