

## Salary Review Commission Remarks by Blaine Stum

Greetings Commissioners,

I submit these comments today out of my volition. I have worked as a Legislative Assistant to Councilmembers for over three years now, and have a background in political science. I have seen firsthand the amount of time and effort it takes to be an effective Councilmember. I firmly believe that council is a full-time job, and that dynamics and forces beyond their control have made it this way.

My previous boss, former Councilmember Jon Snyder, was an example of what it takes to be a responsive, well-rounded Councilmember. In 2013, while running for re-election, he made the difficult decision to sell his self-published magazine "Out There Monthly." When people would ask why, the response was simple: he didn't have enough time to work on the magazine and be a Councilmember.

He served on a dozen boards, commission and committees; and was engaged in numerous other initiatives and projects beyond those. Some may say he "chose" to put that much effort into his job; and there is a very small degree of truth to that. The reality is it was a choice made for him: forces and institutions outside of the control of council have created an environment where it is not only expected that councilmembers show that level of dedication, but it is necessary that they do so in order to be effective at their jobs, and help our city compete in this new world

### *A Gridlocked Congress and State Legislature: What It Means for Local Government*

There are several dynamics that drive this, but perhaps none more so than the gridlock of government at a State and Federal level. Polarization in our state and federal legislatures has created an environment where local governments shoulder more and more duties and responsibilities, because state legislatures and Congress are simply not as productive as they once were. In the federal legislature, Brookings Institute "Vital Statistics on Congress" data shows just how far legislative productivity has sunk despite the myriad challenges we face:<sup>1</sup>

- The average number of bill introduced per House member has dropped from a high of 50.7 to a low of 8.8. In the Senate, it's gone from 47 to 19.
- The number of bills passed by Congress has reached its lowest level since such data has been tracked:
  - o In the House, the number of bills passed has decrease by 91%. In the Senate, 85%.
- Time spent in session for Congress members has gone from over 300 days a year to just 160.
- The number of committee and subcommittee meetings has plummeted:
  - o In the House it has gone from nearly 8,000 a year to just over 1,000.

The same dynamic can unfortunately be seen on a State level in Washington:

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<sup>1</sup> Ornstein, Mann, et al. "Vital Statistics on Congress: Chapter 6 – Legislative Productivity in Congress & Workload," Brookings Institution. (<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2013/07/vital-statistics-congress-mann-ornstein>).

- Research has shown that Washington State is the fifth most polarized state legislature in the United States.<sup>2</sup>
- The number of bills passed is the lowest it has been since the early 1980's.<sup>3</sup>
- The number of special sessions has increased due to the inability of state legislators to compromise on pressing issues.<sup>4</sup>

While it may be nice to believe that this polarization will decrease in the future, we have little reason to believe it actually will. If anything, current polarization is a return to historical norms pre-WW2.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time this slump in legislative productivity has reached new lows, resources for the enforcement and education of existing laws has been squeezed to its breaking point, necessitating a larger role for local government in issues such as wage theft, affordable housing, mental health services and criminal justice to name a few.

Program	Year of Inception	Obligations in 2015 (in millions of \$)	Change since 2000	Change since inception
HOME	1992	\$935	-59%	-61%
Community Development Block Grant	1982	\$3,000	-49%	-63%
Job Training Grants to States	1982	\$2,624	-46%	-70%
Social Services Block Grant	1982	\$1,576	-36%	-73%
Maternal and Child Health Block Grant	1982	\$637	-36%	-29%
TANF Block Grant	1998	\$16,486	-28%	-32%
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant	1994	\$1,741	-22%	-7%
Preventive Health Block Grant	1982	\$160	-15%	-19%
Community Mental Health Block Grant	1994	\$462	-7%	-1%
Community Services Block Grant	1982	\$674	-7%	-18%

The above table shows how much funding from federal programs related to housing, community development, food security, and mental health has dropped over time.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Boris Shor, "How U.S. State legislatures are polarized and getting more polarized (in 2 graphs)," The Washington Post, Monkey Cage, January 14, 2014. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/01/14/how-u-s-state-legislatures-are-polarized-and-getting-more-polarized-in-2-graphs/>)

<sup>3</sup> Total bills passed by Legislatures (Number of bills initiated in either chamber and passed by both from the 48<sup>th</sup> through the 63<sup>rd</sup> Legislatures, years 1983-2014):

<http://leg.wa.gov/History/Legislative/Documents/2014/TotalPassedLegBar2014.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Washington State Legislature – Length of Legislative Sessions for Years 1980-2015:

<http://leg.wa.gov/History/Legislative/Documents/2015/LegLength.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> See last page for graphs showing party polarization in the United States House and Senate from 1879 to 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Change since 2000 and change since inception adjusted for inflation. Based off of analysis of data from the Office Management and Budget, Congressional Research Service and appropriations bills.

This means local governments must step up to the plate and fill gaps left in the wake of all of this. I am far from the only person who holds this view. As Bruce Katz, the Vice President of the Brookings Institute and Director of their Metropolitan Policy Program noted in an interview about the consequences of gridlock at the federal level with the Washington Post in fall of last year, “There’s a new math, frankly, whether it’s transportation, housing or economic development. The new math is that this is going to be locally owned, locally designed and locally financed.”<sup>7</sup>

This is precisely what we are witnessing now:

- In 2000, there were 13 local transit ballot initiatives across the country. In 2015 there were 38.<sup>8</sup>
- Up until 1999, around 100 cities and counties had inclusionary zoning programs to create more affordable housing. The most recent data suggest that number has grown to nearly 500 cities and counties.<sup>9</sup>
- The number of cities who have signed on the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement has gone from 141 in 2005 to 1,060.<sup>10</sup>
- The number of sick leave laws passed by local and state jurisdictions has gone from 1 in 2006 to 29.<sup>11</sup>
- The use of business incentives by local governments rose from 72% in 2004 to 95% in 2009.<sup>12</sup>

This increase responsibility, whether desired or not, creates expectations of what local governments should be focusing on. A survey by Ipsos Social Research Institute in 2010 found that the top two local priority areas for US citizens are job prospects, and wage levels and cost of living.<sup>13</sup> This confirms other research that has found that citizen perceptions of local government performance are driven by more than just filling potholes.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Robert McCartney, “How states and localities are filling the gaps left by Washington’s gridlock,” *The Washington Post*, September 26, 2015. ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/how-states-and-localities-are-filling-the-gaps-left-by-washingtons-gridlock/2015/09/26/e43c5b58-63b8-11e5-b38e-06883aacba64\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/how-states-and-localities-are-filling-the-gaps-left-by-washingtons-gridlock/2015/09/26/e43c5b58-63b8-11e5-b38e-06883aacba64_story.html)).

<sup>8</sup> See: <http://www.cfte.org/elections/past#>

<sup>9</sup> Robert Hickey, Lisa Sturtevant, & Emily Thaden. (July, 2014). *Achieving Lasting Affordability through Inclusionary Housing* (Working Paper). Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

<sup>10</sup> See: <http://www.usmayors.org/climateprotection/agreement.htm>

<sup>11</sup> Bryce Covert, “All workers in this state will soon be guaranteed a paid day off when they get sick,” *ThinkProgress*, February 18, 2016. (<http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2016/02/18/3750721/vermont-paid-sick-leave/>)

<sup>12</sup> Warner, M., & Zheng, L. (2011). “Economic development strategies for recessionary times: Survey results from 2009.” *Municipal Yearbook*, 2011, 33-42.

<sup>13</sup> *One World, Many Places: Citizens’ View of Municipal Government and Local Areas across the World*. Ipsos Social Research Institute. ([http://www.ipsos.com/public-affairs/sites/www.ipsos.com/public-affairs/files/ipsos\\_sri\\_municipal\\_final.pdf](http://www.ipsos.com/public-affairs/sites/www.ipsos.com/public-affairs/files/ipsos_sri_municipal_final.pdf))

Variation can exist in expectations depending on political ideology (See: Percival, G. L., Johnson, M., & Neiman, M. (2009). “Representation and Local Policy: Relating County-Level Public Opinion to Policy Outputs.” *Political Research Quarterly*, 62(1), 164-177).

<sup>14</sup> Glaser, M. A., & Denhardt, R. B. (2000). “Local government performance through the eyes of citizens.” *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting & Financial Management*, 12(1), 49.

### *Checks and Balances against a Strong Mayor*

While some of the duties and responsibilities of local governance fall under the purview of the Mayor in our system, most of the issues mentioned in this testimony cannot be tackled effectively without legislation from council; and as council represents the constituents in their district, their work as legislators/policy makers should be based on the desires and expectations of those citizens, not the Mayor or staff. This is where council acts as a check and balance against the Mayor in our “strong mayor” form of government. The importance of this cannot be understated. Our entire political system is based on the idea that unchecked power is not only undesirable, but dangerous.

The increasing role of council then is not only a function of gridlock and lack of state and federal resources; it is borne of a political culture and expectation for a more responsive, efficient and professional government. We are far from the only city to experience this. Recent research on Mayor-Council cities has shown that this form of government has evolved and adapted all across the country, incorporating many of the key features of council-manager governments as a way to increase their efficiency and responsiveness.<sup>15</sup>

I hope these comments are useful in framing the issue of why council is a full-time job and should be treated as such in terms of pay. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,



Blaine Stum

[blainstum@gmail.com](mailto:blainstum@gmail.com)

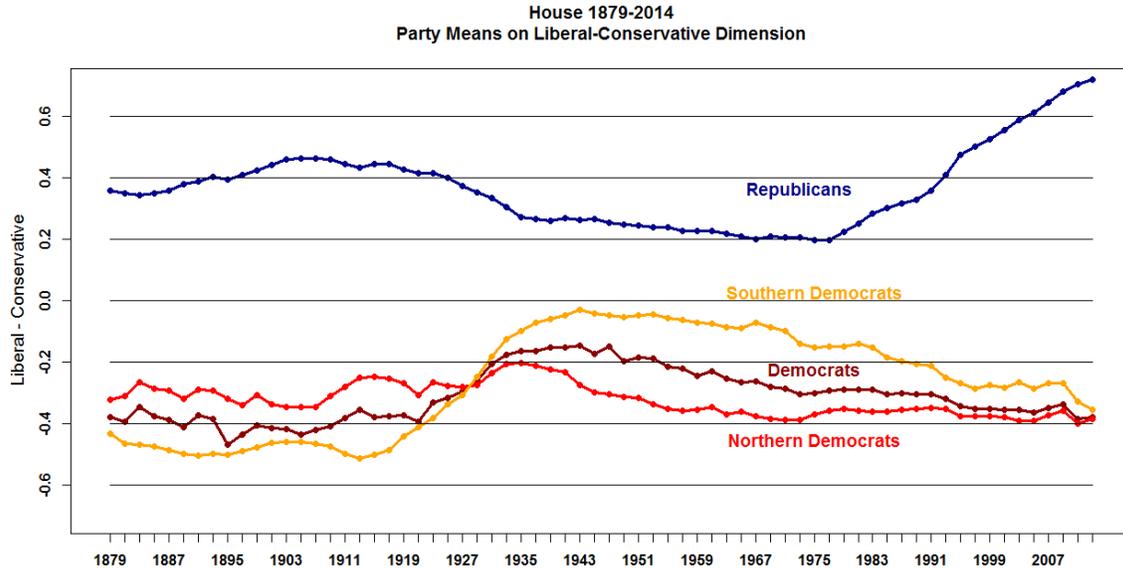
509-879-3943

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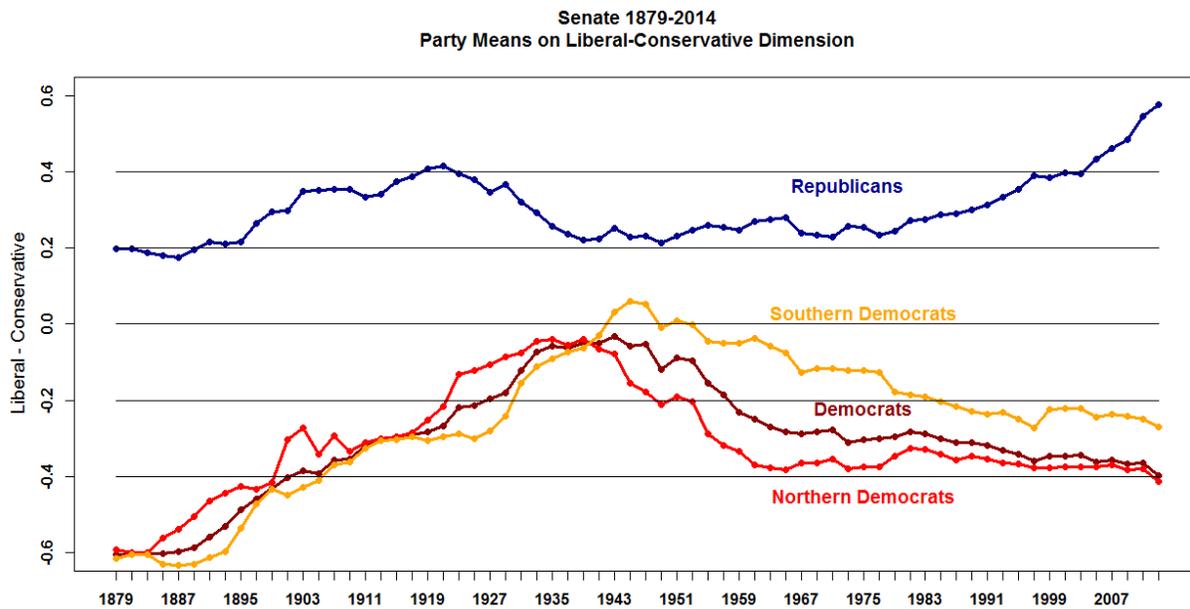
<sup>15</sup> See: Frederickson, H. G., Johnson, G. A. and Wood, C. (2004), “The Changing Structure of American Cities: A Study of the Diffusion of Innovation.” *Public Administration Review*, 64: 320–330 & Frederickson, H. G., Brett Logan, & Wood, C.. (2003). “Municipal Reform in Mayor-Council Cities: A Well-Kept Secret.” *State & Local Government Review*, 35(1), 7–14.

## Historical Polarization in Congress

The charts below, pulled from research by Hahrie Han and David Brady, shows that current levels of polarization in Congress represent a return to historical norms that disrupted by party realignment and crises in the early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>16</sup>



*Polarized America / voteview.com*



*Polarized America / voteview.com*

<sup>16</sup> Hahrie Han and David W. Brady. 2007). "A Delayed Return to Historical Norms: Congressional Party Polarization after the Second World War." *British Journal of Political Science*, 37, pp 505-531.

Party realignment describes the phenomenon where constituencies who were once supporters of one party gradually become supporters of another.

**From:** [David Green](#)  
**To:** [Piccolo, Mike](#); [Robole, Debra](#); [Lowe, Heather](#)  
**Subject:** Comment re City Council Compensation - Salary Review Commission Public Forum  
**Date:** Monday, February 22, 2016 1:54:19 PM  
**Attachments:** [Public Comment - Salary Review Commission - 2-25-16 Public Forum.pdf](#)

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As I am unable to attend the public forum that will be held by the Salary Review Commission with respect to city council compensation, I am submitting the attached written remarks.

The original document is being mailed directly to the Salary Review Commission to the attention of the Chair.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit input to the Commission as it performs its duties.

Dave

**David Green CPA/PFS, CFP®, AEP®**  
**David Green CPA PLLC**  
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Client Portal (works with all browsers and hardware):

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For Internal Use  
Client:  
File: Correspondence,

Spokane Municipal Code

Title 02 Council and Legislation

Chapter 02.05 Salary Review Commission

Section 02.05.010 Salary Review Commission Creation

There is created a salary review commission ("commission") which shall be charged with reviewing and establishing the salaries of the mayor, council president and city council members.

Section 02.05.020 Membership – Term – Removal

A. Membership.

The commission shall consist of five members who are residents and registered voters of the City. Appointment shall be as follows:

1. Two members shall be at-large appointments appointed by the mayor with the city council's approval.
2. Three members shall be appointed by the mayor with city council approval with one member from each of the three city council districts respectively. The individuals submitted for appointment from the council districts shall be recommended by the city council to the mayor for appointment.
3. Applications for positions to the salary review commission shall be reviewed by the City's ethics committee pursuant to SMC 1.04.170 as an advisory opinion for potential conflicts of interest or other conflicts with the ethics code.
4. The ethics committee's advisory opinion shall be filed with the mayor's office and with the city council.

B. Term.

Each member of the commission shall serve a four-year term, and no member shall be appointed to more than two terms regardless of whether the terms are held consecutively.

1. More than two years of a four-year term shall count as a whole term.
2. Initial appointments shall be as follows:
  - a. Three members shall be appointed for a period of four years; and
  - b. Two members shall be appointed for two years.
3. All subsequent appointments or reappointments shall be for a four-year term.
4. Appointments may be made to complete an unexpired term in the event of a vacancy.

C. Removal.

Commission members may only be removed during their terms of office by the city council with a recommendation from the mayor for cause of:

1. incapacity,
2. incompetence,
3. neglect of duty,
4. malfeasance in office, or
5. for a disqualifying change in:
  - a. residence, or
  - b. voter status.

D. Compensation.

Commission members shall serve without compensation.

E. Qualifications.

1. Commission members shall have experience in finance, business management, or personnel management, or other related fields that demonstrate experience beneficial to the review and establishment of salaries for elected officials.
2. Officers, officials, and employees of the City and their immediate family members shall not be eligible to serve on the commission.
  - a. For the purposes of this section, "immediate family member" shall mean a:
    - i. parent,
    - ii. stepparent,
    - iii. in-law,
    - iv. spouse,
    - v. sibling,
    - vi. stepsibling,
    - vii. child,
    - viii. stepchild, or
    - ix. dependent relative of the officer, official or employee, whether or not living in the household of the officer, official or employee.

Section 02.05.030 Definitions

- A. "Elected officials" means the positions of mayor, council president and all council members.
- B. "Salary" or "salaries", as used in this chapter, means any fixed compensation paid periodically for work or services.
  1. This definition expressly excludes the total cost of any medical or other benefits provided to any elected official, as well as any expenses paid or reimbursed on behalf of an elected official in compliance with the City policies and procedures for expense reimbursements.

Section 02.05.040 Duties

- A. **It is the goal of the commission to base salaries of the mayor, council president and council members on realistic standards so that the elected officials may be paid according to the duties of their offices and so that citizens of the highest quality may be attracted to public service.** The commission shall have the duty to review and establish the salary of the mayor, council president and council members. The commission shall study the relationship of salaries to the duties of the mayor, council president and council members.
- B. A decision by the commission to change the salary of the mayor, council president or city council members shall be filed by the commission with the city clerk by May 31st, shall be final and shall become effective and incorporated into the city budget without further action of the city council or salary commission.
  1. Any change of salary by the commission shall supersede any ordinance or resolution in effect at the time the salaries are changed but only to the extent of such conflict.

- C. Salary increases established by the commission shall be effective on the first pay period of the year following the decision of the commission and shall apply to the mayor, council president and all city council members regardless of their terms of office.
- D. Salary decreases established by the commission shall become effective as to an incumbent mayor, council president or council member at the commencement of their next subsequent terms of office.

#### Section 02.05.050 Operations of Commission

- A. The commission may establish its own rules of procedures consistent with the Spokane Municipal Code and state law, which shall include a meeting schedule.
- B. The commission shall annually elect a chair and vice chair from its members.
- C. All meetings of the commission shall be open to the public.
  - 1. At least one of the meetings shall include a public hearing held prior to the commission issuing a decision regarding the establishment of salaries in order to provide an opportunity for the public and the affected elected officials to address the commission.
- D. The commission shall meet to review the salary schedules of the mayor, council president and council members during even numbered years and may meet more frequently on their own initiative or by a motion of the city council.
  - 1. Decisions of the commission regarding an increase or decrease in the salary schedule shall be filed by the commission with the city clerk by May 31st.
- E. In determining the salaries for the mayor, council president and council members, the commission shall solicit information regarding the elected officials duties and responsibilities. Prior to the commission issuing a salary schedule, the commission may request additional financial information and other relevant data from the appropriate city department.
- F. Three members of the commission shall constitute a quorum and the affirmative vote of three members shall be required to approve a salary schedule for the mayor, council president and council members as well as all other matters of the commission.
- G. The commission shall keep a written record of its proceedings, which shall be a public record in accordance with state law.
  - 1. The commission shall provide written documentation forming the basis for the salary schedule.
- H. The commission shall be assisted in performing its duties by staff assigned by the city administration and the City Council.

#### Section 02.05.060 Referendum

- A. Salary increases or decreases shall be subject to a referendum petition by the citizens in the same manner as a city ordinance upon filing of such petition with the city clerk within thirty days after filing of the salary schedule by the commission.
  - 1. In the event of the filing of a valid referendum petition pursuant to [Section 83 of the City Charter](#), the salary increase or decrease shall not go into effect until approved by the voters.

- B. Referendum measures under this section shall be submitted to the voters of the City at the next following general or municipal election occurring thirty days or more after the petition is filed, and shall be otherwise governed by the provisions of the state constitution, city charter and laws generally applicable to referendum measures.**

**Section 02.05.070 Implementation of Proposition No. 1 Regarding Mayor's Salary**

**In order to implement the amendment to Section 7 of the Spokane City Charter regarding the establishment of the mayor's salary by the commission pursuant to Proposition 1, as approved by the voters on the August 4, 2015 ballot, the commission shall review and establish the salary for the mayor by September 30, 2015. The decision of the commission shall be filed with the city clerk and shall be subject to referendum as set forth in SMC 2.05.060. The mayor's salary established by the commission shall take effect on the first pay period of 2016. Future review and increase or decrease to the mayor's salary shall be performed by the commission in 2018 consistent with the review of the council president and council members' salaries as set forth in chapter 2.05 SMC. The commission will meet in 2016 pursuant to the schedule provision of chapter 2.05 SMC to review the salaries of the council president and council members.**

February 25, 2016

To: City of Spokane Salary Review Commission

From: Paul Kropp  
3311 E Donora Court  
Spokane WA 99223

Re: City council member salary standards

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's public forum.

This is to offer an admonishment to the commission, and one observation.

The admonishment is to take all requisite care to arrive at your decision for this two-year period. The commission should obey both the standard set by Spokane's municipal code for salary levels and for providing the written basis for its decision for a salary schedule

The city's municipal code at SMC 02.05 sets both the standard for salary levels and for an accounting for the basis of a decision.

Firstly, the standard for salary levels is at SMC 020.05. It is a dual standard: "paid according to the duties of their office," and "[paid] so that citizens of the highest quality may be attracted to public service."

The duties of Spokane city council members are unquestionably full time, so the salary commission has no choice but to recognize the controlling standard is a level of compensation that can attract "citizens of the highest quality ... to public service." (SMC 02.05.040, at A.)

Secondly, SMC 02.05.050 at G.1 requires the salary commission to document – as in justify in detail and provide the documentary basis for – its decisions.

Thus, my admonition. The salary commission must publicly document and justify, in the case of city council members, a reasoned decision such that "citizens of the highest quality may be attracted to public service."

My observation is about a possible comparable for aggregate city council salaries.

As there are few direct comparables for city council positions in the so-called "strong mayor" form of municipal governance, perhaps a local analogue could be useful.

In my opinion the duties and responsibilities of Spokane city council members and Spokane County commissioners are, in aggregate, roughly equivalent. And especially with regard to "external" duties.

So, posit the Spokane County commissioners are paid \$93,000 per year. Then distribute the aggregate amount of commissioner pay (\$279,000) among the six members of the Spokane city council. That would equal \$46,500 for each.

I would be very interested to read a salary commission finding that attempted to rationalize a Spokane city council member salary at any less than \$46,500 per year. Certainly more is justified.

*Kropp: Council Pres. = Mayor*

**From:** [Robole, Debra](mailto:Robole_Debra)  
**To:** [bobbeaumier@gmail.com](mailto:bobbeaumier@gmail.com); [Lowe, Heather](mailto:Lowe_Heather)  
**Cc:** [jkandjg2@Comcast.net](mailto:jkandjg2@Comcast.net); [Piccolo, Mike](mailto:Piccolo_Mike); [Robole, Debra](mailto:Robole_Debra)  
**Subject:** FW: Salary Review Commission  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 1:24:32 PM

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Chair Beaumier,

Please accept this statement below from Ms Gardner as part of today's SRC public forum commentary. Kindly confirm receipt of this request. Thanks!

Enjoy the day...  
Debra

Debra D. Robole, Ph.D.  
Senior Research & Policy Analyst  
Office of the Spokane City Council

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**ADVISORY:**

Please be advised the City of Spokane is required to comply with the Public Records Act Chapter 42.56 RCW. This act establishes a strong state mandate in favor of disclosure of public records. As such, the information you submit to the City via email, including personal information, may ultimately be subject to disclosure as a public record.

-----Original Message-----

From: Judy Gardner [<mailto:jkandjg2@Comcast.net>]  
Sent: Thursday, February 25, 2016 1:16 PM  
To: Robole, Debra  
Subject: Salary Review Commission

Dear Ms. Robole;

I have been a member of the Cliff Cannon Neighborhood Council Executive Committee for ten years. During that time I have worked with, requested the services of and observed five council members. Without exception, they regularly exceeded an eight hour day to attend the 9 council meetings per month at night, to attend neighborhood special events, to do research on questions posed by the neighborhood and to attend their regular briefings and various board meetings.

I am in favor of raising the current salary of \$31,000 by 20% (if possible) which would make it align with Spokane's median household income of \$37,308. Right now, running for council is viable if you are retired...you have the time and money, are well-paid in another job which allows discretion over your use of time or have a spouse whose salary frees you from constraints about salary or hours away from home. This excludes many capable people, including young people, from serving on the council and whose fresh ideas and insights are needed.

I urge the Commission to raise the salaries of council people. This is in the best interest of attracting a diverse and creative group of people to serve the citizens of Spokane.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Judy Gardner  
Planning Liaison

Cliff Cannon Neighborhood Council

**From:** [Paul Kropp](#)  
**To:** [Robole, Debra](#); [Lowe, Heather](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Updated: The Salary Review Commission will hold a meeting on Thursday, February 25, 2016  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 23, 2016 11:16:21 AM

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Debra Robole and Heather Lowe:

You are listed on the city's web site as the Salary Review Commission's liaisons from the city council and the mayor's administration.

For your information, I intend to join the commission members at their open forum on Thursday afternoon.

Having looked at the full agenda just distributed this morning, can you tell me if the "data review" documents referred to are available to the public in advance? If so where? And if not, why not?

I would expect the public should be able to view and potentially comment on the material the commission members are using to base their discussion and decision.

Thank you for your attention to my query.

Regards,

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Paul Kropp [pkropp\[at\]fastmail\[dot\]fm](mailto:pkropp[at]fastmail[dot]fm) Spokane, WA

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**From:** "Williams, Stephen" <[swilliams@spokanecity.org](mailto:swilliams@spokanecity.org)>  
**Date:** February 23, 2016 at 9:22 AM  
**To:** "Williams, Stephen" <[swilliams@spokanecity.org](mailto:swilliams@spokanecity.org)>  
**Subject:** Updated: The Salary Review Commission will hold a meeting on Thursday, February 25, 2016

Updated to add complete Agenda

Attached please find the following Special Meeting Notice/Agenda.

**Thursday, February 25, 2016:** Special Meeting Notice/Agenda. The Salary Review Commission will hold a meeting on Thursday, February 25, 2016 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the City Conference Room A, Lower Level, City Hall, 808 West Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA.

Thank you,



**Stephen Williams** | City of Spokane | Clerk III

808 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA 99201-3342

509.625.6377 | fax 509.625.6217 | [swilliams@spokanecity.org](mailto:swilliams@spokanecity.org)



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February 22, 2016

Salary Review Commission  
Attn: Robert Beaumier, Chair  
City of Spokane  
808 W Spokane Falls Blvd  
Spokane WA 99201

Re: Public Comment re City Council Compensation

Dear Chair Beaumier and Members of the Commission:

I am writing to offer my thoughts with respect to compensation paid by the taxpayers of the City of Spokane to the city council president and members of the city council.

I am unable to attend the public forum on Thursday, so I'm including my comments in written form so that they may still be considered by the Commission as part of its compensation review process.

When reading the minutes and reports of previous Salary Review Commissions, it is clear that those reports reflected the viewpoint that city council members (not council president) were involved in a "part-time" activity.

That interpretation troubles me from two perspectives.

First, from a time commitment perspective, I believe it to be untrue. Members of city council are clearly devoting a significant amount of time each week in fulfilling their responsibilities to the residents of Spokane. I would hope that the members of the Salary Review Commission focus on the amount of time that is actually devoted by city council members in performing their jobs as opposed to the amount of perceived time or the time that Commission members feel "should" be devoted to the position.

Second, the concept of "part-time" city council members limits the ability for a wide variety of citizens to consider running for election to the city council. Part-time compensation limits the ability for individuals with existing full-time jobs to consider running for elective office, since they are likely to receive significantly less in compensation than their current employment. It minimizes the opportunity to "attract citizens of the highest quality to public service" as members of the city council, which is contrary to the charge of the Salary Review Commission.

Thus, I urge the Salary Review Commission to consider all members of the city council to be engaged in "full-time" job activities.

With respect to what is the appropriate amount of compensation for city council president and members of the city council, I suggest that such compensation be tied to US Census Bureau data with respect to median household income for the City of Spokane (which, by the way, would have been an excellent benchmark to use for the mayor's compensation.)

The City of Spokane has a high percentage of persons in poverty and median household income and per capita income all fall below comparable amounts for Spokane County and Washington.

Using QuickFacts data from the US Census Bureau website, median household income in 2014 dollars was \$42,814. Adjusting that amount for inflation in 2015 (0.7% CPI Index for All Urban Consumers) would adjust the 2014 amount to \$43,114. Linking compensation of city council members (including the council president) to median household income would serve as a constant reminder of the economic circumstances of Spokane's population as they meet to consider the needs of the city and its people.

For council members, take the adjusted median household income and multiply it by a factor of 1.0, to yield 2016 compensation at the annual rate of \$43,114.

For city council president, with significant responsibilities over and above a council member, take the adjusted median household income and multiply it by a factor of 1.5, to yield 2016 compensation at the annual rate of \$64,671.

And although I know the mayor's compensation was decided last year, a similar approach using adjusted median household income, multiplied by a factor of 3.0, would yield 2016 compensation at the annual rate of \$129,342, far less than the \$168,000 that was decided upon last November.

What other cities pay their mayors, city council presidents and city council members really doesn't matter. Elected officials generally don't pick up and move to run for office in another city because the pay or benefits is better elsewhere. The approach of prior Salary Review Commissions is somewhat flawed in that regard.

Public service is still, in the end, public service. We should pay our elected officials a fair wage for the amount of time they devote to serving us. No more, but also no less. And the amount that is paid should be transparent and easily understood by all.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide input to the Salary Review Commission as it does its work.

Very truly yours,



David Green, CPA

**From:** [Robole, Debra](#)  
**To:** [Bob Beaumier](#); [Lowe, Heather](#)  
**Cc:** [Jon Snyder](#); [Piccolo, Mike](#); [Robole, Debra](#)  
**Subject:** Snyder public comment regarding Spokane City Council salary review  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 8:41:35 AM  
**Importance:** High

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Good morning, Chair Beaumier!

I was requested to forward the following public comment from former Spokane City Council Member, Jon Snyder, to you for inclusion in the Salary Review Commission's public forum contributions on Thursday, February 25 (please acknowledge receipt):

-  
- Public Comment on Spokane City Council Salary Review

I want to push back very hard on the notion that Spokane City Council is not a full-time job. Ten years on the City is still trying to figure the conversion to a strong Mayor and the lack of understanding of what the Council does is a big part of that.

Flaws in the conversion to strong Mayor led to a period of time where the City was basically run by senior management staff without enough oversight. There were some negative outcomes as a result. I would specifically point out the leadership problems in the police department and the plan for years of double-digit utility increases as two examples. When I first came on Council our members too often either rubber stamping policy from senior staff or providing knee-jerk opposition to that policy, and not taking the time to craft good policy.

The Council's primary responsibility as the legislative branch of the City is to create policy. There is only one essential ingredient in good policy: time. It takes time to research, bring stakeholders to together, analyze, do outreach, and respond with a good ordinance that meets the often conflicting needs of the citizens. I would point out both the urban farming ordinance and the complete streets ordinance as policy that took multiple years to get right. These policies have not produced the flood of lawsuits critics hard warned they would and have in fact been embraced by citizens precisely because we took the time to get them right.

Four things to consider:

1. A large amount of time is spent by Councilmembers on outside boards and committees, which almost always require subcommittee work and are often in crisis or strategic planning mode, which requires even more attention. Much overlooked are the internal task forces and internal committees that can take as much time or more. The Police Leadership Advisory Committee that I recently was asked to participate in at the request of the Mayor is a good example.
2. Estimates of how many hours it takes to properly do the job have been in the range of 50 a week, but what they doesn't tell you is how those hours are scheduled. On Council it's like being on swing shift all the time. Your essential obligations are often on the evening and the weekends or split at times in the day that makes it hard to schedule outside activity. Because of that you may only work 50 hours but it is divided in such a way that you can't schedule other things. This is one reason I sold my business after being elected to Council.
3. Lack of full-time pay means the position is most likely to attract folks in the real estate industry or lawyers (we have one of each on the Council now, and they are both great but this is no accident), or the independently wealthy or retired (the Spokane Valley Council is an example of this). If we want a diversity of backgrounds on the Council the low salary does not help.
4. The Council's fulltime legislative assistants are crucial for the ever-expanding need for constituent services, research, administration, and processing the enormous amount of information the Council receives in order to govern the states second largest city. But they can never be a substitute for the Councilmembers themselves. The vast majority of Council obligations must be done either legally or practically by Councilmembers themselves.

The Salary Review Commission has set the Mayors salary. They are now faced with reconciling why that salary is over five times that of members of the legislative branch. I appreciate Commission time and willingness to volunteer on this important matter and I thank you for taking a moment to read my comments.

Jon Snyder

Enjoy the day...

*Debra*

Debra D. Robole, Ph.D.  
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