

## **CITY OF TACOMA'S MINIMUM WAGE TASK FORCE**

# **APPROVED GROUND RULES**

to Guide the Task Force's Discussions and Decision-Making

**Adopted by the Task Force Members on 28 May 2015**

### **Task Force Members' Roles and Responsibilities:**

1. Each member of the Task Force is an equal participant in the process and has equal opportunity to voice opinions and contribute ideas.
2. Task Force members represent others not at the table, but it is understood that each member speaks for her/himself. Task Force members may want to periodically update their constituents about the group's progress. At appropriate times, the members should check with their constituents to seek their reactions to and support for our recommendations.
3. Task Force members accept the responsibility to come to the meetings prepared for the discussions.
4. We also commit to fully explore the issues and search for creative solutions that best serve our mutual interests.
5. We recognize the legitimacy of the interests, concerns, and goals of others, whether or not we agree with them. We commit to treating each other, and those who attend our meetings, with respect, civility, and courtesy.
6. We will listen carefully, ask pertinent questions, and educate ourselves and those we represent about the interests and needs that must be addressed in a constructive problem-solving atmosphere.
7. In view of the specific scope of the project and limited amount of time available, we will make a concerted effort to focus on the topics under discussion.
8. Task Force members, including the alternates, commit to attending as many meetings as possible. If a member must miss a meeting, she/he is responsible for asking a fellow member to represent her/his interests and positions at that meeting. The member may also submit written comments that will be distributed to the others. Task Force members should consult the meeting summaries, which will be sent to them and posted on the Task Force's website, or talk to a fellow member or the facilitator to understand the proceedings and decisions made at the meetings they missed.

9. As the process unfolds, Task Force members should provide feedback to the facilitator on the process and his performance. We may do so at meetings and/or by calling or emailing him between meetings.

### **The Facilitator's Role and Responsibilities:**

10. The facilitator's role is to manage the process by keeping discussions focused, ensuring that all points of view are heard, and conducting the meetings according to the spirit of these ground rules. With no stake in the substantive outcome, he is obligated to remain neutral on the issues.
11. The facilitator will also write drafts of the Task Force's report. Once the final version has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the members, he will work with them to prepare to present it to the Mayor and City Council.

### **The Staff's Roles and Responsibilities:**

12. Like the facilitator, City staff and the economists that the City has hired are resources to support Task Force members. They, too, will remain neutral on the issues. They will support the facilitator in ensuring the process is orderly and well managed and the Task Force by obtaining information that Task Force members agree they need to be able to reach consensus.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Guests:**

13. Interested and affected parties or individuals who are not on the Task Force are welcome to attend the meetings. The public may submit their input in writing to the Task Force.

### **Agreements and Recommendations:**

14. The Task Force is expected to identify and define a wide range of interests, perspectives, and opinions. Decisions will be made by consensus. Consensus is defined as the unanimous agreement of the Task Force members.
15. If a Task Force member finds she/he cannot live with an emerging agreement of the entire group, that person is obligated to make her/his concerns known, and the rest of the group is obligated to listen with an interest in resolving them. Everyone is expected to try work to address the concerns, including asking the concerned party (parties) to clarify the underlying interests or about other dynamics that could be interfering with an agreement. All parties are obligated to try to find an alternative that meets the interests of the concerned party (parties) as well as their own.

16. If it is not possible to reach consensus on particular recommendations, the interests of each party and the potential options for resolving the issue will be documented and included in the Task Force's report.

### **Meeting Agendas and Summaries:**

17. Task Force meetings will be task-oriented. Draft agendas will be prepared by the facilitator and distributed to all members for review and comment 2-3 days before a meeting. Agendas will describe the matter for discussion and the purpose of discussing it, and be accompanied by information necessary to support informed discussion.
18. If the agenda or facilitation techniques are not working, Task Force members agree to inform the facilitator so that changes can be made and the group can proceed.
19. Following the conclusion of each meeting, a summary of key decisions and agreements will be developed by the facilitator and distributed to each member within 48 hours of a meeting's adjournment.
20. Task Force members are obligated to review the summaries for accuracy and to alert the facilitator if they find mistakes.

### **Communicating with the Media and Other Interested Parties:**

21. Task Force members agree that it is in their best interests to not speak to the media or negotiate in public during this process. If contacted by representatives of the media, Task Force members will speak only for themselves, and should focus the comments on the process, not on emerging substantive positions or proposals. Task Force members will avoid characterizing the Task Force's or other members' positions. After speaking with the media representatives, or to other organizations or groups, members should inform the facilitator to minimize the possibility that other parties in this process could misinterpret their comments.
22. When appropriate, a joint statement suitable for discussion with the media and with other organizations will be developed by the Task Force. At that time Task Force members will agree on who shall present it on behalf of them, and how it will be communicated.

### **Final Report:**

23. A draft report summarizing the Task Force's findings and consensus recommendations will be prepared by the facilitator and distributed to all members for their review and approval. After approving it, the Task Force members will submit their final report to the Mayor and City Council.