

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

### **THE TASK FORCE'S FIRST MEETING**

Thursday, 28 May 2015 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.  
The Center for Urban Waters

# **SUMMARY**

## **OF THE MEETING'S KEY DISCUSSIONS, DECISIONS, AND AGREEMENTS**

*Approved by the Task Force on 1 June 2015*

**In attendance: Mayor of Tacoma:** The Honorable Marilyn Strickland; **Task Force Members and Alternates:** Sarah Cherin, Pastor Gregory Christopher, Odette D'Aniello, Michelle Douglas, Liz Dunbar, Dennis Farrow, Reggie Frederick (by telephone), Eric Hahn, Russ Heaton, Elizabeth Lewis, Dr. Ali Modarres, Abranna Romero Rocha, David Strong, Robert Taylor, and Brenda Wiest; **City Staff** serving the Task Force: Chris Bacha, Jared Eyer, Martha Lantz, Christina Watts, and Tadd Willie; **Economic Consultant:** Katie Baird; **Facilitator:** Jim Reid

**Task Force members who were absent:** Kelly Chambers and Jason Kinlow

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Facilitator Jim Reid called this first meeting of the Tacoma Minimum Wage Task Force to order at 5:34 p.m. PDT.

### **THE TASK FORCE'S DECISIONS AND AGREEMENTS**

The Task Force members:

1. Approved a work plan outlining the stages of their work through the deadline of 30 June 2015.
2. Approved ground rules to guide how they will work together and make decisions.
3. Approved nine mutual interests or principles that may serve as the foundation for a consensus agreement and as criteria by which to evaluate alternatives.

### **MAYOR STRICKLAND OPENS MEETING BY THANKING TASK FORCE MEMBERS FOR SERVING**

Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland and her fellow City Council members established the Minimum Wage Task Force and worked together to appoint its members. Mayor Strickland opened the meeting by

thanking the members for serving on the Task Force. She characterized the group as “balanced” because the members represent labor, small and big businesses, non-profit organizations, and youth. She explained why the Task Force’s meetings must be public, and acknowledged that this could inhibit candid conversation. But she urged the Task Force members to speak openly and honestly, to listen intently, and to work cooperatively to try to reach a solution that is in the best interests of the community. The Mayor also urged everyone to respect differing opinions, and asked the community and constituent groups to respect that the Task Force members are not elected officials or politicians but have stepped up to address a difficult issue in the public eye. No Task Force member, no business, and no organization should suffer because of the opinions expressed at the Task Force meetings.

Finally, she acknowledged that the 15 Now Initiative prompted the City’s leadership to create the Task Force. She urged Task Force members to reach agreement on a proposal that the Council can put before voters on the November ballot. If the Task Force doesn’t reach agreement on a set of recommendations, the City Council could act unilaterally. Task Force member Sarah Cherin commented that if the Task Force reaches agreement, she would prefer the Council enact the proposal rather than place it on the ballot.

### **TASK FORCE AGREES ON AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, INCLUDING WORK PLAN AND GROUND RULES**

Following the Mayor’s welcome and opening remarks, Task Force members addressed three organizational issues.

1. Martha Lantz of the City Attorney’s Office briefed the members on the requirements of the State’s Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) and the Public Records Act. She provided all Task Force members with a summary of the acts’ major provisions.

As a result of the Task Force’s discussion with Martha and Mayor Strickland about the OPMA and public records requirements, a suggestion was made that *Task Force members should not communicate with each other by email.*

In addition, **the Task Force agreed that any questions about the OPMA or public records requirements should be directed to facilitator Jim Reid.** He will help get the answer from the appropriate City staff person.

2. The Task Force reviewed the draft work plan that outlines the stages of this process. Task Force member Sarah Cherin asked that the phrase “income and wages” be replaced by “minimum wage” under Phase D. “Reach Agreement on Recommendations,” in the third bullet of the fourth column (Activities) in the matrix, and under Phase E. “Reach Agreement on Report,” in the lone bullet of the same column (Activities).

One milestone of the work plan that Jim Reid highlighted was the Task Force reaching agreement on a set of findings on June 8<sup>th</sup>. This could help achieve the members’ interest in developing and agreeing on solutions that are based on data and facts.

**The Task Force members then unanimously approved the work plan.**

3. Jim reviewed the proposed ground rules that are intended to guide Task Force discussions and decision-making. The major items of interest to the Task Force members during the subsequent discussion were: 1) engaging the public in the Task Force’s deliberations (#13); and 2) defining “consensus” (#14).

Tadd Wille, the City’s Budget Director and a member of the staff team serving the Task Force, pledged to find an efficient way for citizens to provide written comments to the Task Force members during this process. *Tad will report back to the Task Force at the meeting on Monday, 1 June.*

Task Force members also said they must be diligent in reaching out to constituents, colleagues, neighbors, friends, and family to solicit thoughts, ideas, and suggestions.

Task Force members discussed that defining consensus as “the unanimous agreement of the Task Force members” is a high standard. After a brief discussion, the Mayor urged the members to work to attain that standard, and they agreed to leave the language of #14 as it was proposed.

**The Task Force members then unanimously approved the ground rules.**

### **TASK FORCE MEMBERS AGREE ON THEIR MUTUAL INTERESTS**

Jim presented to the Task Force members nine interests (or principles or goals) that he believes he heard many of them mention when he was interviewing each of them between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of May. After a brief discussion, a couple members and the Mayor suggested that the second interest be changed to read “Improve the quality of life for Tacoma residents.”

**The Task Force members then unanimously approved their mutual interests.**

**Note:** The approved editions of the work plan, ground rules, and interests are being submitted to the Task Force members with this draft summary and will be posted on the Task Force’s website.

### **TASK FORCE REVIEWS MINIMUM WAGE ORDINANCES OF OTHER CITIES ACROSS THE US**

Deputy City Attorney Chris Bacha provided a matrix to the Task Force summarizing “from 30,000 feet” the key terms and provisions of minimum wage ordinances in eight cities in the western United States and Montgomery County, Maryland. While there was not time for the members to read the information and discuss it in depth, they asked Chris if he would add some data to it, and he said he would be glad to do so. The data Chris will add to the matrix are:

- The third and fourth columns of the matrix (beginning on page 2) identify the date of increase in the jurisdiction’s minimum wage and the amount of the new minimum wage, respectively. At the Task Force’s request, Chris will include the minimum wage at the time of the passage of the ordinances raising the minimum wage and the percent of the increase above the original.

- The City Council of Oakland, California declined to raise the minimum wage. The information about Oakland's proposed ordinance will be added to this matrix.
- Include in the matrix whether the voters approved any of these ordinances (or initiatives that became law) or if they became law only by action of the legislative body.
- Identify if future increases to the minimum wage in any of these jurisdictions linked to the Consumer Price Index (CPI!).

The discussion ended with a focus on enforcement provisions, which are outlined in Chris' paper on pages 7-9. One conclusion from the discussion was that the City of Tacoma's authority to enforce would need to comply with the authority given to cities under Washington State law.

As the review of the ordinances of other jurisdictions drew to a close, Task Force member Odette D'Aniello asked "Can the Task Force's discussions can go beyond the minimum wage?" Mayor Strickland said the City of Tacoma is committed to reducing poverty, and the minimum wage issue is "only one piece of the pie." She suggested the Task Force members think about the broader mission as they focus on the minimum wage.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m. PDT.

**The Task Force's next meeting is Monday, 1 June 2015, from 5:30-8:30 p.m. PDT at the Center for Urban Waters.**