

Item 23-1246: Approval of Alderperson Salaries
Human Resources & Information Technology Committee
Wed, Oct 25, 2023 4:30PM

Alderperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 11:55

Moving on to number 23-1246 approval of alderperson salaries. Now, there's not really a motion to be made based on the information that we received, but I'd be interested if any—anyone on the on the committee would like to propose a motion for this. We can absolutely have a discussion without a motion, but I'm wondering if there's anything on the table to begin. There being none, Director Ratchman, do you have any ideas? Thoughts? What's your feedback?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 12:29

Sure. I mean, my feedback is, this is an annual item that we bring forward. Just to clarify because again we have some new committee members, what you're voting on or what you're bringing forward for a recommendation is for a future term, not for current terms. As outlined in the assistant city attorney's letter, you have a few options. One is to go with staggered salaries, which means you might—you would have half the group earning a different salary than the other half. Or to stick with a single adjustment, which is to keep the entire Council on the same schedule—same salary schedule. Just from my history and working with this. Since I've been in this role, I'm only familiar with the single adjustment. I'm not saying there hasn't been a different history.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 13:17

What I've tried to include in this packet is really three pieces of information to help this committee move forward. One is obviously our letter from the assistant city attorney outlining the process. The second is to have some comparable data, so that's the second attachment. The difficulty with the comparable data is what's a comparable? If you're looking at an attorney position, an HR position, IT, it's a lot easier to do apples for apples. So, but nonetheless, you have some data to help you with that decision. And then the third attachment is a historical document to refresh everyone's memory on what's been done in the past for raises for the Council. So, thank you.

Alderperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 14:03

Feedback from the committee? Alderperson Croatt.

Alderperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 14:06

Thank you, Chair. I'll make a motion to approve no increase for the 2024 election year.

Alderperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 14:13

We have motion on the table. Do I have a second? I'll second for discussion. Would you like to present that Alderperson Croatt, anything further on that?

Alderperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 14:21

As an additional supporting information?

Alderperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 14:24

Correct.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 14:25

Basically, because I just historically have not supported alderperson salary increases. And if you look at the comparable data, which is extremely difficult to use—I mean it's great data to have but to Director Ratchman's comment, it's hard to find a comparable. But if you do consider all of it in aggregate, in my opinion, we seem to be on the higher end right now. So that's why I would propose no increase.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 14:54

And I assume for clarification for the attorney's purposes, that would mean that you would like a single adjustments, effective for April.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 15:02

Yes, not a staggered.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 15:05

Alderson Fenton.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 15:06

Thank you, chair. Um, I am in agreement with this motion, but not necessarily for the reason that my colleague Alder Croatt is giving. I'm going to liken it to what we talked about in our last meeting the compensation changes for the mayor and the city attorney. So, two years ago, effective at the beginning of this year, we—the Council got about an 8% raise. So doing the math, I think that that is in keeping with what other city staff and directors have gotten. So, I'm comfortable supporting no raise for this year.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 15:54

However, I will go on my annual rant that, while we're—

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 16:00

We're all prepared.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 16:01

While we completely understand that this is not a job that anyone makes a living at, and there is a public service aspect of it, by keeping salaries really low, we're ensuring that the only people who can serve their community in this way are people who have sufficient income, and also have sufficient flexibility in their schedules that they can take time out for meetings. So, a self-employed person, or whose income depends on how many hours that they're working, or someone who's having to do a side gig to make additional money to pay for child care, et cetera, is often shut out of a position like this. So, in that way, I think that we're not representative of all of the citizens, if only a certain class of—and I want to, I include myself in that class—reasonably privileged people can do this job.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 17:15

With that, you know, looking at the comparables, I was pleased that we Council members were voted a pretty good raise. I don't think that we should put it as a quote "living wage—wage", but I think that we need to be mindful that we want to have the opportunity for all kinds of people to represent the city in order to have a diversity of viewpoints. Thank you.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 17:42

Thank you. To that to that point, I in some ways, very much agree with Alderson Fenton, that that there is some inflexibility involved with this position. And I would like to state that I don't believe that that's necessarily

income based. I believe that in order to run for this position, you have to be aware that you will be having to attend meetings. And that's why most of the meetings are in the evenings, because we're trying to make it possible for people who would be working during a standard work day. But, I mean, there's no other way to make flexibility for this particular position, and I don't think pay necessarily solves that problem. Thank you. Does anyone else have anything? Alderperson Hayden?

Alderperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 18:33

Thank you, Chair. I just want to echo what Alder Fenton was saying. And I think it goes beyond kind of even the examples that she laid out. We're currently in the midst of a childcare crisis. So single mothers are instantly shut out of this if they don't have a way for someone to take care of their child, especially at the cost effective. I know, right now, I can't even find a daycare during the day. So, the odds of you finding one at night are almost slim to none.

Alderperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 19:05

I think I agree with the motion that's been made. But I think maybe in the future, we need to look at adjusting the salaries, maybe taking a decrease across the board to sort of take in an income-based approach to encourage people who are kind of shut out of the process. But that's not a motion that I think I'm prepared to make today.

Alderperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 19:27

Anyone else? All right, we have a motion and a second on the table to have a zero increase for alderperson salaries effective for the April 2025 period—pay period or election period. All those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Aye. Anyone opposed? Any abstentions? None. So that motion passes five to zero.