



**INDEPENDENT SALARY COMMISSION (ISC)
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, September 12, 2019
City Hall American Lake Conference Room
6000 Main Street SW
Lakewood, WA 98499-5027**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:37 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Ross Drangsholt, Dan Durr, Kris Kauffman, Randy Lindholm, and Shane Simmons.

Staff Present: Mary McDougal, Human Resources Director, Tho Kraus, Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director, and Heidi A. Wachter, City Attorney

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Introductions:

This is the first meeting of a newly formed Commission. Members and staff introduced themselves.

Overview of Ordinance:

City Attorney Wachter provided an overview of the formation of the commission. The purpose of the Independent Salary Commission (ISC) is to specifically address the salaries of the Mayor/Councilmembers. The ISC shall determine what compensation to offer Councilmembers.

The ISC is governed by Washington State law. If the City Council were to vote to change their compensation, it cannot apply to their current term of office – the change is not effective until their current term ends and they are re-elected. With an ISC, the salary recommendation, once approved by the ISC occurs immediately and is not subject to Council review.

The Ordinance requires a recommendation from ISC within 45 days of creation of the commission. An extension may be requested if needed. Decisions by the ISC to change salaries are effective upon filing of statement of salaries with the City Clerk.

Orientation:

City Attorney Wachter conducted an orientation as all members of advisory boards and commissions must receive training on open government.

ISC meetings are open to the public, and notice of the meetings must be provided. People have the right to know what their government is doing, in the form of open public meetings and access to documents.

The City's interpretation of the law is that if a document is about City business and we have access to the document, we must produce it. It doesn't matter if the document is on a public or personal device. The best practice is to confine discussion to a specific place and time, and to respond only to the ISC staff member, and not to each other, when information is provided via e-mail. Otherwise it would be considered a meeting in violation of the Open Public Meetings Act since the public was not allowed to hear the discussion. Contact staff to add items for the discussion to the agenda, and wait until the meeting for discussion.

There are a few exemptions under the Open Public Meeting Act. If you have questions, feel free to contact the Legal Department. If you sought the advice from the Legal Department, that provides you with protection.

Additional information and training is available on the Attorney General's Office Open Government Training Page: <http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/RecordsManagement/>.

An attendance sheet was routed to be signed by all members to show that the training was provided.

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair:

Dan Durr nominated Kris Kauffman for Chair of the Commission; it was seconded by Ross Drangsholt. Passed unanimously.

Ross Drangsholt nominated Randy Lindholm for Vice-Chair of the Commission; it was seconded by Kris Kauffman. Passed unanimously.

Review of Data:

HR Director McDougal distributed the following documents:

- Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councilmember Compensation History
- 2019 Salary Data – Cities and Towns – Council/Manager Form of Government from other cities. The data included all WA State cities with populations over 15,000. The full-time Mayor entities were removed with the exception of Tacoma.
- A list of Councilmember liaison assignments to Citizen Advisory Boards, Committees, and Commissions, Representation to External Committees and Boards, and Other Affiliations
- A list of comparables used for each of the City's bargaining units
- City Employee Salary Adjustment History from 2016 – 2019

Determine Approach to Setting Salaries & Additional Data Needed:

Commission members reviewed and discussed the information provided. In general, the Commission members felt that the information provided was sufficient, and no additional information was needed.

The commission discussed whether members should take time to review and individually provide a recommendation at the next meeting and decided to proceed with the salary discussion as a group.

The Commission discussed and considered the following:

- Salary gap between Mayor and Councilmember salaries and whether it sufficiently addresses the additional duties of the Mayor and more appearances at ceremonial events. It was noted that some cities have a greater gap, but the basis used to set those is not known. There was general agreement to maintain the current \$100 increment between Councilmembers and Deputy Mayor, and \$200 increment between Councilmember and Mayor salaries, and to focus on setting Councilmember pay.
- Several proposed comparable lists were discussed, and generally included Lacey, Olympia, University Place, and Puyallup as neighboring cities and similar in size. There was discussion about whether it was necessary to agree on comparables as the basis for a recommendation or to focus on what is reasonable, with consideration of the workload.
- The comparable salary data provided are for a point in time, and the ISC meets every 4 years. Members agreed that setting the salaries for the next 4 years based on current comparison rather than providing for incremental increases is the preferred approach.
- There was general agreement regarding satisfaction with the performance of the current Council and the direction of the City, and the feeling that citizens are getting a great deal at the current rates. The commission discussed that Councilmembers are serving primarily for other reasons than the money, and changes in compensation within the \$100 or \$200 range likely won't make much difference in terms of who may be willing to serve.
- The commission considered whether there is extra effort and oversight required by the Lakewood City Council due to the relationship with JBLM, the significant highways, and the higher daytime population than reflected in the number of residents.
- The Commission members were interested in being fair, reasonable, and fiscally responsible.
- The proposed salary for Councilmember from individual commissioners ranged from \$1380 to \$1600, with the majority closer to the \$1400 figure. There was discussion about that representing about 4% each year and whether that was low or a little unfair, or sufficient.

Ross Drangsholt moved to set Councilmember salary at \$1400/month, Deputy Mayor salary at \$1500/month, and Mayor salary at \$1600/month. Dan Durr seconded, and the motion passed, with Randy Lindholm abstaining.

The commission discussed next steps to approve the meeting minutes and file the salary statement with the City Clerk, and agreed that the minutes would be prepared and sent via e-mail for electronic approval, and that the salary statement would be prepared for Chair Kauffman's signature following approval of the minutes.


Set Next Meeting Agenda/Future Meeting Dates

As the work of the ISC was completed, no additional meetings were set.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:24 pm.


Kris Kauffman, Chair


Mary McDougal, HR Director