



City of Tacoma
Citizen Commission on Elected Salaries

Lerry Mensonides, Chair
Ronald Malm, Vice Chair
Robert Anderson
Dianne Conway
Karen Robinson
Richard Wilkinson
Joseph Zawacki

MINUTES

TIME: Tuesday, August 25, 2015, 6:00 p.m.
PLACE: 733 Market Street, Room 12, Tacoma, WA 98402
PRESENT: Mensonides, Malm, Anderson, Conway (arrived at 6:04 p.m.), Robinson, Wilkinson, Zawacki (arrived at 6:10 p.m.)
ABSENT (EXCUSED): None

Call to Order

At approximately 6:02 p.m., Chair Mensonides, called the meeting to order.

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of August 18, 2015

At approximately, 6:02 p.m., Commission Member Wilkinson moved to approve the minutes from the Meeting of August 18, 2015, seconded by Commission Member Robinson. Voice vote was taken and carried, approving the minutes from the Meeting of August 18, 2015.

Public Comment

No Public Comment.

City Attorney Elizabeth Pauli spoke with Commission

At approximately 6:03 p.m., Chair Mensonides introduced City Attorney Elizabeth Pauli to speak to the Commission regarding the laws regarding salary changes for elected officials and answer questions that the Commission has.

At approximately 6:03 p.m., City Attorney Pauli referred to questions provided to her from the Commission. The first question was, "Does the Commission have the authority to set salary and compensation package without Council approval?" The answer to that is yes. Clear authority is in City Charter section 2.3 language states that the changes set by the Commission shall be adopted by the City Council.

At approximately 6:04 p.m., City Attorney Pauli referred to the next question, "Can the Commission set, change or modify the current salary or compensation package for the current, sitting Councilmembers and Mayor?" The answer to that is qualified yes. The qualification is dependent on exactly what the determination is. It depends on whether the determination is to increase, decrease or make no change. If the determination is to make no change, the status quo would impact everyone. If the determination is to increase the salary or compensation, that can be effective immediately. If the decision is to decrease or "diminish" that would not become effective for sitting Councilmembers until the start of any subsequent term they might hold.

At approximately 6:06 p.m., Commission Member Anderson asked if compensation also considered the benefits package, as well. City Attorney Pauli advised that compensation would include "extras" that are all kinds of benefits that you can think of. The Commission does have the authority under the Charter to adjust the compensation, as well.

At approximately 6:08 p.m., Commission Member Wilkinson can the Commission decide not to give the 2.75% increase for 2016. City Attorney Pauli advised that would be considered a decrease of compensation and would not be authorized, per the constitution, for the sitting Councilmembers or Mayor. Discussion ensued regarding changes to Councilmember and Mayor salaries, to not have parity among the Councilmembers.

At approximately 6:13 p.m., Chair Mensonides asked if there is anything in the statute against making a recommendation in, say, April of 2016. City Attorney Pauli advised that the determination for 2015 shall be made by September 1, 2015. Other than having a deadline, September 1st, there is nothing saying that the Commission can't make their determination prior to September 1st of the following year. Discussion ensued regarding the date that decisions need to be implemented for the following year.

At approximately 6:27 p.m., Commission Member Wilkinson stated that he is not sure if he is comfortable with Councilmembers being a part of the City Retirement System. Chair Mensonides asked what happens if the Commission makes a decision that violates a type of rule related to retirement plans, what happens. City Attorney Pauli advised that pension and compensation be a 2016 agenda item and that the City Attorney's Office could give real time legal advice during the discussions on those topics.

At approximately 6:30 p.m., Commission Member Conway asked if part-time employees at the City of Tacoma are eligible for pension and medical and other benefits. City Attorney Pauli advised that yes they are, at a pro-rated rate. Commission Member Wilkinson asked what the lowest hour threshold is for benefit eligibility. Staff advised that after 60 days all part-time employees are eligible for benefits at a pro-rated rate, part-time is considered anything less than 40 hours a week.

At approximately 6:33 p.m., Chair Mensonides asked if there were any further questions for City Attorney Pauli. At this time, there were no further questions for her.

Discussion of Mayor and City Council Salaries, Announcement of next meeting and information as requested from Staff.

At approximately 6:34 p.m., Chair Mensonides began discussion about Commission ideas, by going around the table to get everyone's input on salary and benefits for the Mayor and Councilmembers. Discussion ensued regarding each Commission Members ideas on Mayor and Councilmembers salaries and benefits.

At approximately 7:03 p.m., Commission Member Conway moved to leave the benefits untouched, effective January 1, 2018, remove the automatic 2.75% pay increase and set the Councilmembers salaries at \$38,000 and the Mayor's salary at \$76,000. There was no second, the motion did not move forward.

At approximately 7:08 p.m., Commission Member Zawacki moved to remove the 2.75% automatic increase effective January 1, 2016 and to leave the current benefits and salary as is. There was no second, the motion did not move forward.

At approximately 7:11 p.m., Commission Member Wilkinson moved effective January 1, 2018 to eliminate the automatic 2.75% increase and reduce the salaries to \$38,000 per year for Councilmembers and \$76,000 per year for the Mayor and to implement a stipend for the Deputy Mayor of \$2500 annually, seconded by Commission Member Conway. Discussion ensued.

At approximately 7:20 p.m., Chair Mensonides moved to amend the original motion, changing the salaries to \$20,000 for Councilmembers, \$50,000 for the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor's annual stipend to \$5,000. Commission Member Malm seconded the motion. Discussion ensued regarding the amendment to the original motion. Voice vote was taken; Yes – Mensonides; Nos – Malm, Anderson, Conway, Robinson, Wilkinson and Zawacki. The motion to amend the original motion did not move forward.

At approximately 7:38 p.m., Commission Member Robinson moved to amend the original motion, changing the salaries to \$40,000 for Councilmembers, \$80,000 for the Mayor and a \$6,000 annual stipend for the Deputy Mayor. Commission Member Zawacki seconded the motion. Discussion ensued. Voice vote was taken; Yes – Robinson and Zawacki; Nos – Mensonides, Malm, Anderson, Conway and Wilkinson. The motion to amend the original motion did not move forward.

At approximately 7:48 p.m., Commission Member Conway moved to amend the original motion to remove the Deputy Mayor's annual stipend. Commission Member Anderson seconded the motion. Discussion ensued. Voice vote was taken; Yes – Mensonides, Malm, Anderson, Conway, Robinson and Wilkinson; No – Zawacki. The motion carried, approving the amendment to the original motion.

At approximately 7:49 p.m., Vice Chair Malm moved to amend the original motion to remove the 2.75% annual increase as of January 1, 2016. There was no second, the motion did not move forward.

At approximately 7:50 p.m., Commission Member Zawacki moved to amend the original motion to be effective January 1, 2016, removing the 2.75% and updating the annual salaries to \$40,000 for Councilmembers and \$80,000 for the Mayor. There was no second, the motion did not move forward.

At approximately 7:52 p.m., voice vote was taken on the original motion made by Commission Member Wilkinson, amended by majority vote, effective January 1, 2018 remove the automatic annual increase of 2.75%, updating the annual salaries to \$38,000 for Councilmembers and \$76,000 for the Mayor. Yes – Mensonides, Malm, Anderson, Conway, Robinson and Wilkinson; No – Zawacki. The motion carried, approving the motion.

Commission Comments

No Commission comments.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.


Terry Mensonides, Chair


Marisa Tetreault, HR Specialist, Human Resources