



City of Tacoma  
Citizen Commission on Elected Salaries

Richard Wilkinson, Chair  
Julie Yust, Vice Chair  
Brandon Kindschy  
Klaus Nalley  
Pandora Schaal  
Chad Arceneaux  
Patricia O'Conner

**Minutes**

**TIME:** Monday November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 6:00PM

**PLACE:** 747 Market St, Room 243, Tacoma, WA 98402

**PRESENT:** Richard Wilkinson, Julie Yust, Brandon Kindschy, Klaus Nalley, Patricia O'Conner

**ABSENT:** Chad Arceneaux, Pandora Schaal

**Call to order:** 6:00pm

**Roll Call:** 6:01pm

**Introductions:**

Richard – he is the commissioner who is the HR expert and has been appointed 3 times. He is semi retired from UW Tacoma where is he now teaching graduate students.

Julie – is the second longest commissioner. Lives in the hilltop district 3. She used to work for Tacoma Pierce County Health Department with a background in addiction treatment. Currently works for the Teamsters Labor Union. With 117 in Tukwila.

Patty - She lives in district 5 in the south end near Wapato. She currently works for South Sound 911 doing concealed pistol licenses. They do about 80 day along with finger printing and background checks for gun purchases. Hundreds of background checks. 3-400 a day. Public records requests as well and only 4 people do all the work.

Brandon - He is employed at the Kitsap Public Health District, in the water pollution identification and correction program doing water pollution investigation work. Work in Kitsap but lives in Pierce County, he was born and raised in Port Orchard. He is in district 1. He received a letter in the mail and he was curious/interested.

Klaus - He works from home so he has the shortest commute after working downtown for 25 years. Sells office products. District 2 out of NE Tacoma. He got the letter in the mail and responded and thought he might be the only one to fill it out. Has ran youth football leagues and done a lot of things for kids. Has been in the PNW since 1985 when he was at Fort Lewis. Fell in love with the area and stayed.

## **Review and Feedback of 2020 Elected Salary Commission Message**

**Review:** Richard explains the purpose of the commission and how they have to find a good standard for compensating. The council is not full time, only the Mayor is. The commission is responsible for 7 salaries and it can be a hot issue. They are not bound by any particular reference point, but they have used the median income to gauge as well as interviewing council members. As a rough guide it was determined that at 50-60% of the median income was recommended. Currently at about 45k a year. The mayor has been harder because there is not as strong of a reference point. It was a 3 to 2 vote. 2 members wanted to increase significantly. Some would argue she is very undercompensated. There are other counter factors, such as the City Manager manages the city. Victoria Woodards and the previous mayor have invested a lot in representing Tacoma in boards and commissions. Being present in the community and being an advocate and ambassador. This is where the struggle lies. The commission was created by the last charter. Council compensation previously had been set on a fixed increase based on CPI and the commission stopped that. The Commission is unusual because it has a very narrow responsibility but unilateral authority. Whatever they determine is what the salary is. There is no check on it and the council has to implement whatever the Commission directs them to do. In 27 years of working with city government Richard has never seen a commission structured this way.

Julie is appreciative of the council coming and the Mayor as well. It is lovely for her to share her insights. The first year the mayor was very excited, the second year she was more settled in the position. She has some of the same challenges and some different. Julie recognizes it is the mayors bottom line. Julie explains that it is a struggle doing market analysis, and how it is hard to justify giving her 10% like some commissioners wanted to when most citizens in the community are not getting 10% in wage increases. That there is a lot the mayor is asked to do but there is also a lot she chooses to do. The same goes for the council members who say they are spending 60 hours a week doing a part time job. Julie feels they are putting themselves in that position. Julie has no challenges with the formal notification that went out announcing the Commissions decision to increase the Mayor's salary.

**Feedback:** Staff liaison Jamie Olson explained that the News Tribune reached out via email, and references the email and the City's response in their commission member binders. There was also a citizen who emailed the city regarding the Mayor's salary increase that was given up the chain but we did not have record as of yet if and when and who has responded.

### **Staff Introductions:**

Jen Peters introduced herself as an HR Manager in class and comp. With the city 2.5 years. Jamie Olson introduced herself as an HR Assistant and staff liason to the commission with the city 7 months.

### **Commissioner Insights:**

What would the commission want to add to what has already been discussed. Julie brings up that it is early ... but their decision is due in September. She would like to work back from that timeline to leave enough time for discussion before the decision. She would like to have the council and the mayor again as there are new commissioners and some who missed their previous meetings.

Richards brings up the excellent report that Jen and her team put together on their compensation and benefits from previous meeting. Richard confirms that Tacoma employees are not in PERS.

Julie mentions that the amount the Spokane Mayor is paid (168k) is a joke. The printout with the city comparisons is mentioned and that it would be good homework for the new commissioners.

Klaus asks would be out of line to have council members come in to answer questions. Richard agrees it is absolutely appropriate.

Julie asked if we have the questions from when met with Council previously. Liason stated would have to research. It was mentioned that the discussion with the Mayor was most important.

Richard – Council – Feb, Mayor – May then we decide?

Julie -It will leave time for more conversation. She didn't feel it would have changed the outcome. But wants to give the decision the robust attention it deserves, with out time constraint pressure.

Richard asked for Patty's experience with the commission so far: She mentioned she had missed two meetings so far and was thrilled to have the binder of info.

Brandon – was looking for direction on time frames and next steps. Liason advised the binders have been created to keep information in one place.

Julie- said he can always reach out with any questions on the email chain, but their sole job is deciding the pay for council and the mayor. Some meetings are longer than others.

Orientation requested by Richard – a link for a training for open meetings that will be forwarded. Gives guidance on how open meetings work. Only once has there ever been a citizen to show up.

Julie -Motion to approve minutes

Patty - seconds

All in Favor – All ayes

Klaus asks the question are council members allowed to be reimbursed for certain expense?

History of council pay recapped

Liason asked to review meeting times due to staffing and cost to the city – could we move the times to 5? All decide that 6:00 is best.

Richard:Motion to adjorn

Julie: Second

All: Aye

**Adjournment:** 6:31 pm

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Richard Wilkinson, Chair

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Melanie Jay  
Jamie Olson, HR Assistant, Human Resources