



City of Tacoma  
Citizen Commission on Elected Salaries

Ronald Malm, Chair  
Richard Wilkinson, Vice Chair  
Terry Mensonides  
Robert Anderson  
Dianne Conway  
Randy Droppert  
Shari Barrera

**MINUTES**

**TIME:** Monday, August 7th, 2017, 6:00 PM

**PLACE:** 733 Market Street, Room 12, Tacoma, WA 98402

**PRESENT:** Ronald Malm, Richard Wilkinson, Shari Barrera, Randy Droppert, Dianne Conway  
(Walked in at 6:06pm)

**ABSENT (Excused):** Terry Mensonides, Robert Anderson

**Call to Order:**

At approximately 6:05 pm, Chairman Malm, called the meeting to order.

**Roll Call:**

At approximately 6:06 pm, staff liaison, Chantra Real did roll call.

**Discussion of Mayor & City Council Salaries/Duties:**

Council Member Campbell – Not present

**2017 Decision – Salary Recommendation due by September 1<sup>st</sup>:**

(6:06pm) Dianne walked in

(6:06pm) Richard Wilkinson briefed commission on reason for original salary decision.

(6:07pm) Dianne – Didn't go into effect before January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

(6:07pm) Richard – after council members survey, discussion with mayor and former council member, Boe. Called for motion of annual salary –

Mayor - \$100,000  
Council Member - \$45,000  
Deputy Mayor - \$50,000

Regardless of who Mayor is, we recognize the role of Mayor as an ambassador and a represented agenda for the City. Seems to be a clean, faithful approach.

(6:10pm) Dianne – Will you remind me of where we're at before the cut and now?

(6:11pm) Discussion of allowances for mayor. All can access benefits.

Richard – \$100,000 is slightly above what the mayor is getting.

Shari – Recap of timeline of mayor's salary from 2015-current

Randy – Mayor Strickland gives us far more than 40 hours.



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Dianne – It's not required but that is what she has done. Marilyn has gone above and beyond. Anticipates that with the 2 running candidates will continue to do something similar. She goes above and beyond. She's been much more active. David Boe says you can't get away from the job even if you stop by a supermarket even though you're supposed to be Part Time.

Randy – It's a shame. Firefighters make more money than mayor.

Richard – Two things about that, mayor doesn't have a strong union and isn't risking her life. There's a market for firefighters that you can compare. Elected officials are more judgment of art than science.

Dianne – Unfair to compare sometimes to other Cities, most times, they're smaller, expectations levels are different and although we can see in our own council, there's a difference between council members in the amount of time spent in the community. It's a lot of work and requires getting out to the community. If you're expecting your council people to be serving, it does take time. We don't want to set a salary that will deter good candidates from wanting to be our City Mayor.

Ron – It shouldn't be about the money, it should be about public service.

Randy – It's easy to say but she needs to maintain a home and represent the City.

Ron – Someone can represent the City with \$80,000.

Richard – There's a sense of fairness. A couple little comments that Mayor Strickland says all the auctions she goes to and is expected to do her part. These finances are coming out of her pocket, not the City. Mayor has done way more. Mayor Strickland has established an identity for Tacoma that is different from eight years ago. A 6 figure salary makes sense to me in light of the demand of the job. \$80,000 and \$90,000 is fair but no compelling reason to drop their salary substantially which was what was originally decided. Maintaining where we were in 2015 when we started.

Dianne – \$10,000 drop if we go down to \$40,000 for council.

Ron – New mayor coming on board and we won't be talking about Mayor Strickland.

Richard – Mayor Strickland set the bar high. There's a representation that Mayors will have to deliver. People will be compared to Mayor Strickland going forward. My advice is to base on our comparison; I think that Spokane mayor has a different role. The Mayor has a lot more demand than any council. You can spread the work flow amongst council members but you can't spread the work flow for the Mayor.

Randy – The Mayor is the CEO of a thousand so people within a company.

Ron – Asked for HR Director.



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Staff liaison – Gary is out of office today.

Randy – Don't feel comfortable dropping annual salary too low.

Ron – \$84,000 and \$42,000 sounds good. Job ability will grow in time anyhow. It's just like any other job you walk into. It's a job starting with someone new. There are certain steps you take. Public service is a commitment of an individual's service to the public.

Dianne – All the state legislatures that couldn't get a budget pass. I am comfortable with \$100,000 for the Mayor's salary. I think \$120,000 is a bit high. Whoever is going to be our next mayor is going to do a good job and work hard. I know it shouldn't influence the salary decision but I think if you pay people a decent, above average salary, but they're expected to do above average work and work very hard. I know there are a lot of demand, stress and time that comes with the position. I would not take the councilmember salary back down to \$40,000 as they're making \$50,000 now. I would meet at \$45,000. Automatic percentage raise, inflation, and the other hand, you really have people that really put in the hours. Unless some of these folks retire, I'm a strong believer of public service. It certainly isn't always about the money but it helps in getting a quality person who is effective.

Shari – I kind of see it the same way. I think that if we keep it under than \$50,000. Same goes for the council member. \$50,000 and knocking it down to \$38,000. The more incentive they have to do a fair good job that represents the people.

Richard – We had incorrect data from 2015. I move to set the salary of elective officials effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 as follows:

Mayor: \$100,000 annually  
Council Member: \$45,000 annually  
Deputy (Mayor Pro Tem): \$50,000 annually

Randy seconds the motion. Shari and Dianne agrees.

Randy would like to have a small increase to \$105,000 for Mayor.

Dianne – I'm comfortable with \$100,000.

Ron – We were supposed to have a guest but didn't show up. Maybe this is not that important.

Richard – I don't think anything he could have said would change my point of view.

Dianne – We had a couple years to figure out what was going to make sense. What we decided the first meeting was due to short decision time.

Randy – Striking a balance between overly conservative and what is fair.





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Dianne – We'd like council to know that the salary is high and know that most of you do put in a lot of time and effort. We'd like to encourage and also make it attractive for future candidates.

Richard – We want to make the salary at a level that all people in all districts would be interested in the job. I'm still figuring out Tacoma and know that there's a range here. I want to be sure that there are interests in the different districts.

Ron – I'm still not in favor, for 100. I'm from old school and you have to earn your way in. Let's get back to basic and get a standard set. Yes one amount is a little too low but to jump up to this other way of thinking and forget about what we talked about for the last two years to get to this point.

Randy – Contrary side to that, we're going to expect them to hit the ground running. The first year is probably the hardest getting to know the ropes and get to know who they can rely on.

Richard – We're still figuring out how to cycle these things in. The idea that we had waited for this to take into effect January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 was so that everybody is paid the same. I'm concerned that we can do annual for mayor salary but I don't think we have the same flexibility for council salary because of fear of a 2 tier salary system. Yes I'd agree annually for the mayor and maybe for deputy but for council, it's a different story.

Richard – Motion is to set the salary for elected officials as follow:

Mayor: \$100,000 annually

Council Member: \$45,000 annually

Deputy (Mayor Pro Tem): \$50,000 annually

Ron – Motion has been read.

All in favor (4): Richard Wilkinson, Shari Barrera, Randy Droppert, Dianne Conway

All oppose (1): Ronald Malm

Motion has been passed.

(6:38pm) Richard – In terms of preparing the decision, I'll prepare with cooperation with Ron.

Dianne – It's meant to encourage people to do the hard work of the position that it entails.

Ron – If we're doing this for next year, how will we judge? We should invite more people and see what is really going on.

Richard – I think continuing to learn about the type of work done by elected officials makes a lot of sense.

Dianne – We can always see what people are doing. With David Boe coming in last time was very illuminating to hear what it was like for him.



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Richard – I was struck with what David Boe said that the day he was appointed to the council, he was questioned immediately for his ethics. That one day he was an outstanding citizen of the community and then the next day he was a suspect.

Shari – Was it because he was an elected official?

Dianne – He was initially appointed and then he ran.

Richard – I'll work on the draft and send to Chantra (staff liaison) for edits.

Staff – Is a week enough time to prepare the draft?

Richard – It's pretty straight forward. Not too much information to provide this time.

Staff – I will get with Clerk's office for confirmation.

**Review & approval of May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 minutes:**

Ron – Motion to approve minutes. Approved and signed. All in favor.

**Adjournment**

(6:45pm)

  
Chantra Real, HR Assistant, Human Resources

  
Ron Malm, Chair