

THE CITY OF  
**COLUMBUS**  
CITIZENS' COMMISSION  
on Elected Official  
Compensation

Meeting Minutes for the Citizens' Commission on Elected Officials Compensation

July 16, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

Columbus City Hall, Conference Room 225

Attendance:

- Fred L. Ransier III, Commission Chair
- Diana Givand, Commissioner
- Qiana Williams, Commissioner
- Robert J. Weiler, Sr., Commissioner
- Joel Diaz, Commissioner (via telephone)
- Greg Beaverson, Compensation Manager, Department of Human Resources
- Adam Friedman, Office of Mayor Andrew J. Ginther
- Jo Ellen Cline, Legal Analyst & Ethics Officer, Columbus City Council
- Lauren Herderick, Columbus Department of Human Resources
- Dr. Bill Lafayette, Regionomics LLC, Presenter

Chair Ransier called the meeting to order and asked the Commission members and staff members to introduce themselves.

Dr. Bill Lafayette, owner of Regionomics LLC, spoke to the Commission regarding the consumer price index (CPI). Dr. Lafayette explained what the CPI measure, how it is calculated and which CPI should be used in benchmarking compensation. He detailed some of the problems with the CPI including changes in the quality of the underlying goods being used and the shifting of purchasing patterns over time. These problems result in use of the "chained CPI" which changes the weights on goods and services measured based upon the monthly Consumer Expenditure Survey. However, the chained CPI is not a good idea for compensation because it requires a formalized process to adjust compensation after it is released and could result in a downward adjustment. Commissioners, in considering Dr. Lafayette's testimony, asked if the salary of an elected official could be lowered during their term? Staff will research this question.

Dr. Lafayette suggested that the Commission consider utilizing the CPI-U, Size Class A, All Items and a national average for large regions nationwide for its purposes. According to his presentation (available in the Commission materials) the four-year average would be 1.48%. With no further questions from Commissioners, Chair Ransier thanked Dr. Lafayette for his presentation.

THE CITY OF  
**COLUMBUS**  
CITIZENS' COMMISSION  
on Elected Official  
Compensation

Mr. Beaverson then presented the Commissioners with the results of the peer city survey. He started with an overview of the definition of “market” and noted that some of the peer elected officials may have different job responsibilities, might be part-time and not full-time, or may have voluntarily reduced their pay. For these reasons, the median salary information is most useful in determining the market for a particular job. He also noted that it is a best practice in compensation to have a “market window” that is plus or minus 5% to plus or minus 10% of the market amount.

Mr. Beaverson then presented the results of the peer city survey. Chair Ransier asked for a comparison of the median line in 2015 versus 2018. Mr. Friedman gave one example of the median line for the mayor/city manager. A comparison chart will be available at the next meeting. Ms. Williams asked for a comparison of the roles and responsibilities of a mayor and a city manager. The same information was requested by Chair Ransier for the Auditor and Comptroller positions. Ms. Williams asked if all Council Members are paid the same or if there is a difference in salary based upon the number of years in service. Mr. Beaverson answered that, in Columbus, all Council Members have the same salary except for the Council President regardless of the number of years they have served on Council. Research will be done to determine if any of the peer cities pay Council Members based on years in service.

Ms. Williams asked if staff had broadened the market for the City Attorney position or Auditor position. Ms. Givand opined that there may be a need to look at other attorneys or auditors because those positions require a specialized skill set and the Commission should, perhaps, set a premium for those special skills.

Chair Ransier asked for a comparison of salaries in relation to the peer cities’ budgets. Staff will provide that analysis at the next meeting. Ms. Williams asked if staff made any analysis of the survey results. Mr. Beaverson answered that staff only wanted to provide the data to the Commissioners.

Chair Ransier asked if the size of the City Council played any part in the calculus of the 2015 Commission. Staff responded that there is no indication that number of Council members played a significant role in that Commission’s deliberations. This led Chair Ransier to discuss the passage of Issue 3 earlier this year which will add two additional City Council members beginning January 1, 2024. Because the Commission will be setting salaries beginning January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2025, the addition of two new members must be considered in the Commission’s discussions. Mr. Friedman talked about the Charter Review Commission and the philosophy behind adding two more members. Ms. Williams stated that it felt like adding two members doesn’t lessen any member’s workload but just gets Columbus closer to the median for number of Council members. Staff will provide the Commission with further background, including the ballot language, at its next meeting.



Chair Ransier announced that the next meeting would be on July 26, 2018 at 12:00 p.m. and thanked staff for their work. Mr. Beaverson thanked Ms. Herderick for her work in tracking down survey responses. With no further business to discuss, Chair Ransier adjourned the meeting.