

Item 23-1246: Approval of Alderperson Salaries

Common Council

Wed, Nov 01, 2023 7:00PM

Mayor Jake Woodford 36:55

All right. From human resources and information technology, this is item 23-1246 approval of alderperson salaries. We have a motion and a second to approve. We'll open the floor for discussion. Alder Doran.

Alderperson Chad Doran (District 15) 37:22

Thank you. I hope my colleagues will indulge me just for a moment. I know this isn't always our favorite subject to talk about, but tonight I come to you with a few thoughts about our parking passes as part of our Council salary. And I hope you'll indulge me because I come with a compromise that I hope will meet with your approval. As much as it pains me, I know you all know how I feel about the parking pass benefit that we have, and I think that it's unnecessary. But I realized that a number of you a number of my colleagues, do it do enjoy the benefit and think it is something that's important for various reasons. And so, I appreciate that. And I'm going to be making an amendment to try and meet in the middle that I think is hopefully something that we will all benefit from, because it will allow us all to have the cost of parking for our required meetings covered, and yet still save the city what I think is a fairly substantial amount of money considering the amount we're talking in total overall for parking passes.

Alderperson Chad Doran (District 15) 38:29

So, the idea here is to create a parking pass—or a parking stipend, essentially \$12 a month for each member of Council that will cover our cost to park in the ramp for the four required meetings that that we generally have to pay for when the meters are in effect and in during the daytime. Doesn't cover for Council meetings, because by the time our Council meetings happen, the meters—the cost of filling the meters is no longer in effect. Generally, a lot of us end up parking on the street either around or in the parking lot nearby by Council meetings anyway. So, this, this would then create a \$12 a month stipend for each Council member and would eliminate the Council parking pass line item in the 2025 budget. So, the total cost of this would end up being \$2,160. For comparison, in 2023, our cost was \$7,200 for parking passes. In this year's proposed budget, it's \$5,760. So, in total are saving \$3,600 for the city, money that can be used elsewhere it a number of different places in different ways.

Alderperson Chad Doran (District 15) 39:44

So, I will, I guess make the amendment and to replace the Council parking pass with a \$12 a month stipend for each Council member to cover the cost of parking for meetings and eliminate the Council parking pass budget line item entirely starting in 2025.

Mayor Jake Woodford 40:08

Okay, I just want to make sure that we're clear. You're making a motion?

Alderperson Chad Doran (District 15) 40:12

Yes.

Mayor Jake Woodford 40:12

Okay. I just want—you said you're making an amendment. So, I just want to make sure. So, okay—so we have a motion. Is there a second? All right. We have a motion and a second. All right, we can open discussion now on the motion to amend. Alright, we'll take it up with Alder Alfheim.

Aldersperson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 40:36

Thank you, chair. I don't think anyone enjoys this conversation, but I appreciate that you're trying to find a happy medium. First, I would question whether we're actually spending the 7000 or it's just a book number, because I think a number of the passes have been turned back in. But my question would be, what the process would be and is this effort to make this work going to end up costing more in man hours to manage. That may not be the case, but I would like to know if that's been thought out and how that would apply.

Mayor Jake Woodford 41:11

Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 41:17

Thank you, Chair. The thing I like about this is that we can stop talking about parking passes every year at Saturday. This would be a addition to aldersperson salaries, and would be able to make sure that we can cover the parking that is necessary for doing our job. And that has always been the bone of contention between different camps in regards to how we feel about parking passes. So, this solves that problem and, again, removes this discussion, for all intents and purposes, from Budget Saturday and budgeted option future years. Granted, we still have to manage 2024, but 2025 this could solve this problem very easily. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 42:04

Alder Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 42:07

Thank you, Chair. Excuse me. So, I am going to ask my colleagues not to go through with this, mainly because when I gave my parking pass to the city—or when I gave it back—it was commitment that it would be spent on helping people in the community through the police department, which would mean that we are giving less to the community overall, which I like the idea of giving a larger figure amount to people in need. So, I'm going to vote against this mainly for the fact that I'm helping more people with the current system in place. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 42:54

Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 42:56

Thank you. I encourage my colleagues not to support this amendment. I think that it's interesting that we look at the economy around us, we look at challenges with workplace retention, we look at how can we make Appleton a really awesome environment where our employees want to stay here and work here. But we don't have the same sort of attitude towards our colleagues and future generations or future iterations of Council. I'd um—I am one of the people who does not use a parking pass, but I will continue defending the parking passes. This is not that I'm attached to some kind of benefit that I don't want to let go of. I think that fundamentally, the parking passes as their own separate thing, make a very important statement saying, "Hey, if you have the means and support to make yourself into this seat here, then you will be able to attend meetings." You're not going to be stuck as the odd one out who was late to meetings all the time and not able to fulfill your responsibilities because of infrastructural issues. I think that they're they're—you know, there's a lot of work we have to do to really make it more attractive for people to sit in these seats and represent the community, and I think that

these discussions that we continue having about our compensation and the stagnation there is not going in the right direction. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 44:25

Alder Fenton.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 44:27

Thank you, Your Honor. I would also urge my colleagues to vote against this proposal. Adding a particular amount as a stipend to the alder salary—it doesn't affect some of us who are retired, but it's taxable income for the people for whom this job is a second job, and the marginal rate could take all of that away. I actually—I may have spoken slightly ill of the compromise we came up with at budget meeting last year where the parking pass was provided as a benefit as opposed to part of the salary. And those of us who chose not to take it, turned it back in with the hope that as alder Wolff pointed out that those funds would be used by the police department to help people in need. I understand that, to this point, they have not been used for that purpose, but I also understand that the police department is looking at some possibilities. And while I gave my parking pass up with the idea that that money was going to this purpose, I think it should be a choice that alders make that suits their needs, and I just think putting it in salary is not a good idea, and I don't support it. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 46:14

Alder Van Zeeland?

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 46:16

Thank you, Chair. This isn't the first time that we've tried to go down the route of compromise or reimbursement. And I just feel that, you know, for someone like me, who is down here quite regularly beyond typical meetings, \$12 does not actually cover the cost of me parking downtown. I think it penalizes people for being here to do their jobs. I think that we should not be worried about plugging meters or moving vehicles and that this is only going to become a bigger issue now that we are rebuilding the neighborhood.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 46:57

More importantly, I see this as I see this as a, an extension of the discussion about privatization of the parking ramp. I think that's what this is really about. I think that the hope is that we would say "Well, let's just take the funding, and let's just have the pass," which I think is irresponsible. And so, I would ask my colleagues to vote against this. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 47:28

Alder Hayden.

Aldersperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 47:29

Thank you, Chair. I think Alder Alfheim raised a really good question, and I was wondering if anybody on staff would be able to give us an estimate of how much a month it cost for an alder to have a parking pass?

Mayor Jake Woodford 47:43

Well, the rate is \$40 a month for the pass.

Aldersperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 47:46

But I guess the question is, is that \$40 that's costing the city or is that \$40 just on a spreadsheet?

Mayor Jake Woodford 47:56

The pass is \$40. And it's collected by the parking utility. And it flows into the revenues for the parking utility. So, I guess I'm not understanding your question.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 48:08

I guess it's kind of—\$40 is coming from the city to the city is what it seems like, no?

Mayor Jake Woodford 48:15

No.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 48:15

Okay, I'm sorry. I misunderstood.

Mayor Jake Woodford 48:17

No. Parking utility's an enterprise fund. So, it's moving from general fund, property tax levy, to the parking utility, which is an enterprise fund.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 48:27

I apologize.

Mayor Jake Woodford 48:27

That's all right. Alder Hartzheim.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 48:32

Thank you, Chair. I'd like to address the issue of not being able to make a meeting without having a parking pass. It's my understanding that you can still drive into the parking ramp, take a ticket, let the ramp go up drive in, park same as you would with a parking pass. So, I don't see the issue of "well, we don't want people to be late for meetings or unavailable—you know parking is not available or they have to plug a meter." This still allows for a person to use the parking ramps. It's just without a parking pass. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 49:16

Alder Alfheim.

Alderson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 49:19

I wish I didn't have a car. Thank you, chair. I think that we have to actually consider this option. Parking passes are not meant to be a perk, but parking can be a deterrent from people wanting to be in this position. So, our colleague's suggestion to just make it part of in essence the package to me is actually a much more equitable way to deal with it. To Alder Fenton's point, we live in that we pay parking meters in a net world not a gross. So, it—according to the math, if the dollar amount were changed to \$20 a month a stipend, then from a net perspective, there will be a little bit of buffer for those of us that have more meetings than that, and we still would be reducing the budget by 50%. I think that's a rational conversation to have.

Alderson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 50:21

Again, we are not getting a parking pass as a perk. I hate having the conversation about parking passes, and I wouldn't mind if we stopped talking about parking passes. And at \$20 I think that this is a very good idea and I would support that. Leaving it there. **[Indecipherable]**

Mayor Jake Woodford 50:41

Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 50:44

Thank you. If someone were parking downtown, and they weren't in the ramp with their pass and they had a number of meetings, and they had to go back out in between meetings to plug the meter or move their car, that could cause them to be late for one of their meetings. Because otherwise, they could just stay in City Hall without having to go and take a detour to walk all the way to their car, maybe move it all the way back. Some meetings would be over by then. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 51:14

Alder Croatt.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 51:16

Thank you, Mayor. I don't think we're ever going to have something on the table that everybody likes or agrees with. That's pretty clear, right? We have different philosophies on this whole parking pass thing and different philosophies on what the salary should be to do this responsibility. I'm not going to call it a job. It's a responsibility that we take on when we choose to run for office.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 51:37

I really liked this proposal. I'm not—and I'll tell you why I like it. I don't like the fact that we have a year next year that's going to be different than—or half the Council will be on a different thing, but we can take that up next year and fix that. What I like about this proposal is that it better aligns with the actual expenses we might incur. And I think Aldersperson Alfheim has a good point about maybe \$12 isn't enough. It's probably enough for all of us that have two committee meetings a week and a Council meeting. Council really isn't included because it starts at seven. But I think over the course of the year, maybe 12 isn't enough for extra meetings, budget Saturday, that kind of thing.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 52:24

I really liked this because it better aligns with the actual expenses we might incur to come to these meetings. At \$40 a month, I don't think if we didn't have the passes, I don't think anyone is spending anywhere close to \$40 a month on parking. And I think that we should consider that savings. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 52:44

Alder Firkus.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 52:47

Thank you, Mayor. I'm going to bite on that idea and amend the amendment to change the stipend amount to \$20. And if I—I'll give a little bit of a rationale here. I mean, yes, it would cover the parking but I think as a stipend, it's also more flexible. Suddenly, you can do something else like say, take the bus, pay bus fare with this amount, which is also then opens up more opportunities for say anyone who is considering this who does not have a vehicle but has to travel more than a few blocks. And this might make it a little bit easier for more people then. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 53:23

Alright, we have a motion and a second to amend the amendment. Right. We're gonna clear the queue and start up the discussion on that. All right, please tap back in if you're looking to speak on the amendment to the amendment. Alder van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 53:41

Thank you, Chair. Could we have staff go over what the rate is if you're parking in the ramp currently?

Mayor Jake Woodford 53:51

Director Block.

Director Danielle Block (Department Of Public Works) 53:53

Thank you, Mayor. Rates for the ramps \$3 for zero to four hours \$6 for anything over four hours a day.

Mayor Jake Woodford 54:07

Alder Doran.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 54:10

Thank you. I was about to make that point as well. The idea that the that—this still allows councilmembers to have flexibility to park in the ramp if they choose to so they don't have to keep running out to plug meters. For what it's worth, Budget Saturday, we were here almost 10 hours; I paid \$2 and I parked a block north of the library, and plugged the meter for \$2 for the entire day. Didn't have to go back out. So, there's options, and while I dislike spending even more, I will support the \$20 version of this amendment because it still comes into this overall savings to our taxpayers.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 54:51

And to the concern that was raised about how some of us have been giving our parking passes back and allowing that money to be utilized elsewhere, I hear that, but I would remind our colleagues that the total amount saved under this proposal is still more than what the turned in parking passes are. So, this comes as a net benefit in multiple ways to the community.

Mayor Jake Woodford 55:14

Alder Croatt.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 55:16

Thanks, Mayor. Just a clarification on this concept that there was money that APD could spend, based on parking passes turned in. As one that turned into money, I was hoping that that money could be utilized. But since it's a parking utility, can APD actually use that money? And if they can—if they don't use it, and '23 does it, can it roll to '24?

Mayor Jake Woodford 55:40

So just to be clear, the money in that case was never ever given to the parking utility. So it never—the money never flowed into the parking utility in the first place. So, when the passes were turned in—yeah, so they were general fund dollars which could then be redirected to other purposes, which was the direction of the Council. So, they never hit the parking utility. So, they were able to be used in that way.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 56:05

Okay. And to the question about rolling, if they don't use it in '23, does it—can it roll to '24?

Mayor Jake Woodford 56:12

Depends on carry forward policy. Looking to finance colleague.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 56:18

Reason I ask is I heard some disappointment that the money wasn't utilized, and I would like to know if the police department could still use the money.

Mayor Jake Woodford 56:25

Deputy Director Demeny.

Deputy Director Katie Demeny (Finance) 56:30

Thank you. um, as I at this point, would like to go back and just double check on the budget policy with the carryover. If it did, it would be an under consideration one that would be voted on with budget carryover.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 56:46

Okay, thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 56:51

Alder van Zeeland.

Alderman Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 56:52

Thank you, chair. What the parking pass does allow—when people are thinking about this parking pass, what they're thinking about is their own particular situation. You know, for me, it's not that big of a deal to pay an extra \$2, pay an extra \$3, \$6. But what this pass was provided to Council for was to make sure that those expenses are not incurred. And what's—what's important about this is not everybody pays the same amount to sit in this chair.

Alderman Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 57:28

When I come here, I often have to pay a babysitter so that I can be here. And some people might say, "Well, that's your choice." But if you put it in, in that frame, what you're saying is, "Parents should be charged more to represent parents and citizens on this body." That's what you're saying.

Alderman Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 57:52

You know, if you are retired, and you have no children, you may not have any other expenses. You may be able to afford it. I may be able to afford it. But what this path allows is for people to engage in this process, without the worry of extra added expenses.

Alderman Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 58:10

And we need to be mindful of the fact that we already do not pay a salary that really rewards people for the amount of time that they put into it. A parking pass, as opposed to cash, does make sure that you are getting a benefit by being down here to do your job. I think that this is an attempt to make people have this argument so that it can be "Some people are fiscally responsible, and some people are not." And I think that that is wrong, when we are looking at what kinds of decisions we need to make as a Council, not just for this Council but for councils in the future. Thank you

Mayor Jake Woodford 59:00

All right, any further discussions on the amendment to the amendment? Hearing none, we have a motion and a second to amend the amendment, increasing the amount to \$20. Please cast your votes.

Mayor Jake Woodford 59:22

Thanks, Alder Fenton.

Mayor Jake Woodford 59:32

Motion passes 12 to two, so the amendment has been amended. We're back to the amendment as amended. Alder Schultz left the meeting.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 59:44

Okay.

Mayor Jake Woodford 59:45

And so, we can't record even if he—I think he put a comment and about his position on one of these, but—

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 59:51

Okay.

Mayor Jake Woodford 59:51

—given that he's not here, we're—I'm not going to count those votes.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 59:54

Fair.

Mayor Jake Woodford 59:57

All right, we're back to the amended amendment. Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:00:05

Thank you, chair. I hear Alder Van Zealand's discussion just before this, which technically wasn't on the amendment to the amendment, but that's okay. I still feel like that comes down to the word "perk." And I think it's important that we—that this is a part of the job. Having to park is a part of the job. And as Aldersperson Croatt says, "a part of the service." The additional usage of that parking pass isn't a part of the service, and I don't think we should think of it as that. So, I would encourage folks to vote in favor of this amendment. This will stop this discussion for councils in the future as well. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:00:57

Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:00:58

Thank you. I encourage my colleagues to oppose this amended amendment. I do think that the amendment to the amendment improved it somewhat, but I think that another important thing for us to consider is that historically, parking was needed for alderspersons, parking by alderspersons was happening, parking passes for alderspersons then happened. The discussion about, and the presence of, these parking passes is about parking. The discussion of and the increases to our aldersperson stipend are about our aldersperson salary.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:00:59

If we now roll the parking passes into the salary, well, yes, for 2024 and 2025 we have this narrative that we are part of that we were making sure that that \$20 was in there to account for parking expenses. What happens six years, seven years, 10 years down the line when that narrative is lost, and aldersperson salary continues to stagnate and that \$20 that was added now—which at that point will be years ago—that \$20 from years ago, won't be helping at all towards covering anybody's parking expenses at that point. So, I think that the changes

that we make right now will make it even more challenging to address the stagnation of the alderperson salary. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:02:34
Alder Croatt.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:02:36
Call the question.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:02:38
Motion has been made call the question. Is there a second? We have motion and a second to call the question. There are two alders left in the queue. All those in favor calling the question please signify by saying aye. Any opposed?

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:02:52
You guys don't make it easy, do you? I'm gonna I'm gonna call it again, and please be clear with your call. All those in favor calling the question please signify by saying aye. Those opposed? All right, the ayes have it. The question's been called. Please cast your votes. Motion passes eight, six. Item's been approved.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:03:40
Alright, the item has been amended. So now we're back to the item as amended for the discussion on alderperson salaries. You have a point? Okay. Attorney Behrens just has a clarification offer.

Attorney Christopher Behrens 1:03:57
The item being amended, I just want to make sure everybody—I believe everybody's under the correct understanding here, but there's been talk about a stipend monthly. What this would result in with the amendment is an increase to the annual salary. So, what came out of committee was holding the salary at \$6,750. With the amendment passing \$20 a month, that's \$240 annually, that would increase the annual salary to \$6,990. That would be effective as of the seeding of the Council in April of 2025, because as you may—some of you may have been advised in the past, you can't vote on your own salaries. So, you're voting on a full future Council's salary, and that amount would be without parking passes. So just wanted to clarify, make sure everybody understands the amount and the timing before taking the vote.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:03:59
Thank you. Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:04:33
Thank you, chair. If you look at what's attached to the agenda for this particular item, you'll see a very robust spreadsheet that comes from the HR department in regards to what we have been paid—what alderpersons have been paid, historically. And it also as a very large portion that states "Here's what other benefit is involved" and that includes parking passes. I would beseech the HR department to include this discussion today on this going forward so that we don't lose sight of what Aldersperson Meltzer has stated that, "Well, now we've got a higher salary and it's—and parking passes is not a part of it." I think there is some validity to the question we're discussing today won't—may not be heard by someone who's serving 5, 10 years from now. But if that document is maintained, as it has been, very succinctly, I believe that we can move forward without that worry. And I would encourage everyone to vote for this. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:06:13

Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:06:15

Thank you. At this point, I am going to offer an amendment to increase the aldersperson salary by \$500. So, \$500 more than what was before us prior to me making this motion.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:06:39

We have a motion and a second to amend, increasing to—let's have the actual total please.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:06:54

I'm not sure what the—I didn't jot down what the new total was after the—that's what we have now? 7—724? \$7,490. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:07:17

Thank you. We have a motion and a second to amend. Open the floor for discussion. Any discussion? Alder Doran.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:07:32

Thank you. I guess I'm not sure what the rationale for an additional \$500 comes from. If our colleague would like to speak to that I'd be interested in hearing. But off the top of my head, I guess I wouldn't be in favor of another \$500 increase.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:07:58

Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:08:00

Thank you. Historically, our alder salary has only ever increased very incrementally in teeny tiny steps, or it's remained completely flat. So, this is just an attempt to catch us up, you know, considering inflation and all of that, and also considering the general climate of this body. Considering that, you know, if we do make any particular increase, it's probably not going to increase again for a considerable time afterwards. So just trying to consider that if this is only—you know, if it's going to be quite a number more years before we try to catch up with inflation again, just trying to have a nice, round number that was easy for my colleagues to do the math for me. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:08:57

Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:08:59

Thank you, chair. I think it's important to note that the HR IT committee voted unanimously not to increase any salaries. So, the talk of the parking stipend is a completely separate discussion for this, and then increasing the salaries on top of it does not seem like it came—the HR IT's discussion did not generate that particular statement.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:09:23

It's also important to note that again, in the items that came with this from our HR group, we as a city, Appleton is almost the one of the higher rates of aldersperson salaries. So, this particular amendment would raise it—I

would say that we are, we'd be unable to justify it to our citizens. So, I would encourage folks to vote this amendment down. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:09:54
Alder Del Toro.

Aldersperson Israel Del Toro (District 4) 1:09:57

Just want to make the point that this \$500 figure closely matches the national median inflation rate within the last two to three years. So, if we're just going by that rate, it just makes sense.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:10:13
Alder Croatt.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:10:15

Thank you, Mayor. I just wanted to address the comment about a number of small increases or no increases. If I'm viewing this right, and if I recall correctly, there was a substantial increase about two years ago of about I think, approximately 8%. So, there hasn't been small or no increases consistently. There was a substantial increase a couple of years ago, and I don't see any need to catch up on anything. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:10:52
Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:10:56

Thank you. I guess my final comment here is just, you know, I appreciate it when people in the community respect us for the job that we do. It makes me very uncomfortable, though, when people pity us, and that's something that I've encountered, especially when speaking to younger people whom I'm trying to motivate to get more engaged with government. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:11:21
Alder van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:11:24

Thank you, Chair. I don't love this idea because, as I said, I think that we're better off investing in things that we know are being used to do this job. But I guess given the my colleague's disapproval with a parking pass that I will vote for it, thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:11:51
All right, this next speaker is the last in the queue. Alder Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 1:11:57

Thank you, Chair. I'm not going to call the question. Just wanted to clarify. So, I think that it's good to keep up with inflation. And I did just have a conversation with constituents today. I posted about our salary, parking passes, and the last one—sorry, my mind, but the training costs that we incur. And they did mention that they—like the majority of people think that we deserve more for what we do here in the city. I have not heard anyone say that we're overpaid by any means so I will be supporting this. Because my constituents have not told me else anything else. Yeah. Thank you,

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:12:50

Alder Jones.

Aldersperson Vaya Jones (District 10) 1:12:54

Thank you, chair. I struggle to support this in one way as I haven't been able to personally work out math and work out what this looks like to the budget, to salaries. I haven't been able to look at the history. So, it's not—I don't know. I'm uncomfortable voting on "Yep, \$500. Let's do it." But what I am comfortable in saying is the only way that I personally can do this job is because we have a double income and no children. So, like I said, on Saturday, I lose money in this position by what I do to support my people. And so, I am fighting for those who don't have the opportunities I do now, who didn't have the opportunities I had perhaps growing up to be in this position. We—this body does not represent what our city looks like, lives like, and experiences. And if we truly want to represent the people of Appleton, we need to get a diverse people into the seats and this salary is not—the salary will never be the reason someone does this job, but the salary will be a barrier to people doing this job because they cannot survive and put the time into it or afford childcare or afford not to work a second job to be able to do this. So, this is—I vote—I will vote in support of this because I think it's taking a stand to say that I am supporting those of the future, and I support removing the barriers to the opportunity of these seats.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:14:44

Before we move on and discussion, I want to make a note about decorum. I'm noticing that there are side conversations going on and note passing and maybe even messaging, and so I'd ask that we please keep the conversation to the floor and if you have something to say that you please say it on the record for the benefit of the full group. We'll continue now with the queue. Alder Doran.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:15:10

Thank you. The—I guess I'm struggling with this because the amendment that we just took up and agreed to approve was one that I think is very fiscally responsible because we accomplished a goal that that, at least some if not a majority of, Council members wanted to see. And at the same time found a way to make it a savings to taxpayers, which is something I hope that we can all feel good about doing.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:15:43

This just feels sort of far outside the bounds of that, given what Alder Croatt had said about the 8% increase, this ends up being about a 7% increase in this—so we're talking about a 15% Council salary increase in the span of three years. I'm not aware of any anyone in the private sector who's seen a 15% salary increase over the last three years. Now you can make all kinds of different arguments about well 15% of \$6,700 is a pretty small amount, or we need to increase the salary to get more diverse people in here. But, in reality, the salary is not the barrier to people coming to do this job. And \$500 isn't going to be something that someone says, "You know, can't do it for \$6,75 but for another \$500 I'm in." I just don't I don't see that.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:16:36

And I think we—this is sort of in the opposite direction of what we just accomplished a couple of minutes ago about trying to be fiscally responsible. And I think the salary that we have now still puts us at the second highest paid of any city on the list that the HR department brought forward to us. Certainly of any community our size, where compared to Eau Claire, which is a few 1000 people less than us, we're more than double the salary of Council members in Eau Claire. This this just feels like a bridge too far to me. So, I'm just gonna encourage our colleagues to defeat the amendment.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:17:16

Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:17:17

Thank you, Chair. I'm disappointed that we're, to borrow a phrase from our esteemed colleague from district one, that we're doing committee work here in Council. None of this came up at the HR IT committee meeting. And again, unanimous vote to not increase salaries so I would encourage folks to defeat this please. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:17:48

Alder van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:17:50

Thank you, chair. No discussion at committee occurred regarding this item because it passed five zero for no salary increase with a parking pass. That's what it says on the agenda. I think that—I several times over the past few years, I have spoken on behalf of parents in this city and parents who want to do this job. When I ran for office one of the things that excited people in my district was that somebody in a chair here with a small child would be making the decisions for the future of this city. And I'm disappointed that at—just as several times before, my colleagues have heard me speak on behalf of parents and have decided to go a different direction. Often, then I will hear later "I just really didn't consider it," and I'm hopeful that my colleagues hear me now when I say that we need to take some steps to make sure that the people who are going to be buying homes in this city and paying taxes in this city, that we're building a tax base with parents and young people.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:19:11

They understand that we are not going to be paid a salary like our professional position. You know, obviously you don't get a 15% increase in the private sector, but you're not making \$5,000 a year or \$6,000 a year. The argument that's happening here is bigger than what's going on with Council salaries, and I think that this is also a benefit now that—I think there'll be a question of the benefit with employees going forward, and I think this is setting a dangerous precedent. I'm going to vote for the increase because I feel like I have no other choice in the matter, and this is the only way that I can see this position allowing people like me to recoup some of the costs that other people don't have in this room. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:20:17

Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:20:18

Thank you, I just did some math here that I want to share for us to consider as we decide how we're going to vote on this. The difference between the 2021 salary and the 2023 salary was a \$528.56 difference, which works out to \$44 a month. So, the proposal I'm making now for adding \$500, that's actually just \$41 a month. So, Council approved that increase back in 2021. We're really we're not even keeping up with inflation. I'm not trying to—I'm not doing anything that's like coming from way out there. I'm not trying to give us a meaningful raise. If we if we approve this amendment tonight, we're still not really keeping up with inflation. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:21:15

Alder Alfheim.

Aldersperson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 1:21:16

In the spirit of math, we started the night with a parking pass that was going to cost \$480 per person, and our colleague wanted to cut that down. So, we swapped out with an option that would cut that cost in half at the end of the year and still give us the opportunity to park. Now we're asking for \$500. If we, just to find an end to this conversation, amend that request down to \$350, we would then be coming in at \$29.16 per month per

person which would still be coming in \$10.83 per month less than what we started the day with from the parking passes. So, we would be saving approximately \$1,950 to be fiscally responsible and still take care of parking and giving a little bit of love to those that understand that it's harder to be here for some of us than others. So, I would beg you, amend your request to \$350 and let's be done.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:22:32

Alder Del Toro.

Aldersperson Israel Del Toro (District 4) 1:22:34

I'd like to start by apologizing to my colleagues here. I have to excuse myself because of observance of Día de los Muertos and have things to get to. But I'd also like to call to question because I'd like my vote to be heard on this issue.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:22:47

Motion's been made to call—you were the last speaker in the queue. Motion has been made. Motion and seconded. All those in favor of calling the question, this is on the amendment, please signify by saying aye. Opposed? Alright, the question has been called.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:23:03

This is on the amendment to increase \$500. Please cast your votes. Point of—seven, seven, the salary would be set at \$7,490. Yes, please cast your votes. Motion passes eight to six. The item has been amended. We're back to the item as amended. Back to discussion on that. Alder Doran.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:23:56

Thank you. Given the action just taken I'm going to make an amendment to remove the \$20 additional funding that we just added for the parking pass stipend which no longer seems necessary since we just gave ourselves—gave future Council a fairly gigantic pay raise.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:24:18

Okay, so what's the total salary then in your amendment?

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:24:24

I guess it would be

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:24:26

We're starting at \$7490 less 20?

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:24:30

Correct.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:24:37

So okay, \$7,470—oh, a month. Excuse me. \$7,250.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:24:53

Okay, \$7,250. We have a motion to amend. Is there a second? All right, we have a second. Open the floor for discussion on the amendment.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:25:15

Alder van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:25:17

Thank you, Chair. I'm getting really uncomfortable with the amount of work that we are trying to do on this item in chambers. And I don't think that I can vote for the amendment. I would like to encourage my colleagues to consider sending this back to committee for an actual—for actual work to be done and for our citizens to have an option to weigh in on whether we should increase our salary or allow for things like parking. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:25:47

I just want to clarify then, are you referring this back to committee?

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:25:50

You know what I think I would like to refer this back to committee, Your Honor.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:25:55

Okay. Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:26:00

I'm not certain that we have the time to do this based on the timeline that we are looking at. So, I would look to Director Ratchman to confirm that.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:26:10

Director Ratchman.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 1:26:14

Well, look—I just want to quickly look at the calendar here.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:26:17

Okay.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 1:26:25

So next week's meeting, HR IT committee meeting will not be held because of budget adoption. So, we—for another item, we're actually doing a special meeting before Council on the 15th. We would really be looking at November 23 as the next HR IT committee without calling a special meeting. And then I don't—I'd have to look if we have a Council meeting before December 1. And I'm seeing the headshake no. So, I would agree that it would be really difficult to get this accomplished.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:26:55

All right. And so, we have a another issue, which is we haven't—we have an outstanding amendment on the item that we need to resolve. Right? We've got a—just I just want to make sure we're tracking here because we get—now we're horse trading and we got amendments and back and forth. I want to make sure we're clear about where we are in the process. So just as far as the record is concerned, where are we in the?

Clerk Kami Lynch 1:27:23

So, we're on our fourth amendment to the item and that is to remove the previously approved \$20 a month and have the salary be this \$7,250.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:27:35

Okay. So really, we need to get the item cleaned up, we need to resolve this outstanding amendment discussion before I would I would rule a refer back in order, and at that time, just given the information we've just we've just learned would ask folks to take that into consideration as you consider a refer back. So, we're still in discussion at this point on this amendment discussion. This would be reducing the amount by \$20 a month per member. Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:28:10

Thank you. I encourage my colleagues not to support the most recent amendment. I think that you know, we're trying to make some steps forward here, and that's better done without taking steps backwards at the same time. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:28:25

Alder Hartzheim. You're in the queue.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:28:28

I apologize.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:28:29

Okay.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:28:29

Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:28:30

Alder Doran.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:28:32

Thank you. I guess I was just going to ask the question about potentially holding a special meeting before the budget adoption to address this.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:28:45

And what is the question?

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:28:46

Just if we could hold a special meeting, I guess, rather than have to resolve it before the budget adoption, so we had the information that we needed, I guess to complete that.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:28:58

Is it a point of order? Alder Fenton.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 1:29:01

So, we just talked about dates. So, this would have to go to—we're still talking about a refer back? So, this would have to go to HR IT, which wouldn't have a meeting before the budget adoption meeting. So there—it seems like there would be no point in having a special Council meeting if HR it hasn't met yet.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:29:26

So, we're still talking about the amendment. We need to get that clarified and then we can sort out process from here. So further discussion on Alder Doran's amendment to reduce this item after it had been increased. Alder Croatt.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:29:41

On the amendment, call the question.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:29:45

We have a—okay motion has been made and seconded to call the question. All those in favor of calling the question please signify by saying aye. Opposed? Question has been called. This is on Alder Doran's amendment to reduce the previously increased amount by A \$20 per month per member to a total salary of \$7,250. Please cast your votes. Motion passes eight to five. Item has been approved—or the amendment has been approved.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:30:30

Alright, now we're back to the item we're gonna refresh the queue here. Alder Fenton.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 1:30:43

I'm going to vote in favor of this because with the round—exception of little rounding error we're exactly where monetarily where we came from committee with. So, we have taken away the parking pass and added almost that exact amount per month to the salary. So, I will vote for this. So, we've spent a whole lot of time accomplishing basically what we came out of committee with.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:31:21

Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:31:23

Thank you. I am going to vote against this I do not think that this accurately reflects the compensation that we should receive so I will be voting against it. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:31:35

All right, the last speaker in the queue. Alder Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 1:31:38

Call the question.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:31:39

All right. Motion been made the call the question? Do we have a second? Motion and a second to call the question. All those in favor of calling the question please signify by saying aye. Any opposed? The question has been called. Please cast your votes. Motion passes seven to six item has been approved. **[Note: after the meeting, it was realized that, per [Wisconsin State Statute 62.09\(6\)\(a\)](#), changes to aldermanic salaries require an affirmative vote by $\frac{3}{4}$ of the members of the Council. Because it only received a simple majority, the item did not pass.]**