

# **SALARY COMMISSION Meeting Minutes**

## **SPECIALLY CALLED MEETING**

**Wednesday, August 14, 2019  
7:00 pm**

Police Department Training Room  
250 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. N., Edmonds, WA 98020

**Present:** Jay Grant, Chair  
Ava Dubno, Vice-Chair  
Don Hall, Commissioner  
Jeff Hodson, Commissioner  
Carl Zapora Commissioner  
Marilynne Beard, Consultant, MMB Consulting (by conference phone)

**Excused:**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Grant called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Grant asked the Commissioners if they had any changes to the agenda. Commissioner Zapora noted that he had a topic that he wanted to discuss under Agenda Item 8. Chair Grant agreed that any topic could be introduced under Other Topics of Interest or Concern. Noting no other comments, the agenda was approved as submitted.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Grant asked the Commissioners if there were any changes to the Meeting Minutes of the August 7, 2019 meeting. Chair Grant had communicated to staff about an edit needed clarifying his communication with the Council President about Council Committees. With that edit, Commissioner Hodgson moved to approve the minutes and Vice-Chair Dubno seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Grant noted that there were no members of public present to provide comment.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Review and Update of Additional Data Received since Last Meeting**

- **Cost of Living Adjustments** – Staff provided requested information in the Commission's August 7 packet. The Commissioners noted that it was useful information to have and a reasonable basis for comparing elected officials' compensation adjustments with employee adjustments.
- **Attendance and Committee Appointments** – The City Council's Administrative Assistant provided three documents showing Council attendance at regular Council meetings for 2019, Council Committee appointments and regional committee appointments (see Attachments to minutes).

The Commissioners discussed that, while there were differences in attendance among individual Councilmembers, the number of absences as a percentage of total meetings for the year was not considered excessive. The Commissioners noted that the one aspect of Council Committee procedures that has changed is that Councilmembers no longer report out their attendance and a summary of committee meeting attended. Chair Grant clarified that the Council had eliminated the reports typically provided at the end of the Council meeting due to the late hour for adjournment. She had noted that any significant issues arising out of a Council or regional committee meeting is discussed in open session.

The Commission agreed that no further information on attendance was needed at this time.

### **Council and Community Survey Distribution Update Commission**

Ms. Beard noted that the survey was made available on-line on August 13. A media release was issued on August 13 and a link to the survey was being sent out to groups on the distribution list as contact information for each group became available. Chair Grant noted that he has a contact for the Lion's Club. Commissioner Hodgson had posted a notice on My Edmonds which has about 9,000 subscribers and was contacting other on-line community groups. Commissioner Hall noted that he had made hard copies of the survey that could be filled out and turned in at City Hall. The survey will be available until the end of business on Monday, August 19 and the results will be available for the Commission's August 21 meeting.

### **Discussion of Possible Elected Official's Compensation Adjustments**

Vice-Chair Dubno noted that she had looked at the practices of City Council compensation in other states and noted that it varies. In some cases, Councilmembers receive no compensation.

Chair Grant asked that, if they use CPI as a basis for adjustments, which CPI measure would be appropriate. For instance, should they use the same CPI

factor used for employee groups? Many cities in the Puget Sound use CPI-W but some use CPI-U. Commissioner Zapora noted that it made sense to use the same measure that is used for Edmond's employee groups.

Chair Grant asked each Commissioner to share their thoughts about possible changes to compensation for the Mayor and City Council.

- Vice-Chair Dubno noted that she is less interested in Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA's) and more interested in incentives for meeting attendance.
- Commissioner Hall noted that the Council did not spend a significant amount of time in committee meetings and some Councilmembers have more committee appointments than others. As a consequence, it may not be a consistent measure or accountability for all Councilmembers.
- Commissioner Hodgson noted that he liked the accountability measure of meeting attendance, although he added that it was not the Salary Commission's job to hold the City Council accountable. He noted that the Salary Commission had adjusted compensation in 2017 to bring the Council up to the average and provided a cost of living adjustment for the Mayor. He is inclined to provide a COLA and noted that Councilmembers are not receiving compensation commensurate with the time they devote.
- Commissioner Zapora believes that meeting attendance appears to be a "non-issue" and the better question to ask is whether City Council and Mayor's compensation are competitive. Since the Commission addressed market conditions two years ago, a COLA may be appropriate to stay competitive with the market. If the survey reveals strong reactions from the City Council or the public, the Commission should take that into consideration.
- Chair Grant had provided information from the City of Lynnwood since they were nearby and provided incentive pay for meeting attendance. He believes that, while the public does want the Council to be accountable, they may have a difficult time articulating how that would be measured. He believes it is reasonable to continue to consider a cost of living adjustments to keep from lagging comparable cities.

The commissioners discussed whether to consider compensation of special district elected officials' such as the hospital district, school district and port district. The Commission agreed to consider the new data including monthly compensation, benefits and incentive pay for commission/board members and Chief Executive Officers and the average number of meetings per year attended by the elected officials. Commissioner Zapora offered to reach out to the three districts to request the information.

## **Other Topics of Interest or Concerns**

Chair Grant had received a comment from the City Council expressing concern that some of the Salary Commissioners had endorsed candidates in the current election and that this may be seen as political activity that would represent a conflict of interest. Chair Grant stressed that the commission looks at compensation for positions, not people. In order to ensure that Commissioners are not engaging in activities that present an actual conflict they asked that the City Attorney be consulted as to whether there was any conflict. Ms. Beard will contact the City Attorney.

Topics for the next meeting will include the public hearing, discussion of survey results and proposals regarding compensation adjustments. The Commission would like to have a preliminary decision by the end of the next meeting so that they can finalize their report at the September 11 meeting. The Commission is scheduled to present their recommendation to the City Council on September 17.

### **Future Commission Meeting Schedule**

- Wednesday, August 21, 2019 7:00 pm – Commission Meeting and Public Hearing
- Wednesday, September 11, 2019 7:00 pm – Commission Meeting

### **OTHER**

There were no other items for discussion.

Chair Grant adjourned the meeting at 8:46 p.m.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

City Council Attendance  
Council Committee Assignments  
Regional Committee Assignments