

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE
COMPENSATION COMMISSION REPORT
JUNE 30, 2023**

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REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Chapter 2, Section 2-21 of the Rockville City Code, and the extension Ordinance No. 01-23, the Compensation Commission met between February and June 2023 to discuss and prepare recommendations for the Mayor and Council's annual compensation. Commission members are: William Spagnuolo (Chair), John Becker, Kavita Dawson, Paul Newman and Marc Weinshenker. Assisting the Commission are City Clerk/Director of Council Operations, Sara Taylor-Ferrell, Deputy City Clerk, Danny Winborne and Senior Assistant City Attorney, Leela Fireside. Staff from the City's Human Resources, Recreation and Parks, and Finance Departments provided additional data and information.

2. RESEARCH

The Commission reaffirmed previous determinations that the City's elected officials are intended to be equivalent to a municipal Board of Directors selecting and overseeing a City Manager, hereinafter referred to as "Council-Manager" form of Government. Mayor and Council are not considered employees. Mayor and Council receive a stipend which is intended to cover their service as well as certain expenses they incur to perform their duties, along with an annual travel allowance and additional benefits that are outlined in Appendix A. Although not considered employees, Mayor and Council are expected to abide by certain policies which apply to City employees, such as the Travel Guidelines.

The Compensation Commission reviewed the following information:

- i) The March 2015 and March 2019 Compensation Commission Report (Including 2019 supplemental report from 02/23/20)¹;
- ii) Data showing compensation of elected officials in municipalities across Maryland and Virginia;
- iii) Data showing historical compensation for Rockville elected officials from Fiscal Years 2005 to 2023.

The Commission also conducted one-on-one interviews with all five current elected officials: Mayor Bridget Newton and Councilmembers Monique Ashton, Beryl Feinberg, David Myles and Mark Pierzchala. For public input, the Commission posted a survey on the City's web site and held a public hearing on May 11, 2023. Summaries of these responses are outlined further on in this report.

3. MAYOR AND COUNCIL INTERVIEWS

In April 2023, Commission members conducted one-on-one interviews with each of the 5 Mayor and Councilmembers and posed the following questions:

- 1) What did you think of the last report by the 2019 compensation commission, and do you have any suggestions for the current commission?
- 2) Do you feel the stipend you receive is reasonable? If not, please explain. Did the stipend play a role in your decision to run for office?

¹ 2015 Report Link: <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11056/2015-Compensation-Commission-Final-Report?bidId=>

2019 Report Link: <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/43431/Compensation-Commission-Report-32919?bidId=>

2019 Supplemental Report Link: <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/43432/suppreport021220?bidId=>

- 3) What impact, if any, will the increase from 4 to 6 councilmembers have on the level of your responsibilities?
- 4) Do you feel the reimbursement for out-of-area events/conferences is reasonable? If not, please explain.
- 5) Is the access to the City's health insurance plan (paid 100% out-of-pocket) beneficial to you?
- 6) Are there other benefits that you would like to see offered in addition to, or in lieu of, access to the City's health plan?
- 7) Are there any changes to the compensation stipend and benefits that might encourage a wider number of residents to run for office?
- 8) Any other thoughts or comments?

The Commission compiled, reviewed and discussed the responses received from Mayor and Council and incorporated some into our recommendations. We did receive other suggestions that were either outside of our scope to address, or which we chose not to incorporate into our recommendations. Many of these suggestions may merit consideration in the future and we have outlined our thoughts and suggestions in Appendix D.

4. PUBLIC SURVEY AND HEARINGS

A public survey was posted on the City's web site from April 20 through May 11, 2023 and posed the following questions:

Do you believe that the current compensation for Mayor and Council is reasonable? Currently, the annual stipend is \$37,560 for the mayor and \$30,483 for councilmembers. If yes, please provide additional comments. If no, please explain.

The survey was promoted in Rockville Reports and on city social media (e.g. Facebook, email lists, Nextdoor).

The survey yielded 95 responses. Fifty-six percent felt the compensation was reasonable and Forty-four percent felt it was not (some felt it was too high, and some felt it was too low), and 70 of the respondents provide additional comments explaining their input.

The Commission also held a Public Forum on May 11, 2023 at 7 p.m. Two residents spoke at the Forum and provided written comments to the Commission. The survey and Forum responses were compiled, reviewed and discussed by the Commission in forming our recommendations.

While 95 responses and two residents speaking at the public forum do not represent a large portion of the City of Rockville's population, it is a notable improvement over 2019's responses of 23 people to the survey and no residents speaking at the public forum.

5. COMPENSATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Contributing to one's community through public service by committing time, effort, and experience can be a noble and rewarding endeavor. Participating in local government as a Mayor or Councilmember represents the pinnacle of local community service and commitment. Nationwide, compensation for such service ranges from unpaid volunteering to full-time salaried. The Mayor and Council of the City of Rockville serve effectively as a municipal Board of Directors in a part-time capacity, compensated for

their service through monetary stipends and other benefits. It is with these principles in mind, along with principles applied by the 2015 and 2019 Compensation Commissions, that this Compensation Commission was guided in their mission to propose stipends and benefits for the four-year term of the next Mayor and Council to be elected in 2023.

The Commission identified that the Rockville stipend and travel allowance for Mayor & Council compared to other similar municipalities in size and geography were among the highest recorded. As such, the Commission felt that it could not justify large changes in stipends or benefits at this time, nor did they feel that they were positioned to do so, particularly with respect potentially large impacts upon the City budget or other policies in place, as well as due to the short timeframe of the Commission's term during this election year. Examples of large changes include possibilities such as substantial increases to stipends or benefits, support staff, and campaign funding.

In advance of the 2027 election, to accommodate proposals which take more time to formulate, the Commission will consider meeting with more frequency (at least annually) during the next Mayor and Council term to discuss the merits of new and substantial changes, seek guidance from appropriate bodies, and seek public input.

Please refer to Appendix A for a list of current (FY 2024) stipends and benefits which are provided by the City to Mayor and Council.

Below are the summarized consensus proposals of the 2023 Compensation Commission as they related to Stipends, Travel Reimbursements, and Benefits:

- I. **Stipend.** As approved for FY 2024, the annual stipend for Mayor will be \$39,662.86 and for each Councilmember it will be \$32,190.15. The Commission recommends that the stipend be increased annually for FY 2025 through FY 2028 by the average annual budgeted percentage COLA increase that City staff receives (1.5% for FY 2023 and FY 2024).

Comment: The stipend is intended to cover public service provided by Mayor and Council, as well as expenses incurred by the members which are not reimbursable. The Commission determined that annual increases should be held at the level of the COLA offered to City employees. At this time the annual increase by employee COLA represents a lower value than the Washington-Baltimore CPI-U that has been previously applied to Mayor and Council stipends, but the Commission felt that members of the Mayor and Council should not be treated with annual increases more generous than those provided to employees who are being asked to carry out the policies and directions of the Mayor and Council.

- II. **Travel Reimbursement.** For FY 2024, each Mayor and Councilmember has been allocated an equal amount of \$6,000 for travel reimbursements. The travel reimbursements are in accordance with the City's travel policies, a copy of which is available on the City's web site, governing travel to approved events or meetings more than 50 miles away. The Commission has two separate recommendations:
 - a) The Commission recommends that the allowance for Mayor be increased by 10% to a "base" of \$6,600 prior to applying any annual increases. The Commission recognizes that, although the Mayor is considered equivalent to the Council in terms of authority, the Mayor has additional annual travel commitments which warrant a higher travel allowance.

- b) The Commission recommends that the travel allowances be increased annually from FY 2025 through FY 2028 by the positive change, if any, in the Washington-Baltimore CPI-U for the twelve months preceding the previous November.

III. Benefits. Mayor and Council currently have access to the City's health plan, dental plan, vision plan, life insurance, and legal plan. 100% of the premium is borne by them should they choose to join. Although none of the current Mayor and Council are enrolled in the City plan, the Commission recommends that this benefit continue to be offered to Mayor and Council. The decision to offer the benefits at 100% of premium borne by Mayor & Council is based on the decisions and analysis of the Compensation Commission as detailed in their March 2015 Compensation report. The current Compensation Commission had debated this issue, but after a vote, elected to not propose any changes to the amount of premium borne by Mayor & Council (See Appendix D for Further Discussion).

APPENDIX A – CURRENT STIPEND AND BENEFITS

- Stipend for FY 2024: Mayor - \$39,662.86, Council \$32,190.15 (increases based on CPI-U for last 4 years)
- Travel allowance for FY 2024: \$6,000.00 each (annual increase of \$250 per year for last 4 years)
- IT Equipment: laptop & printer issued upon request. Returned at end of service.
- Office supplies: paper, toner, and general office supplies available as needed from supply closet.
- Office Furniture & Equipment: Specifically requested office furniture and equipment (e.g. shredder, ergonomic equipment, file cabinets) are available upon request. Returned to city at end of service.
- Access to all City facilities in line with city employees (e.g. Senior Center, Swim Center, & Community Centers, see table below)
- Access to City health insurance, vision, and dental plans (100% of the premium paid by the member)
- Access to legal resources and life insurance (100% of the premium paid by the member)

Appendix A - Continued

City Facilities Detail ²

City of Rockville Employee and Family Member Discounts

RECREATION CLASSES AND CAMPS	SENIOR CENTER	CIVIC CENTER - GLENVIEW MANSION	SWIM & FITNESS CENTER	TCRC/LPCC/TFCC & NATURE CENTER
Employee receives a 40% discount on registration fee for recreation activities (excluding cooking classes) and 10% discount for trips (excluding overnight trips). Family member receives a 10% discount on recreation activities (excluding adult team sports and cooking classes), summer camps, playgrounds, childcare, and trips.	Employee receives a FREE membership (age requirement is 60 years of age), a 40% discount on classes, 10% discount on senior trips (excluding overnight trips), and a 10% discount on rentals (no age requirement). Family member receives a 10% discount on memberships, and a 10% discount on classes and trips (excluding overnight trips).	Employees and family members receive a 10% discount on all Civic Center fees and a 10% discount on Glenview Mansion rentals. <i>All Rentals require the rental to be in employee's name and they must be present for the event.</i>	Employee receives a FREE individual membership or a 50% discount on a family membership. Family members receive a 50% discount on the membership fees. Family members receive the resident rate for a daily swim pass. Employees are admitted free. Employees and family members receive 20% off the non-pass holder rate for swim classes. Employees receive a 10% discount on rentals.	Employee receives a FREE individual membership or a 50% discount on a family membership. Family members receive a 50% discount on the membership fees. Employee receives a 10% discount on rentals and birthday parties.

NOTE: In order for family members of employees to take advantage of the discounts at the Community Centers and Swim & Fitness Center they must obtain a Recreation ID card. This photo ID is available at all Centers (excluding Nature Center) during normal business hours. Employees may obtain this card free of charge.

- All discounts are based on the resident/nonresident status of the employee or retiree. Regular benefit eligible employees; retirees, their spouse, and children residing in their house qualify for this discount. Temporary and seasonal staff does not qualify for this discount.
- Discount does not apply for amusement park tickets, concert tickets, or special event productions.

Revised 7/17/2018

Rec Services/Superintendent Files/Employee & Family member discounts

² From PDF: Family Member Discounts_201906061300487967. Provided by Sara Taylor-Ferrell on 5/22/23.

APPENDIX B – HISTORIC STIPEND AND TRAVEL ALLOWANCE ³

6/22/2023

Rockville Elected Officials Compensation Prepared for 2023 Compensation Commission

Report Submitted	Fiscal Year	Election Year	Actual Comp				CPI	DC-VA MD	CPI Date	Comp Cmsn Recommendations				Travel Allowance	Comments
			Mayor Comp	% Change	Council Comp	% Change				Mayor Comp	% Change	Council Comp	% Change		
2005			25,750.00		13,200.00										
2006			25,750.00	0.0%	20,000.00	51.5%	3.7%	Nov-05							
2007			25,750.00	0.0%	20,000.00	0.0%	3.1%	Nov-06							
2008			25,750.00	0.0%	20,600.00	3.0%	4.5%	Nov-07							
2009			25,750.00	0.0%	20,600.00	0.0%	2.5%	Nov-08							
3/26/2009	2010	2009	25,750.00	0.0%	20,600.00	0.0%	1.6%	Nov-09	26,295.00	2.1%	21,036.00	2.1%			M&C REJECTED Cmsn recommendation
3/30/2011	2011	2011	25,750.00	0.0%	20,600.00	0.0%	1.6%	Nov-10							
3/30/2011	2012	2012	25,750.00	0.0%	20,600.00	0.0%	3.3%	Nov-11	26,581.00	3.2%	21,265.00	3.2%			Resolution approved but not funded
3/28/2013	2013	2013	25,750.00	0.0%	20,600.00	0.0%	2.1%	Nov-12	27,458.00	3.3%	21,967.00	3.3%			Increase recommended by comp cmsn
3/28/2013	2014	2014	26,581.00	3.2%	21,265.00	3.2%			28,035.00	2.1%	22,428.00	2.1%			Increase recommended by comp cmsn
3/20/2015	2015	2015	27,033.00	1.7%	21,265.00	0.0%			27,033.00		21,265.00				Increase recommended by comp cmsn
3/20/2015	2016	2016	31,500.00	16.5%	25,500.00	19.9%	1.1%	Nov-2014	31,500.00	16.5%	25,500.00	19.9%			Increase recommended by comp cmsn
3/20/2015	2017	2017	31,689.00	0.6%	25,653.00	0.6%	0.5%	Nov-2015	31,846.50	1.1%	25,780.50	1.1%			Increase recommended by comp cmsn
2018	2018	2018	32,069.00	1.2%	25,960.00	1.2%	1.1%	Nov-2016	32,324.20	1.5%	26,167.21	1.5%			
2019	2019	2019	32,582.37	1.6%	26,376.00	1.6%	1.5%	Nov-2017	32,744.41	1.3%	26,507.38	1.3%			
3/29/2019	2020	2019	34,500.00	5.9%	28,000.00	6.2%	1.3%	Nov-2018	34,500.00	5.4%	28,000.00	5.6%			Increase recommended by comp cmsn
2021	2021	2021	35,017.50	1.5%	28,420.00	1.5%	1.5%	Nov-2019	34,983.00	1.4%	28,392.00	1.4%			Increase deferred; applied to FY22
2022	2022	2022	35,500.50	1.4%	28,812.00	1.4%	1.4%	Nov-2020	37,012.01	5.8%	30,038.74	5.8%			
2023	2023	2023	37,559.53	5.8%	30,483.10	5.8%	5.8%	Nov-2021	39,084.69	5.6%	31,720.91	5.6%			
2024	2024	2023	39,662.86	5.6%	32,190.15	5.6%	5.6%	Nov-2022							6,000.00

Data Sources:

Data was provided by City Staff (sources listed below), compiled into a single table, and returned to City Staff for review, corrections (if any), and comment.

The Commission requested a meeting with City Staff to conduct a detailed review, but was unable to schedule that meeting prior to the June 30 reporting deadline.

1	Per p4 of "List of Requested Documents - 2019" attachment to 2/10/2023 email Taylor-Ferrell to Comp Cmsn - FY2012-2013 recommendations and CPI per p4; but actual FY2012 comp was different from approved resolution
2	Per 12/23/2022 email Roelkey to Taylor-Ferrell - "Re: Mayor and Council Compensation Request" Included as attachment to 2/10/2023 email Taylor-Ferrell to Comp Cmsn
3	FY 2021 figures corrected per attachment to 3/24/2023 email Taylor-Ferrell to Comp Cmsn Calculated
4a	per 1/3/2023 email Taylor-Ferrell to Webster - "Re: Request- CPU-I for the Compensation Commission" Included as attachment to 2/10/2023 email Taylor-Ferrell to Comp Cmsn
4b	Note 1: CPI table in the attachment was incomplete (right side of table cut off); full table found here: https://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic/news-release/consumerpriceindex_washingtondc_20180214.htm Note 2: Previous reports referenced "Washington-Baltimore CPU-I" index; As of 2018, that index no longer exists; since then use "Washington-Arlington-Alexandria" index. That index includes Montgomery County.
5	Per Compensation Commission reports: 2009 report: Mayor = \$26,295, Council = \$21,036; increase of 2.12% per Washington-Baltimore CPI-U from November 2007 to November 2008. 2011 report: 2013 report: 2015 report: 2019 report: "to make up for past failures to fund ... recommended increases ...", then CPI Initial increase of approx 6%, followed by CPI-based increases

³ Data provided by City Staff and formatted / analyzed by Commissioner Newman.

Appendix B – Continued

Rockville Elected Officials Compensation

Prepared for 2023 Compensation Commission

Live Image of Data Table, Annotated to Show Data Sources

Numbers 1,2,3,4a,4b called out by the red/black lines below correspond to the numbered sources in the Data Sources notes below the table.

Report Submitted	Fiscal Year	Election Year	Mayor Comp.	% Change	Actual Comp	% Change	CPI	MD	CPI Date	Comp Cmsn Recommendation	% Change	Travel Allowance	Comments
2005	2005	2005	25,750.00	0.0%	13,200.00	51.5%	3.7%	Nov-05					
2006	2006	2006	25,750.00	0.0%	20,000.00	0.0%	3.1%	Nov-06					
2007	2007	2007	25,750.00	0.0%	20,000.00	0.0%	4.5%	Nov-07					
2008	2008	2008	25,750.00	0.0%	20,600.00	3.0%	2.5%	Nov-08					
2009	2009	2009	25,750.00	0.0%	20,600.00	0.0%	1.6%	Nov-09					
2010	2010	2010	25,750.00	0.0%	20,600.00	0.0%	3.3%	Nov-10					
2011	2011	2011	25,750.00	0.0%	20,600.00	0.0%	2.1%	Nov-11					
2012	2012	2012	25,750.00	0.0%	20,600.00	0.0%	3.2%	Nov-12					
2013	2013	2013	25,750.00	0.0%	20,600.00	0.0%	1.1%	Nov-13					
2014	2014	2014	26,581.00	3.2%	21,265.00	19.9%	0.5%	Nov-14					
2015	2015	2015	27,033.00	1.7%	21,265.00	0.0%	1.1%	Nov-15					
2016	2016	2016	31,500.00	16.5%	25,500.00	0.6%	1.1%	Nov-16					
2017	2017	2017	31,689.00	0.6%	25,500.00	0.6%	1.1%	Nov-17					
2018	2018	2018	32,069.00	1.2%	25,960.00	1.2%	1.3%	Nov-18					
2019	2019	2019	32,582.37	1.6%	26,376.00	6.2%	1.3%	Nov-19					
2020	2020	2020	34,500.00	5.9%	28,000.00	1.5%	1.4%	Nov-20					
2021	2021	2021	35,017.50	1.5%	28,420.00	1.4%	1.4%	Nov-21					
2022	2022	2022	35,500.50	1.4%	28,812.00	1.4%	5.8%	Nov-22					
2023	2023	2023	37,559.53	5.8%	30,483.10	5.8%	5.6%	Nov-23					
2024	2024	2024	39,662.86	5.6%	32,158.15	5.6%							

Data Sources:

Data was provided by City Staff (sources listed below), compiled into a single table, and returned to City Staff for review, corrections (if any), and comment.

The Commission requested a meeting with City Staff to conduct a detailed review, but was unable to schedule that meeting prior to the June 30 reporting deadline.

1 Per p4 of "List of Requested Documents - 2019" attachment to 2/10/2023 email Taylor-Ferrell to Comp Cmsn

2 FY2012-2013 recommendations and CPI per p4, but actual FY2012 comp was different from approved resolution

3 included as attachment to 2/10/2023 email Taylor-Ferrell to Comp Cmsn

4 FY 2021 figures corrected per attachment to 3/24/2023 email Taylor-Ferrell to Comp Cmsn

4a per 1/3/2023 email Taylor-Ferrell to Webster - "Re: Request - CPI-U for the Compensation Commission"

4b included as attachment to 2/10/2023 email Taylor-Ferrell to Comp Cmsn

Note 1: CPI table in the attachment was incomplete (right side of table cut off); full table found here:

https://www.bls.gov/regional/jmi-4/tables/jmi-4-tables/consumer-price-index_washingtondc_20120214.htm

Note 2: Previous reports referenced "Washington-Baltimore CPI-U" index;

As of 2018, that index no longer exists; since then use "Washington-Arlington-Alexandria" index. That index includes Montgomery County.

Per Compensation Commission reports:

2009 report: Mayor = \$26,295; Council = \$24,036; increase of 2.12% per Washington-Baltimore CPI-U from November 2007 to November 2008.

2013 report: "To make up for past failures to fund ... recommended increases ...", then CPI

2015 report: Initial increase of approx 6%, followed by CPI-based increases

2019 report: "To make up for past failures to fund ... recommended increases ...", then CPI

Initial increase of approx 6%, followed by CPI-based increases

APPENDIX C – COMPARISON WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS ⁴

Maryland Cities Comparison Table - February 2019

(sorted by Form of Gov't, Full/Part Time, Population)

City	Population	Form of Gov't	Mayor	Council	Full/Part Time	Notes
Takoma Park	17,721	Council-Manager	14,425	11,096	Part-time	Chg calc uses ECI for State/Loc gov't
Cumberland	20,452	Council-Manager	7,200	4,800	Part-time	
Greenbelt	21,000	Council-Manager	12,000	10,000	Part-time	
Fairfax, VA	23,973	Council-Manager	13,000	12,000	Part-time	
College Park	30,413	Council-Manager	10,500	7,000	Part-time	
Bowie	54,727	Council-Manager	23,958	15,598	Part-time	
Rockville	64,072	Council-Manager	32,582	26,376	Part-time	+ \$5,000 toward travel
Gaithersburg	65,690	Council-Manager	30,000	24,000	Part-time	+ \$4,346 toward city benefits
Alexandria	148,892	Council-Manager	41,500	37,500	Part-time	
Ocean City	8,500/350,000	Council-Manager	30,000	11,800/10,000	Part-time	Council comp is Pres vs others
Laurel	25,800	Mayor-Council	20,000	13,500	Part-time	\$1k expense (donation) allowance
Salisbury	31,507	Mayor-Council	50,000	15,000/12,500	Part-time	Council comp is Pres vs others
Annapolis	38,722	Mayor-Council	98,000	13,600	Full time mayor	
Frederick	66,893	Mayor-Council	96,078	26,688	Full time mayor	
Hagerstown	40,613	Mayor-Council	28,000	8,000	Full time	

Maryland Cities Comparison Table - March 2023

(sorted by Form of Gov't, Population)

City	Population 2020	Form of Gov't	Mayor	Council	# Council	Full/Part Time	Notes
Cambridge	13,100	Council-Manager	25,026	16,461	5	Part-time	
Elkton	15,800	Council-Manager	10,580	9,600	4		
Takoma Park	17,600	Council-Manager	32,000	24,000	6	Part-time	Chg calc uses ECI for State/Loc gov't
Cumberland	19,100	Council-Manager	7,200	4,800	4	Part-time	
Fairfax, VA	23,973	Council-Manager	13,000	12,000	6	Part-time	
Greenbelt	24,900	Council-Manager	14,000	12,000	6	Part-time	1 Mayor ProTem + 5 Council
College Park	34,700	Council-Manager	12,000	7,000	7	Part-time	1 Mayor ProTem + 7 Council
Bowie	58,300	Council-Manager	25,026	16,461	5	Part-time	
Rockville	67,100	Council-Manager	37,560	30,483	4	Part-time	+ \$6,000 travel allowance
Gaithersburg	69,700	Council-Manager	38,426	24,677	5	Part-time	+ \$4,346 toward city benefits
Alexandria, VA	148,892	Council-Manager	41,500	37,500	6	Part-time	1 Vice Mayor + 5 Council
Ocean City	8,500/350,000	Council-Manager	30,000	11,800/10,000	7	Part-time	Council comp is Pres vs others
Aberdeen	16,300	Mayor-Council	15,000	10,000	4		
Laurel	30,100	Mayor-Council	20,858	8,357	5	Part-time	\$1k expense (donation) allowance
Salisbury	33,000	Mayor-Council	50,000	15,000/12,500	5	Part-time	Council comp is Pres vs others
Annapolis	40,800	Mayor-Council	98,000	15,325	8	Full time mayor	
Hagerstown	43,500	Mayor-Council	28,000	8,000	5	Full time	
Frederick	78,200	Mayor-Council	105,937	29,427	5	Full time mayor	1 Alderman ProTem + 4 Alderman

⁴ From PDF: List of Requested Documents - 2019. Provided by Sara Taylor-Ferrell on 2/10/23. 2023 Values also provided by Sara Taylor-Ferrell. Data Formatted by Commissioner Newman.

APPENDIX D – OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Commission received input from the Mayor and Councilmembers and the public regarding compensation. Some of the feedback was deemed to be outside the scope of our task and other input was not incorporated into our recommendations. We have attempted to address these here, along with our suggestions.

Stipend:

The majority of Mayor & Council we asked felt the current stipend was adequate. One elected official felt the stipend should be doubled. Public survey results were almost evenly split. At the public forum, one speaker also felt an increase of 10% in the stipend should be implemented effective January 2024.

Commission response: Given that the majority of current Mayor & Council are satisfied with their stipend and that the amounts they receive are on the higher end of the spectrum for similar size municipalities, the Commission's recommendation is to keep the stipends the same with an annual increase. The Commission also considered the upcoming increase in the council size from four to six members, which the current Mayor & Council felt should allow some of the duties related to Boards & Commissions, and regional community activities and events, to be spread across seven officials instead of five. This should presumably result in a decrease in time commitment.

Travel Reimbursement:

The elected officials had vastly different opinions regarding the travel allowance (currently \$6,000 per year per official, with leftover funds being returned to the general fund). The Commission also noted that the pandemic impacted the most recent Mayor & Council term, so councilmembers who were new to Mayor & Council this term were not able to comment fully as to the adequacy of the amount. Most of the elected officials felt the current allowance was sufficient, though one councilmember felt it was too high. Some of the varied suggestions we received included: ability to rollover unused allowance, ability to use the funds to upgrade to premium economy for longer flights, travel to Sister City events out of country should come from a separate budget line (City Clerk's office confirmed that this is already occurring), more transparency when an official requests travel funds, more flexibility to attend an event without having to wait for the City to decide if they are participating, increase the allowance for Mayor since they attend extra events, increase the allowance to open up more travel opportunities in order to attend events where officials could apply for grants for the City.

Commission response: Although Mayor & Council are not considered to be employees, they are required to abide by the City's travel policy. Any change to that policy (such as upgrades for longer flights) is outside the scope of this Commission. The ability to rollover unused funds is dictated by the annual budget process and any change is outside our scope. It has also been standard practice for the last few years for the city to budget for Sister City travel in a separate line item and the Commission recommends this practice continues for the foreseeable future. The Commission did discuss the suggestions regarding transparency of requests and flexibility to attend events prior to the City making a decision, and we understand that the City is currently accommodating both these issues if the Mayor & Council put in the request. The Commission did make a recommendation related to the travel reimbursement to increase the allowance for the Mayor by 10% to attend additional events.

IT Equipment and Supplies:

It appears that not all elected officials are aware of what equipment and supplies they are entitled to receive from the City.

Commission response: City staff confirmed that all elected officials can request a laptop, printer, and office supplies (as needed) including toner. The Commission suggests that the City include this information in the orientation for future incoming Mayor & Council.

Access to City Facilities:

It appears that not all elected officials are aware that they have the same access to City facilities as do City employees, including the Senior Center, Swim & Fitness Center and Community Centers.

Commission response: The City should include information in the orientation package for all incoming Mayor & Council detailing their access to City facilities.

Access to Other Resources / Benefits:

We received input during our interviews with Mayor & Council that a variety of other resources would be beneficial to the elected officials. Some items mentioned included legal resources, life insurance, dependent care to attend evening meetings, and additional staff to provide day-to-day help for Mayor & Council.

Commission response: For additional staffing resources, the Commission recommends that the City explore offering internships for local college students to provide assistance to elected officials.

The Commission also identified that access to legal resources and life insurance were already available to the Mayor & Council and that not all members of the body were aware of that.

The Commission debated & discussed but did not approve if elected officials should be able to apply for reimbursement to cover dependent care expenses while they attend City meetings or events.

The Commission also debated the covering a portion of health and dental premiums for Mayor & Council to be more in line with employees of the City of Rockville, as some commissioners felt that the Mayor & Council were being treated similarly to employees in other aspects of their compensation (e.g. Travel reimbursement standards, Equipment) it made sense to align this aspect as well. In addition, it was thought that having employee treatment of these premiums might open up the pool of potential Mayor & Council candidates. After some debate it was put up to a vote and decided that treatment should remain in its current form based on the rationale provided in the 2015 Compensation Commission Report.

Lastly, the Commission discussed adding cell phone service stipends as was the practice prior to 2015. After discussion, it was decided not to change this policy.

Increasing Pool of Mayor & Council Candidates

We received several suggestions from Mayor & Council on possible ways to broaden the pool of Rockville residents across all demographics who would want to run for office. Although some members of the Mayor & Council did suggest the following ideas, the Commission did not have a majority for approving some of the suggestions for inclusion in this report and in some instances did not feel that they were in scope of the Commission's review. The ideas proposed by the Mayor & Council were as follows:

- 1) Double (or significantly increase) the current stipend. As previously addressed, the Commission recommends that the base amount of the stipend remain the same (with annual increases tied to CPU or COLA), recognizing that the position is intended to be part time;
- 2) Allow Mayor & Council to apply for reimbursement for dependent-care expenses to attend evening meetings or events;
- 3) Provide City funds to assist with campaign expenses. The Commission felt that this request was outside our scope to address since this would involve coordination with other parties (e.g. City of Rockville Board of Supervisors of Elections); and,
- 4) Put a hard stop on meeting times as many residents may be discouraged by the length of the Mayor & Council meetings. The Commission felt that this request was outside our scope to address. Hard start & stop times are within control of Mayor & Council.

Feedback from members of the current Mayor and Council, with one exception advocating for a considerable increase, was that the current stipend was reasonable, and each member indicated that the stipend did not play a role in their decision to seek office. Public feedback was mixed, with more than half of respondents supporting current levels of compensation. Where stipend increases were supported, the primary reasoning was to make Mayor and Council service more practical for those who are not in as secure a personal or financial position to commit themselves.

The Commission does recognize that many potential candidates will not be in a practical position to participate due to barriers to entry (e.g. long work hours, shift work, commuting time, care for dependents, etc.), but also felt that compensation should not become an incentive or objective for candidacy. Rather, motivation for service must, first and foremost, come from within. Further, while the Commission also recognizes that there are opportunity costs to serving as Mayor or Councilmember, they submit that there are also many opportunity benefits to be reaped as well. The question of how compensation may be appropriately adjusted to attract a larger pool of qualified candidates will continue to be under consideration.

Additionally, the Commission suggests the City of Rockville and the Mayor & Council explore multiple ways to address Diversity and Inclusion concerns in the long term in regard to cultivating future candidates through methods such as:

- Through targeted internship programs,
- Outreach to middle school, high school and/or college programs related to civics, government, citizen participation, or public service; and,
- Outreach to the Maryland Municipal League (MML) and the International City Management Association (ICMA) for ideas, etc.

2023 Compensation Commission Report – Errata and Clarification of Language

After the submission of the report, several commissioners felt language in one section was confusing. As we are not able to edit the report as submitted, the commission wanted to provide this supplementary documentation for the presentation on 07/17/2023 to better clarify the Commission's intent on their recommendation surrounding Travel Reimbursements for the Mayor and Council. The language in question is on Page 4 of the 2023 Compensation Commission Report, Section 5, part II – Travel Reimbursement.

- II. Travel Reimbursement.** For FY 2024, each Mayor and Councilmember has been allocated an equal amount of \$6,000 ~~each~~ for travel reimbursements. The travel reimbursements are in accordance with the City's travel policies, a copy of which is available on the City's web site, governing travel to approved events or meetings more than 50 miles away. The Commission has two separate recommendations:
- a) The Commission recommends that the allowance for Mayor be increased by 10% to a "base" of \$6,600 prior to applying any annual increases. The Commission recognizes that, although the Mayor is considered equivalent to the Council in terms of authority, the Mayor has additional annual travel commitments which warrant a higher travel allowance.