



City of Tacoma
Citizen Commission on Elected Salaries

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

TO: Mayor Marilyn Strickland and members of the Tacoma City Council
FROM: Ronald Malm, Commission Vice Chair
DATE: August 25, 2016
SUBJECT: Confirmation of Commission Decision on Elected Salaries

At our regular meeting of August 22, 2016, the Citizen's Commission on Elected Salaries confirmed our decision submitted to the Mayor and Council last year. As a reminder, that decision is to change the salaries of Tacoma elected officials and terminate their automatic annual salary increase, both actions effective January 1, 2018.

The vote was unanimous of the quorum of Commissioners present.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald Malm, Vice Chair

City of Tacoma
Citizen Commission on Elected
Salaries

September 1, 2015

Decision Presented to City Council

Per Section 2.3 of the Tacoma City Charter, a Citizen Commission on Elected Salaries will determine the compensation and salary of the Mayor and each Council Member. The Commission shall set the salary and any salary changes for the Mayor and Council Members. The salary and any salary changes set by the Commission shall be adopted by the City Council.

Determinations for any change in the salaries of these elected officials shall be filed with the City Clerk and transmitted to the Council for adoption no later than September 1 of the calendar year.



City of Tacoma
Citizen Commission on Elected Salaries

Terry Mensonides, Chair
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Robert Anderson
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Karen Robinson
Richard Wilkinson
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TO: Mayor Strickland and the Tacoma City Council
FROM: Citizen Commission on Elected Salaries
DATE: September 1, 2015
SUBJECT: City of Tacoma Elected Officials Salary Decision

DECISION

The Citizen Commission on Elected Salaries (Commission) respectfully decided the following changes in the annual salaries of City of Tacoma elected officials, effective January 1, 2018:

Mayor	\$76,000
Council Member	\$38,000

Also effective January 1, 2018, the Commission respectfully decided to eliminate the annual 2.75% salary increase for all future years.

COSTS

Total costs for implementing these changes in FY 2016 are \$0.00.

DISCUSSION

Under provisions of the City Charter and state law, the Commission has the authority to set the salary and compensation of the Mayor and Members of the City Council. The Commission's decisions must be implemented without modification. Such authority is sobering and one the Commission did not take lightly.

The Commission will continue to study the appropriate salary and compensation of the Mayor and Council Members in the coming months. Based on what it learns, and prior to September 1, 2016, the Commission may determine additional changes are necessary. Any future changes (increases or decreases) will be implemented in accordance with the schedule set forth in any such action and applicable laws and regulations at the time such a decision is made. **The Commission did not address, with this decision, salaries and benefits or any scheduled increases for the period January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2017.**

The Commission's decision on 2018 salaries reflects several considerations that surfaced during the Commission's deliberations.

1. The majority of Commission members were concerned with what appear to be elected official salaries significantly out of step with the salary of elected officials in other Council-Manager jurisdictions within Washington State. [See Exhibit 1]
2. Commission members were challenged by the short time window for action. This timeframe, less than a month, made it impossible for the Commission to research and compare aspects of elected official compensation to the extent desired. The Commission felt that inaction by the September 1, 2015 date would hamper its' ability to implement changes within a timeline it believed reasonable. The majority felt it was important to make a decision now, in a direction it believed most appropriate, and refine that decision after subsequent analysis.

This decision represents a compromise on the part of the Commission in terms of both salary and benefits. It was clear throughout the discussion that there were multiple members with varying opinions. Some favored maintaining the status quo and taking no current action. Others would have preferred more immediate but less substantial change. Some commission members also expressed a desire for significantly larger reductions or a more aggressive timeline which they believed would allow more flexibility pending the outcomes of further research during 2016 and 2017.

Ultimately, the decision represented the direction the Commission believed salaries should move while attempting to be conservative given the short timeframe available for evaluating the status quo.

3. The basis for setting the effective date of January 1, 2018 was driven by two primary factors:
 - a. To allow time for further research and, if warranted, allow for at least some reduction within the next few years.
 - b. To maintain parity in Council Member compensation, so that all Council Member compensation changes become effective on the same date. The idea of parity in compensation was important to a majority of the Commission's members. This rationale is driven by the Commission's understanding, based on the interpretation of state law by the City Attorney, that compensation reductions cannot be implemented mid-way through an elected official's term and only become effective if implemented prior to the start of an official's term or after the official's current term expires.

Furthermore, the Commission understands that such a limitation is not applicable to increases determined by a commission such as this one and that such changes can be made effective immediately. This would allow the Commission to return salaries to the levels scheduled prior to this decision before January 1, 2018, if appropriate.

4. The Commission recognized Tacoma's uniqueness, both economically and geographically, and that such uniqueness may, upon further study, warrant salaries inconsistent with other Council-Manager cities.
5. Additionally, the Commission did not want to create a situation in which a potential candidate would not run for office because such service would be cost prohibitive, while at the same time it recognized that serving as an elected official should also contain a component of volunteerism.
6. The chart below demonstrates the impact of the Commission's decision, should it go in to effect unchanged on January 1, 2018:

	2015 Salary	2016 Salary	2017 Salary	2018 Salary
Mayor	\$96,117	\$98,760	\$101,476	\$76,000
Council	\$48,069	\$49,391	\$50,749	\$38,000

DISSENTING OPINION

The minority provided the following comments regarding their dissent:

1. Short time frame to analyze data hindered gathering and analyzing data.
2. Misperception that immediate action is mandated, as opposed to analyzing data and making recommendations with more information at a future date.
3. Current city council compensation is based upon members classified as 90% almost full time.
4. In comparisons to other municipalities it was not delineated if compensation was based on the same time spent performing duties (90% work schedule).
5. Median household income (supplied by staff) in Tacoma seems to indicate that the current salary is set equitably.
6. Reduction of salary may preclude citizens from seeking office as they may not have employment or employer willing to allow the significant time away from work. By reducing the salary citizens simply may not realistically be able to serve and still support household obligations.
7. These dissenting comments are only for salary and do not address the annual rate increases.

Exhibit 1

2015 Elected Official Salaries

City	Population	Form of Government*	Mayor's Salary	Councilmember's Salary
Seattle	626,600	Mayor-Council	\$183,036	\$119,976
Spokane	211,300	Mayor-Council	\$82.65/hr	\$14.94/hr
Tacoma	200,400	Council-Manager	\$96,117	\$48,069
Vancouver	164,500	Council-Manager	\$27,600	\$21,600
Bellevue	132,100	Council-Manager	\$23,400	\$19,800
Kent	120,500	Mayor-Council	\$138,000	\$14,096
Everett	104,200	Mayor-Council	\$167,028	\$26,964
Renton	95,540	Mayor-Council	\$141,204	\$11,400
Yakima	92,620	Council-Manager	\$16,500	\$12,900
Federal Way	89,720	Mayor-Council	\$115,620	\$13,800
Bellingham	82,310	Mayor-Council	\$135,444	\$24,108
Kirkland	81,730	Council-Manager	\$17,136	\$13,464
Kennewick	76,410	Council-Manager	\$14,292	\$11,904
Auburn	73,235	Mayor-Council	\$136,823	\$14,400
Lakewood	58,310	Council-Manager	\$10,800	\$8,400
Olympia	48,480	Council-Manager	\$19,968	\$16,632
Sammamish	48,060	Council-Manager	\$11,400	\$10,200
Puyallup	37,980	Council-Manager	\$16,400	\$14,043
University Place	31,340	Council-Manager	\$20,256	\$16,896

Source: <http://mrsc.org/Home/Research-Tools/Washington-City-and-Town-Profiles.aspx?orderby=citygovtform&dir=down>

2016 Data –

CITY	POPULATION	FORM OF GOVERNMENT	MAYOR'S SALARY	COUNCILMEMBER'S SALARY	BUDGET
BELLEVUE	139,820	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$23,400	\$19,800	\$1,459,000,000
KENNEWICK	78,896	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$14,280	\$11,904	\$117,097
KIRKLAND	87,281	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$17,484	\$13,728	\$291,512,711
LAKEWOOD	59,829	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$16,800	\$14,400	\$22,933,042
OLYMPIA	50,302	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$19,968	\$16,640	\$67,981,430
PUYALLUP	39,659	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$16,404	\$14,040	\$113,500,000
SAMMAMISH	52,253	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$11,400	\$10,200	\$22,700,000
TACOMA	207,948	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$98,758	\$44,782	\$1,645,500,000
UNIVERSITY PLACE	32,842	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$20,256	\$16,896	\$33,300,000
VANCOUVER	172,860	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$27,600	\$21,600	\$297,800,000
YAKIMA	93,701	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$16,500	\$12,900	\$228,100,000
AUBURN	77,006	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$139,560	\$14,688	\$240,237,151
BELLINGHAM	85,146	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$142,296	\$24,828	\$302,747,735
EVERETT	108,010	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$174,540	\$27,504	\$682,315,780
FEDERAL WAY	95,171	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$119,088	\$14,214	\$100,810,000
KENT	126,952	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$141,456	\$14,448	\$87,552,060
RENTON	100,242	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$160,176	\$15,000	\$243,000,000
SEATTLE	684,451	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$190,426	\$123,359	\$5,100,000,000
SPOKANE	213,272	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$168,000	\$31,200	\$824,669,328

Source:

<http://mrsc.org/Home/Research-Tools/Washington-City-and-Town-Profiles.aspx?orderby=citygovtform&dir=down>

<http://www.citypopulation.de/USA-Washington.html>

Key:

- Decrease in Salary
- Increase in Salary

2016 Data: Sorted by Mayor's Salary –

CITY	POPULATION	FORM OF GOVERNMENT	MAYOR'S SALARY	COUNCILMEMBER'S SALARY	BUDGET
SAMMAMISH	52,253	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$11,400	\$10,200	\$22,700,000
KENNEWICK	78,896	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$14,280	\$11,904	\$117,097
PUYALLUP	39,659	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$16,404	\$14,040	\$113,500,000
YAKIMA	93,701	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$16,500	\$12,900	\$228,100,000
LAKESWOOD	59,829	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$16,800	\$14,400	\$22,933,042
KIRKLAND	87,281	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$17,484	\$13,728	\$291,512,711
OLYMPIA	50,302	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$19,968	\$16,640	\$67,981,430
UNIVERSITY PLACE	32,842	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$20,256	\$16,896	\$33,300,000
BELLEVUE	139,820	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$23,400	\$19,800	\$1,459,000,000
VANCOUVER	172,860	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$27,600	\$21,600	\$297,800,000
TACOMA	207,948	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$98,758	\$44,782	\$1,645,500,000
FEDERAL WAY	95,171	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$119,088	\$14,214	\$100,810,000
AUBURN	77,006	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$139,560	\$14,688	\$240,237,151
KENT	126,952	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$141,456	\$14,448	\$87,552,060
BELLINGHAM	85,146	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$142,296	\$24,828	\$302,747,735
RENTON	100,242	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$160,176	\$15,000	\$243,000,000
SPOKANE	213,272	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$168,000	\$31,200	\$824,669,328
EVERETT	108,010	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$174,540	\$27,504	\$682,315,780
SEATTLE	684,451	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$190,426	\$123,359	\$5,100,000,000

Key:

- Decrease in Salary
- Increase in Salary

2016 Data: Sorted by Councilmember's Salary –

CITY	POPULATION	FORM OF GORVERNMENT	MAYOR'S SALARY	COUNCILMEMBER'S SALARY	BUDGET
SAMMAMISH	52,253	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$11,400	\$10,200	\$22,700,000
KENNEWICK	78,896	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$14,280	\$11,904	\$117,097
YAKIMA	93,701	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$16,500	\$12,900	\$228,100,000
KIRKLAND	87,281	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$17,484	\$13,728	\$291,512,711
PUYALLUP	39,659	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$16,404	\$14,040	\$113,500,000
FEDERAL WAY	95,171	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$119,088	\$14,214	\$100,810,000
LAKEWOOD	59,829	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$16,800	\$14,400	\$22,933,042
KENT	126,952	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$141,456	\$14,448	\$87,552,060
AUBURN	77,006	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$139,560	\$14,688	\$240,237,151
RENTON	100,242	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$160,176	\$15,000	\$243,000,000
OLYMPIA	50,302	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$19,968	\$16,640	\$67,981,430
UNIVERSITY PLACE	32,842	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$20,256	\$16,896	\$33,300,000
BELLEVUE	139,820	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$23,400	\$19,800	\$1,459,000,000
VANCOUVER	172,860	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$27,600	\$21,600	\$297,800,000
BELLINGHAM	85,146	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$142,296	\$24,828	\$302,747,735
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SPOKANE	213,272	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$168,000	\$31,200	\$824,669,328
TACOMA	207,948	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$98,758	\$44,782	\$1,645,500,000
SEATTLE	684,451	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$190,426	\$123,359	\$5,100,000,000

Key:

- Decrease in Salary
- Increase in Salary

2016 Data: Sorted by Budget –

CITY	POPULATION	FORM OF GORVERNMENT	MAYOR'S SALARY	COUNCILMEMBER'S SALARY	BUDGET
KENNEWICK	78,896	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$14,280	\$11,904	\$117,097
SAMMAMISH	52,253	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$11,400	\$10,200	\$22,700,000
LAKEWOOD	59,829	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$16,800	\$14,400	\$22,933,042
UNIVERSITY PLACE	32,842	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$20,256	\$16,896	\$33,300,000
OLYMPIA	50,302	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$19,968	\$16,640	\$67,981,430
KENT	126,952	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$141,456	\$14,448	\$87,552,060
FEDERAL WAY	95,171	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$119,088	\$14,214	\$100,810,000
PUYALLUP	39,659	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$16,404	\$14,040	\$113,500,000
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AUBURN	77,006	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$139,560	\$14,688	\$240,237,151
RENTON	100,242	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$160,176	\$15,000	\$243,000,000
KIRKLAND	87,281	COUNCIL-MANAGER	\$17,484	\$13,728	\$291,512,711
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EVERETT	108,010	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$174,540	\$27,504	\$682,315,780
SPOKANE	213,272	MAYOR-COUNCIL	\$168,000	\$31,200	\$824,669,328
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