

SALARY COMMISSION Meeting Minutes

SPECIALLY CALLED MEETING

Wednesday, August 21, 2019

7:00 pm

Police Department Training Room
250 5th Ave. N., Edmonds, WA 98020

Present: Jay Grant, Chair
Ava Dubno, Vice-Chair
Don Hall, Commissioner
Jeff Hodson, Commissioner
Marilynne Beard, Consultant, MMB Consulting

Excused: Carl Zapora, Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Grant called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Grant asked the Commissioners if they had any changes to the agenda. There were no changes requested to the agenda and 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 14, 2019 meeting. Chair Grant had communicated one edit that he had requested. With that edit, the minutes were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chair Grant opened the Public Hearing and described the scope and authority of the Salary Commission. Three individuals provided testimony:

1. Barbara Chase regarding the importance of including benefits in addition to salary when describing compensation.
2. Roger Pence spoke to the part-time nature of the City Council's position and that their compensation should reflect a part-time salary and possibly be calculated as a percentage of the Mayor's salary.

3. Victor Eskenazi introduced himself as a new member of the Mountlake Terrace Salary Commission and was in attendance to learn about how the Edmond's Salary Commission operates.

No further public comments were offered and Chair Grant closed the Public Hearing.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Follow-up from August 14, 2019 Meeting

1. Review of Special District Compensation – The Commission had requested comparable compensation data for elected officials and CEO's of the hospital district, port district and school district. Commissioner Zapora had requested the data from the districts and forwarded their responses to staff for compilation. Ms. Beard provided a recap of the data as compiled (Attachment A).
2. City Attorney Follow-up on Conflict Question – At the August 14 Commission meeting Chair Grant advised the Commissioners that he had been contacted by a member of the City Council expressing concern that Commission Members endorsing City Council candidate would create a conflict with their work on the Commission. The Chair asked Ms. Beard to consult with the City Attorney.

Ms. Beard spoke with Jeff Taraday of Lighthouse Law Group, Edmonds contracted City Attorney. Mr. Taraday that there is no provision in the Salary Commission's enabling ordinance or any other regulation that would prevent them from supporting a candidate. Since the Commission is setting compensation prior to the November election (the Commission must complete its work by September 30) they do not have knowledge about which candidates will win and so would not be seen as influencing the election outcome or setting compensation based on an individual candidate.

Council and Community Survey Results

Results of the Community Survey were provided to the Commission electronically of Tuesday, August 20 (Attachment B). Ms. Beard provided an overview of the results including written comments provided to open-ended questions (Attachment C).

Results of the Council Survey were made available at the Commission meeting to enable all Councilmembers that wished to complete the survey time to do so. Ms. Beard provided an overview of the Council survey results (Attachment D).

The Commission discussed the survey results expressed their appreciation to the survey responders and the thoughtfulness of their answers. Their response rate was much better than the previous process in 2017.

Potential Adjustments to Elected Officials' Compensation

Chair Grant opened the Commission discussion about possible adjustments to the Mayor and City Council compensation including the Council President. He offered several thoughts about factors the Commission could consider and reminded the Commissioners that they had approved an adjustment in the last process that brought to the average of other cities.

Chair Grant led a roundtable discussion with the Commissioners about salary comparable figures. The Commission wanted to consider other comparable factors other than just other city and state government boards and councils. Commissioner Hodson pointed out that other cities' comparable ranges average on the higher side and, in some cases was set at over \$18,000 a year. The discussion then turned to reviewing part-time and full-time positions within the City itself including salary, health care and retirement credits based on part-time to full-time.

It was noted that the Mayor is paid about \$10,500 a month in his full-time position. In reviewing other City staff positions that are currently open, Chair Grant noted that the Parks Director's salary, which reports to the Mayor, is \$10,000 to \$13,000 a year, and in fact most all the City Directors salaries are higher than the Mayor's. Reviewing other open positions starting at the lower end start about \$4,100 - \$6,100 a month for a regular full-time staff position, down to some basic part-time personnel who would be paid the State minimum wage which will be \$13.50 beginning January 1, 2020.

With these criteria in mind, the discussion turned to the topic of what a Council's salary might be if it were full-time using the Mayor's position as the comparable. The discussion then turned to how many hours a council member actually works, which has could be difficult to track and can vary significantly from one council member to another. Chair Grant shared that the only place he could find any official document relating to the numbers of hours a Council member work was in the adopted City budget which states council members work an average of 25-32 hours a week. Using a measure that is statistically valid is important.

Commissioner Hodson noted that the Council had not received regular cost of living adjustments prior to 2017 which caused Edmonds to lag behind comparable cities. The Commission calculated what the Council adjustment would have been since the last cost of living adjustment to arrive at their decision for Council salary adjustments in 2018 and 2019.

The Commission then discussed how hours would be tracked if compensation was based on hours worked and who would be responsible for maintaining the records. Since the Council positions are considered salaried, they do not presently track hours.

The Commission then considered how to calculate a salary that could be replicated in the future, for instance using and benchmark hourly rate multiplied by the estimated 25 hours per week. The Commission did not determine the exact formula to use.

The Commission also discussed compensation for the Mayor and Council President. The Commission discussed whether to use the same cost of living adjustment as the non-represented employees for the Mayor's salary. Regarding the Council President, a

majority of the Community and Council survey responses indicated that the extra responsibilities of the Council President warranted additional compensation ranging from \$300 per month to \$1,000 per month, with the most frequent suggestion being \$500. Commissioner Hodson notes that cities with comparable populations pay the Council President up to \$18,000 per year (Attachment E). The Commission did not arrive at a decision regarding the Mayor's or Council President's salary.

The Commission's last scheduled meeting is on September 11 at which time a final decision to forward to the City Clerk would need to be approved. Given that deadline, the Commission agreed to add an additional meeting on September 4 to continue their discussion. Ms. Beard will follow-up with staff to provide for public notice and scheduling of Commissioners and a meeting room.

OTHER

There were no other items for discussion.

Chair Grant adjourned the meeting at 9:15 pm.

Future Commission Meeting Schedule

- Wednesday, September 4, 2019 7:00 pm – Commission Meeting
- Wednesday, September 11, 2019 7:00 pm – Commission Meeting

ATTACHMENTS

A – Summary of Special Districts' Compensation

B – Community Survey Results

C – Summary of Community Survey Results

D – Council Survey Results

E – Comparison Graph of Council/Council President Pay Cities 30,000 to 50,000 Population