

Meeting Minutes for the Citizens' Commission on Elected Officials Compensation
March 12, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.
Columbus City Hall, Conference Room 225

Attendance:

- Chester C. Christie, Commission Chair
- Kristen Easterday, Commissioner
- Dawn Tyler Lee, Commissioner
- Marchelle E. Moore, Esq., Commissioner
- William Murdock, Commissioner
- Andrea Blevins, Columbus City Clerk
- Josh Cox, Chief Counsel, Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr.
- Ken Paul, Chief of Staff to Council President Andrew J. Ginther
- Rory McGuinness, Special Assistant to Mayor Michael B. Coleman
- Jacquilla Bass, Deputy Director, Columbus Department of Human Resources
- Greg Beaverson, Benefits Manager, Columbus Department of Human Resources

Mr. Christie called the meeting to order and allowed the members of the Commission and staff to introduce themselves.

Mr. McGuinness read from section 15.2 of the Columbus City Charter, which states, "The citizens' commission on elected official compensation shall consist of five members, who shall be qualified electors of the city, shall not hold any other office or employment in the city government, and shall serve without compensation. Two members shall be appointed by the council, two members shall be appointed by the mayor, and one member shall be jointly appointed by the council and the mayor, such member serving as chair of the commission."

Mr. Paul gave a background of the Charter Review Commission recommendations and how Issue 8, which was passed overwhelming by voters, formed the Citizens' Commission on Elected Official Compensation. Ms. Moore stated it was clear that it is an emerging best practice, and the Charter Review Commission felt that it should be included in the Charter. Ms. Tyler Lee agreed and stated it would help create balance between compensating hard working public officials and being good stewards of tax payer money.

Mr. Paul then read and reviewed Charter sections 15.1 – 15.5, which outline the purpose, charge and goals of the Citizens' Commission on Elected Official Compensation. Mr. Paul then gave an overview of the timeline and framework of allowed salary recommendations as well as how Council will vote on the recommendations.

Mr. Christie asked about the current charter provision and how it could affect current Council members' pay. Mr. Paul responded that for years where salaries are already set, the Commission could recommend changes, but it would require Council to repeal the previous salary ordinance.

Mr. Greg Beaverson from the Human Resources department then presented on current Council compensation, past salaries and factors that contribute to the rate of increase.

Mr. Christie asked about comparable cities, and what else should be compared and reviewed. Mr. Beaverson referred to the presented list of comparable cities, which included cities within the state of Ohio and peer cities vs. core peer cities.

Mr. Christie then asked what the difference was between a peer and core city. Mr. Beaverson responded that peer cities would be those of general or broad level of comparison and largely come from lists that have been compiled in the past by the City's union negotiation teams while core peer cities actually share several similar characteristics to Columbus especially in terms of population.

Mr. McGuinness added that the Charter specifies cities to benchmark and then asked for the Commission's direction on which cities to select. Mr. Beaverson proposed three basic criteria of deciding which cities to research: practically, accuracy, and is it logical.

Mr. Paul then referenced the "Proposed Salary Survey Questions" handout. Mr. Christie asked if questions about opportunity for employment could be added. Ms. Tyler Lee suggested asking about the type and frequency of Council meetings and the size of the city budget. Mr. Murdock suggested asking about the potential mechanisms used to justify financial decisions.

Mr. McGuinness proposed that Commissioners review the list of cities and questions and send back their revised lists by March 19th. The commissioners agreed to this date.

Ms. Tyler Lee asked if either the Conference of Mayors or the National League of Cities had been contacted. Mr. Paul responded they had been contacted but have not yet responded.

Mr. Christie asked about the timeframe required for the research. Mr. Beaverson responded that the amount of time required for the research would depend on the number of cities and number of questions asked.

Mr. Christie added that it might be beneficial to ask if the state is a 'right to work' state. Mr. Beaverson responded that the question focused more on the bargaining unit which would not apply to elected officials but could provide the information.

Mr. Paul presented timelines and potential dates for the Commission's next meeting. The commission agreed to review the potential meeting and hearing dates and finalize a date in the near future.

Mr. Christie adjourned the meeting.