

# SHORELINE CITY COUNCIL SALARY COMMISSION

## Meeting Notes

**Thursday, June 30, 2022, 5:00-6:30 pm**  
**Shoreline City Hall Conference Room 440 and Via Microsoft Teams**

PRESENT: Commissioner John Hoey, Commissioner Paula Itaoka, and Commissioner Robin McClelland

ABSENT: None

STAFF: John Norris, Assistant City Manager and Melissa Muir, Human Resources Director

GUESTS: Doug Johnson, Ralph Anderson and Associates

### **1. Welcome and Review Agenda**

The meeting began at 5:02 pm when the Microsoft Teams recording was started with Commissioner John Hoey presiding. Commissioner Hoey outlined the agenda and the timing for the agenda items. All members of the Commission and staff introduced themselves and Commissioner Hoey acknowledged that there was one member of the public attending the meeting remotely.

### **2. Introductory Questions**

Commissioner Hoey then lead the Commissioners through the three introductory questions so that the Commissioners could get to know one another better and hear from each other about why there were interested in serving on the Salary Commission.

### **3. Review and Approval of June 23, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

The Commission then reviewed the draft minutes from their June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Commissioner Paula Itaoka moved to approve the minutes which was seconded by Commissioner McClelland. The June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

### **4. Public Comment**

Commissioner Hoey then sought public comment but no members of the public were in attendance at the meeting at this time. The one member of the public who had been participating remotely dropped off the meeting prior to public comment being taken.

## **5. Review of Current Council Salary Compensation**

The Commission then discussed the salary history and structure, benefits, and payroll schedule and withholdings of the current City Council. Assistant City Manager John Norris presented this information as provided in a memo to the Salary Commission. It was also shared with the Commission that Council compensation is viewed as salary, not as a stipend, and that Councilmembers are not paid differently based on their tenure on the Council; only the Mayor and Deputy Mayor have different compensation from other Councilmembers based on their roles.

The Commission also discussed the Council's deferred compensation in lieu of the use of the City's contribution to medical, dental and other benefits and that the retirement investment accounts the deferred compensation is deposited into are associated with Councilmembers and the Councilmembers get to keep their accounts after their tenure on the Council ends, just as employees keep their City-based retirement investment accounts. It was also confirmed for the Commission that the contribution level to the retirement investment accounts changes each year based on the likely increase in the cost of medical, dental and other benefits and the City's contribution to cover benefit premiums. Thus, while the Council's base salary does not increase each year automatically and only would change upon the action of the Council, the deferred compensation amount does change on an annual basis.

The Commission then asked if any prior City Council had ever opted into the use of medical/dental benefits, rather than taking the City's contribution as deferred compensation in their retirement investment accounts. Staff responded that they were not aware of this ever happening. Commissioner Itaoka also stated that the City's rule that a majority of Councilmembers must opt in to use medical/dental benefits is a rule from the City's health insurance provider, the Association of Washington Cities, and that this rule applies to all cities in the insurance pool.

Councilmember Hoey asked staff if the City Council's salary information is publicly available. Staff responded that while all City ordinances are available on the City's website and the information could be accessed by reviewing those ordinances, the specific Council salary information is not posted on the website.

## **6. Surrounding Jurisdictions Council Salary Survey**

The Commission was then joined by consultant Doug Johnson of Ralph Anderson and Associates, who discussed the potential process and scope of a Council salary survey of comparable jurisdictions, including how data would be collected and what comparable jurisdictions the Commission may want to consider surveying. Mr. Johnson also shared that for salary surveys for employees, there is much more competition in the labor market, as employees can work outside of the jurisdiction where they live. This doesn't translate to Council positions however, as Councilmembers can only serve in this role in the City in which they reside, and Councilmembers typically do not serve in this role for the compensation, but rather to give back

to the community, or for a desire to engage in local government, or for larger political aspirations, among many other reasons.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the City's 13 comparable jurisdictions used for employee salary surveys and identified that some of the cities operate under the Council-Manager form of government, while some operate under the Mayor-Council form. Mr. Johnson further stated that while he didn't know how the difference in the form of government would impact Councilmember salaries, he assumed that it would not necessarily impact the salaries significantly, whereas it would likely impact the salary for the Mayor.

The Commission discussed with Mr. Johnson the various Council structures in other cities and how they may compare to Shoreline, and it was noted that the City of Seattle, while included in the list of 13 comparable jurisdictions, did not seem that comparable to Shoreline from a City Council perspective. Mr. Johnson stated collecting more data, rather than less, does not direct the Commission to use all of the data collected, and therefore he suggested that the Commission start with the same 13 cities used for employee salary surveys. He also suggested that the Commission look at base salary and any compensation in lieu of benefits or other forms of compensation that the other cities may provide their elected officials.

Following this discussion, the Commission agreed to direct Mr. Johnson to survey the City's current 13 comparable jurisdictions for the total compensation of the positions of Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councilmember. Mr. Johnson stated that he would be able to present the findings of his survey when the Commission meets again in late July.

## **7. Current Councilmember Data Collection**

The Commission then discussed engaging with the current City Council to hear from them about their experience as Councilmembers, the time commitment involved, etc. Staff asked if there are other topics or areas that the Commission thinks are relevant to talk to current Councilmembers about. Some questions posed include, how long do meetings last; how much time is spent preparing; how many hours a week or month are spent on Councilmember duties; what other factors are important for the Commission to consider when setting the salary for Councilmembers; and how relevant is compensation when an individual is considering to run for a Council seat?

Commissioner Itaoka also asked about one of the Salary Commission duties, which is to study the relationship of salaries to the duties of the mayor, deputy mayor and councilmembers and to study the costs personally incurred by councilmembers in performing such duties, and what is meant by 'costs personally incurred'. Staff responded that given that personal fiscal costs performing the work of Councilmembers are reimbursable by the City, that this likely meant the time spent performing the work of Council.

Some Commissioners felt that an opportunity for written comment by current Councilmembers to provide information about the time commitment to serve on the Council, such as the amount of preparation for Council meetings, attending other meetings with community members, etc., would be beneficial. Other Commissioners felt that this could be subjective and given the potential wide range of time commitment, it might not be helpful to understand the role of Councilmembers or what their compensation should be.

Following this discussion, the Commission agreed to work with Mr. Johnson to help craft one general question for current City Councilmembers focused on considerations or aspects of the City Council role that Councilmembers would like the members of the Commission to consider or be aware of as they engage in this salary setting work. Mr. Johnson stated that he would work with staff to draft a proposed question which staff would then circulate to the Commission for their final consideration. Staff and Mr. Johnson stated that once finalized, they could work to distribute this written question to the current Councilmembers for their optional response. The Commission was interested in receiving anonymous written response from the current City Council, which staff stated could be accomplished.

## **8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:37 pm. Staff stated that they would coordinate with Commission members to schedule the next Commission meeting between July 25<sup>th</sup> and July 27<sup>th</sup>.