

**2008
SALARY REVIEW
COMMISSION:
REPORT**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Salary Review Commission is charged with reviewing the salaries of the Spokane City Councilmembers and the Council President by Ordinance C34087. The Salary Review Commission is a separate, independent Commission. The City Council is directed to provide information to the Commission, but doesn't vote on or have oversight over the Commission's decision.

Determination

The Salary Review Commission makes the following determination:

- The Salary for Council Member shall be set at \$30,000
- The Salary for Council President shall be set at \$55,000

Justification

The Commission's determination is based on several factors:

- Public policy value in an elected body that is able to effectively represent the citizens of Spokane
- A formal review of Council Member or Council President salary, job requirements, duties, expectations, time demands, and workload
- Council President salary should reflect higher demands and responsibilities relative to that of Council Member
- Council Member salary should reflect demands placed on them by districts, neighborhoods, and other constituent requests
- Lack of an increase in Council Member salaries since 1991
- Lack of an increase in Council President salary since 2001
- Public policy value in expanding the pool of Council Member and Council President candidates
- Increased time and workload demands placed on Council Members and Council President under the mayor-council form of government
- Public policy value in salaries discouraging career politicians
- The most comparable part-time elected positions available to Spokane city residents are in the Washington State Legislature where legislators earn \$42,106.

Next Steps

Per ordinance, the Commission's decision is sent to the city clerk by May 31 and entered into the City Budget and is effective the first pay period of the year following the Commission's decision (January 1, 2009).

Further Commission Recommendations

The Commission recognizes that its authority established by ordinance is restricted to setting salaries for Councilmembers and Council President, however, the Commission recommends that the City Council consider its recommendations for future Commissions and other committees that are charged with areas of interest to the Council.

Future Salary Adjustments

Future salary adjustments should be based on a COLA keyed to the Washington state CPI.

Council Job Descriptions

Develop job descriptions for the Council President and Councilmembers emphasizing citizen contact and representative-based decision making.

Term Limits

Continue term limits in order to avoid the appearance of creating career opportunities in Council positions.

Council Staff

Add one additional full time research analyst position to assist in researching items that will be coming before the council.

Additional Compensation

All other current additional compensation e.g. mileage, health benefits, and retirement, etc. shall remain consistent with similar employment benefits provided to exempt, managerial employees.

The Commission acknowledges its acceptance of the report by signing below.

Mr. Hal Ellis
Commission Chair

Ms. Marianne Guenther
Commission Vice Chair

Mr. Dick Barrett
Commission Member

Ms. Debby Kurbitz
Commission Member

Ms. Erica Lovchik
Commission Member

Received by the City Clerk on May _____, 2008.

City Clerk

CPR _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND

1.0 Why the Commission was created	
1.1 Spokane Municipal Code	1
1.2 Public Expectations.....	1
1.3 Form of Government	1
1.4 Interest in Expanding Candidates.....	1
1.5 History	1
1.6 Research Methodology	1

CURRENT STATE

2.0 Data	
2.1 Council Roles: Council President	2
2.2 Council Roles: Councilmembers.....	2
2.3 Interviews	2
2.3.1 Interview Themes	2
A. Committees	2
B. Staffing.....	2
C. Candidate Diversity	2
D. Districts	3
E. Outside Obligations	3
F. Information	3
G. Form of Government	3
2.4 Council Workload Survey.....	3
2.4.1 City Office.....	4
2.4.2 Committee Work.....	5
2.4.3 Weekly Council Meetings.....	5
2.4.4 Citizen Requests	5
2.4.5 District Issues	5
2.4.6 Outside City Council Related Commitments.....	5
2.5 Councilmember Workload	6
2.6 Salary and CPI.....	7

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

3.0 Literature Review	
3.1 Spokane Comprehensive Plan.....	8
3.2 Salary Reviews in Other Jurisdictions.....	8
3.2.1 City of Vancouver, WA.....	9
3.2.2 City of Olympia, WA.....	9
3.2.3 Snohomish County, WA.....	9
3.3 News Articles.....	9

APPENDICES

A. SPOKANE MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 02.05 SALARY REVIEW COMMISSION	I
B. COUNCIL PRESIDENT SALARY ORDINANCE C32629	V
C. E-MAIL RESPONSES TO DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION	VI

BACKGROUND

1.0 Why the Commission was Created

1.1 Spokane Municipal Code

On August 20, 2007, the Spokane City Council passed Ordinance C-34087. This ordinance established the Salary Review Commission and states that Section 7 of the City Charter allows for the annual adjustment of the mayor's salary but that no such provision exists for the City Council. The Code also states that it is appropriate to have a separate, independent Commission rather than the City Council establishing council salaries.

The code states it is the Commission's goal to base salaries on realistic standards according to the duties to attract citizens of the highest quality to public service. Any decision to increase councilmember salary is effective on the first pay period of the year following the Commission's decision. Decreases are effective at the commencement of the councilmember's next subsequent term.

1.2 Public Expectations

The Commission was formed as a result of higher demands and expectations the public has for the City Council. The public expects councilmembers to be available at all-times of the day and days of the week for meetings, events, appearances, phone calls, e-mails, and available to address immediate, emerging, and long-term issues. This places time demands that broaden the scope and nature of council duties from City Charter prescribed attendance at Council meetings and also participation on local and regional committees to meeting the demands, needs, and concerns of district constituents.

1.3 Form of Government

The change in the form of government in 2000 from a council-manager to a mayor-council (strong mayor) form also changed the duties and roles of councilmembers. In a council-manager form, the council acts as the board of directors for the agency with the mayor representing the Council's position on issues. The staff works for the City Council and implements the council's directives.

In the mayor-council form, the mayor oversees the operations of the city, sets organizational direction, and implements policies and procedures. Under this form, the mayor has departments perform research and analysis and provide recommendations. The City Council's primary functions are to develop policies through the enactment of ordinances and adoption of resolutions and to also oversee and approve the City budget. The council doesn't have City staff support for policy development but must instead rely on the input from advisory committees.

1.4 Interest in Expanding Candidates

Current council compensation is perceived as a barrier to broadening the pool of candidates to the council. There are concerns that the current salary limits council composition to those who are: retired; independently wealthy; business owners; have a working spouse; and / or receive income from some other outside source. Councilmembers have expressed an interest in drawing candidates from the largest pool of diverse candidates as possible.

1.5 History

The Council's salary was set at \$18,000 in 1991 by Ordinance C30141 and remains at that level. In 2001, following the change in government, the council president's salary was set at \$40,000 by Ordinance C32629 (the original proposal was for \$50,000). The salary was intended to allow the council president sufficient time and energy to meet the new Council President Office demands.

1.6 Research Methodology

The Commission took several steps to ensure data gathering provided appropriate information for making a decision. Data gathering included: providing councilmembers with a written survey to

determine weekly workload; interviews with each councilmember, key staff, and previous councilmembers; survey of cities in the state and nationwide to gather councilmember compensation information; review of literature including the Spokane City Charter, reports and recommendations of other city salary review commissions, newspaper articles, and professional journals; internet research of jurisdictions and cost of living information; and regular Commission meetings including two televised public hearings.

CURRENT STATE

2.0 Data

2.1 Council Roles: Council President

The council president is differentiated from councilmember positions in that it is elected at-large versus by district. As the at-large elected official, the council president works with other councilmembers to ensure issues are given full council consideration. The council president also works closely with the mayor to bring items of concern to the council to the mayor's attention. The council president has the City Charter prescribed duty to preside at all council meetings, serve as mayor pro tem in the absence of the mayor (Charter Section 23), and is also responsible for the day-to-day administration of the council office. The council president's salary is intended to recognize the additional demands placed on the position.

2.2 Council Roles: Councilmembers

Spokane's councilmembers are elected by district. There are three districts and each district elects two representatives. The citizens voted in election by district at the same time as the change in form of government.

Councilmembers are only required by the City Charter to attend City Council meetings. Councilmembers are held accountable in the Charter to attend the meetings. If a councilmember is absent from four consecutive council meetings, the councilmember can be removed from the council.

2.3 Interviews

Councilmembers were asked to complete a survey and then attend a brief interview by the Commission to discuss their responses to the surveys. Interview lasted approximately fifteen minutes for each councilmember. The Commission posed a set of questions to each councilmember. Councilmembers were asked to explain what their duties were, if they considered themselves either part time or full time, if there was a way for them to cut down their hours spent on committees, and other questions related to workload requirements and the survey.

2.3.1 Interview Themes

Several themes emerged from the interviews and covered topics such as: committees; staffing; candidate diversity; districts; outside obligations; information; and form of government.

A. Committees: Committee time comprises a large portion of the workload; committees do not always provide councilmembers with the information they need on policy related items; the committee structure didn't change when the form of government was changed; and there is no formal process for councilmembers to bring committee information to the entire council.

B. Staffing: The council office needs additional full-time staff, preferably more analysts (responses ranged from one analyst for each district to one for each councilmember); council assistants are a good start; and individual councilmembers have different staff / assistance needs (some indicated a preference for clerical assistance while others were interested in broader, analysis work)

C. Candidate Diversity: Low salaries prohibit more people from running for council office; not all candidates are able to take time off from a job to run for office; not all employers will allow a

flexible enough schedule for someone to work and be a councilmember; salaries prohibit professionals from serving on the council; and a broader applicant pool would better reflect the community.

D. Districts: Councilmembers are elected by district and are obligated to respond to constituents; there may be times when broader City issues conflict with district issues; district constituents expect councilmembers to attend district events; neighborhood councils expect councilmembers to attend neighborhood meetings; attendance at district events and meetings are in addition to Charter, Council, and regional committee commitments; and sometimes meetings conflict and councilmembers aren't able to attend all requested functions.

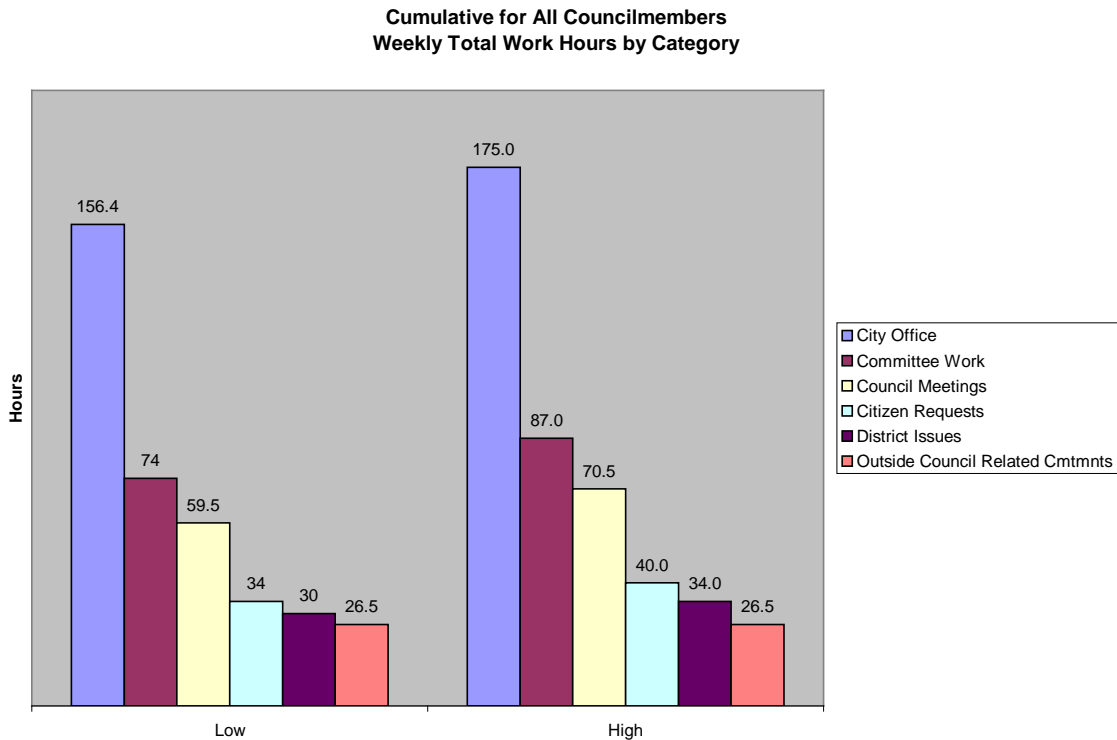
E. Outside obligations: Attendance at local, regional, and national conferences, policy committees, and lobbying efforts are not always considered when looking at council obligations; and time commitments for these items can cover several days.

F. Information: Information is constant; not enough time to read all e-mail, staff reports, industry data, hearing reports, and other items that are sent to council; not enough time to research items on the internet or through other means; rely on City staff for analysis; and sometimes not enough time between when information is provided and when decision is being made.

G. Form of Government: City staff reports to the mayor; the change in form of government left councilmembers with no staff to do research and analysis; City staff, boards, and / or commissions may have conflicts of interest if the executive and council have different policy priorities; and the Council's role as a legislative body that oversees the budget places the council in a weakened position with respect to the executive due to the lack of staffing.

2.4 Council Workload Survey

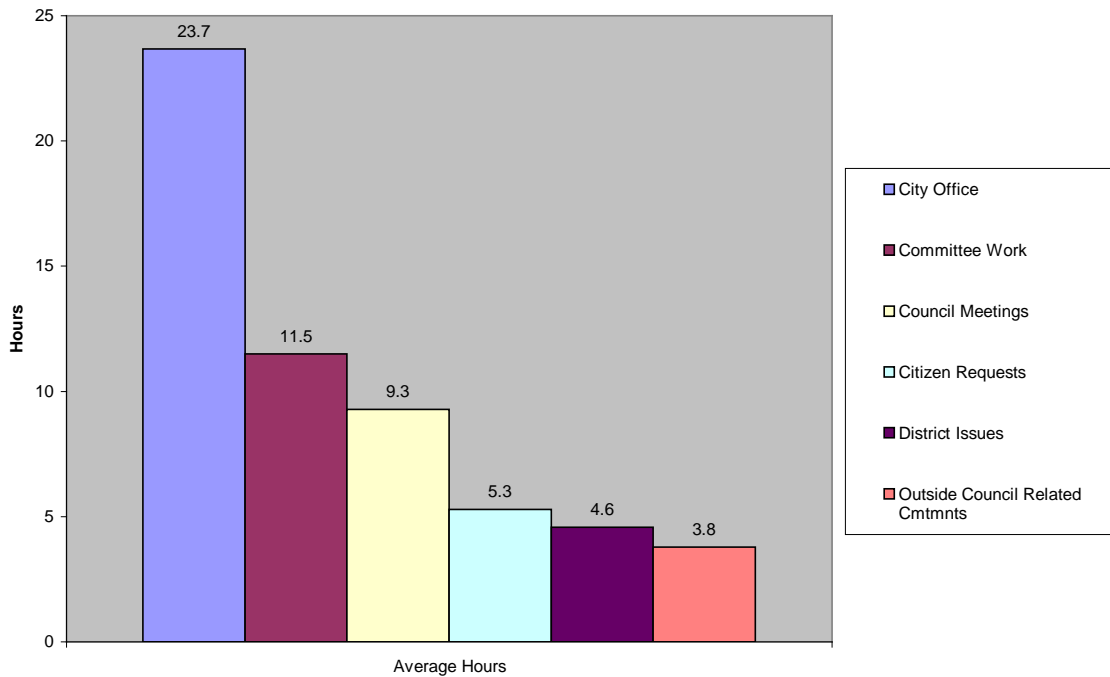
Councilmembers were asked to complete a survey covering six categories to gauge the amount of time spent on specific items: city office; committee work; council meetings; citizen requests; district issues; and outside council related commitments.



The 'Weekly Total Hours by Category' chart shows the total hours councilmembers spend in certain areas. Councilmembers provided a range of times and the two bar graphs show the 'low' range and the 'high' range. The chart delineates the different categories and expresses the disparity between the amount of time councilmembers spend on 'City Office' items as opposed to other categories. 'Committee Work' and 'Council Meetings' may involve similar work requirements such as reading, research, phone calls, and following up with staff and citizens.

When council times in each category are averaged, the City Office, Committee Work, and Council Meetings categories are 44.5 hours per week.

Average Weekly Council Hours Spent in Each Category



2.4.1 City Office (Avg. Hours – 23.7)

The council office employs two full time staff positions: Chief Executive Assistant; and Research Analyst. The positions provide support to all councilmembers. However, the full time positions report to the council president and are overseen by and provide services to the council president.

The City Office category comprises the bulk of councilmember time and includes items such as: time on the phone; reading reports; researching; and other items. These items may or may not reflect time in the City Hall office as councilmembers are able to access their e-mail and phone messages remotely. This has the effect of making 'office time' unrestricted and not subject to City Hall office hours of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM and instead places councilmembers on a constant schedule.

Four councilmembers have a part time assistant. The assistants were hired within the last three months and provide a wide range of duties depending upon the needs of the councilmember. Council assistants may provide clerical assistance to assisting with policy development. The 2008 budget is the first budget to include assistants. Council assistants report to their councilmember and are not directed by other councilmembers, the council president, or the council's chief executive assistant.

2.4.2 Committee Work (Avg. Hours – 11.5)

The Committee Work category asks councilmembers to detail the amount of time spent on committee items such as: attending meetings; reading reports; and discussions outside of meetings. There are five standing (permanent) committees: public safety; finance; public works; planning, community, and economic development; and neighborhood / communications. Each councilmember is appointed by the Council President to two standing committees. Two senior councilmembers are appointed to chair a committee. The Council President chairs three standing committees.

In addition to these committees, councilmembers indicated they may serve on several other committees involving regional, statewide, and / or national issues. Examples include the Association of Washington Cities, National League of Cities, Spokane Regional Transportation Council, and many others. Councilmembers are not required to attend the meetings. If councilmembers fail to attend, they may be held accountable by the Council President in having their appointment assigned to another councilmember. This can place an additional workload requirement on another councilmember.

2.4.3 Weekly Council Meetings (Avg. Hours – 9.3)

The City Council meets every Monday night for their council meetings. Council meetings can vary in length from one hour to five or more hours. A typical council meeting may last two hours. Preparation for a council meeting includes reading a lengthy packet of reports of information, attending previous study session meetings, meeting with staff to discuss issues, listening to neighborhood and district issues, and gathering information through research or other means.

2.4.4 Citizen Requests (Avg. Hours – 5.3)

Citizen requests involve meeting the additional time demands citizens place on council officials. The public visibility as an elected official means councilmembers are requested to attend events such as fundraisers, auctions, city promotional events, and other causes that aren't restricted to a district. Appearances are requested at all times of the day and night as well as weekdays and weekends.

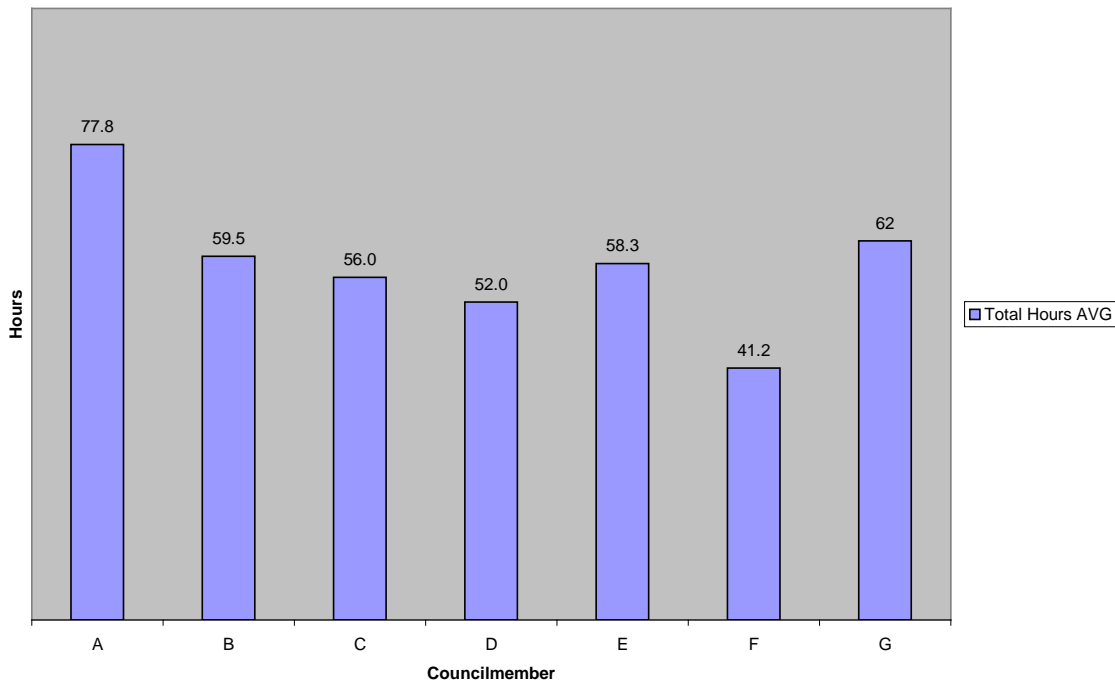
2.4.5 District Issues (Avg. Hours – 4.6)

As a district elected official, district constituents expect councilmembers to attend district specific events, respond to district related information requests, and attend district and neighborhood council meetings. These items require councilmembers to follow-up with staff and research a variety of items. Unlike council meetings where broad, citywide policy decisions are made, district issues may involve code complaints or questions concerning road striping that aren't related to policy but are important and necessary items to citizens within the district.

2.4.6 Outside City Council Related Commitments (Avg. Hours – 3.8)

Outside commitments are to agencies and organizations that may be either directly or indirectly affiliated with the City and Council. This includes non-profit organizations, regional and state agencies, and federal legislative items. These items may require councilmembers to travel within or outside of the state to meet with lobbyists; government, non-profit, or private agencies; state and national elected representatives; legal agencies; and others. Travel may be a one-day commitment or up to a week depending upon the urgency and need of the trip.

Average Weekly Hours



2.5 Councilmember Workload

The average hours for all councilmembers are 58.1 hours per week. All councilmembers reported spending more than full time hours on their positions as councilmembers. During interviews, one councilmember reported limiting the amount of time spent on council assignments because of a full time job. Nevertheless, time given to the council work requirements exceeds forty hours per week.

Three councilmembers are business owners. This allows for some flexibility in their schedules. The Council President maintains a law practice. One councilmember doesn't have an outside job but is a stay-home parent and is reliant on a spouse for income. The work as councilmember places pressure to meet the needs of family and business. Another councilmember teaches courses through a local university but reports the need to limit teaching time or not teach to keep up with council workload demands.

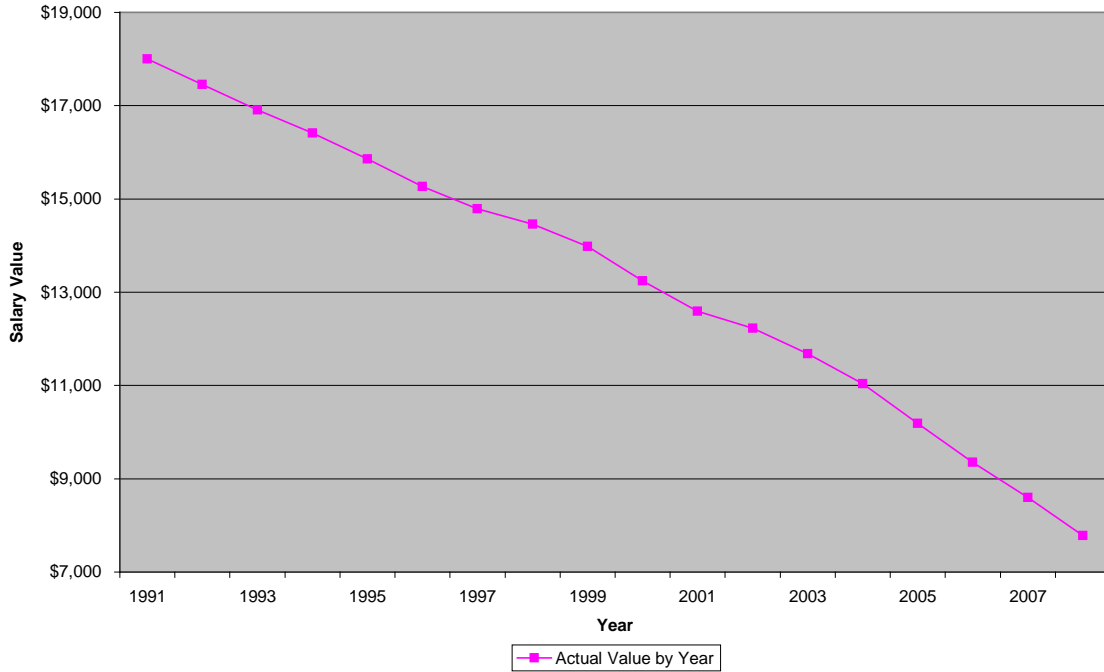
The result is that councilmembers have to split time between the work and home requirements that existed prior to becoming a councilmember. The prior commitments provide necessary income or family support that the time requirements as councilmember restrict without adequate compensation. Councilmembers were almost unanimous in their characterization of the position as Councilmember as a full time job. Councilmembers consider attending not just weekly Council meetings as necessary to effectively perform their jobs, but to also attend district and neighborhood meetings. Also, they are acutely aware that their position places them in a public eye and that citizens generally expect them to attend the events, functions, fundraisers, and other activities to which they are invited.

Councilmembers cited compensation as a primary reason why they are unable to leave their business or other obligations. Also, councilmembers suggested that compensation prevents others in the community that would be qualified to run for office.

2.6 Salary and CPI

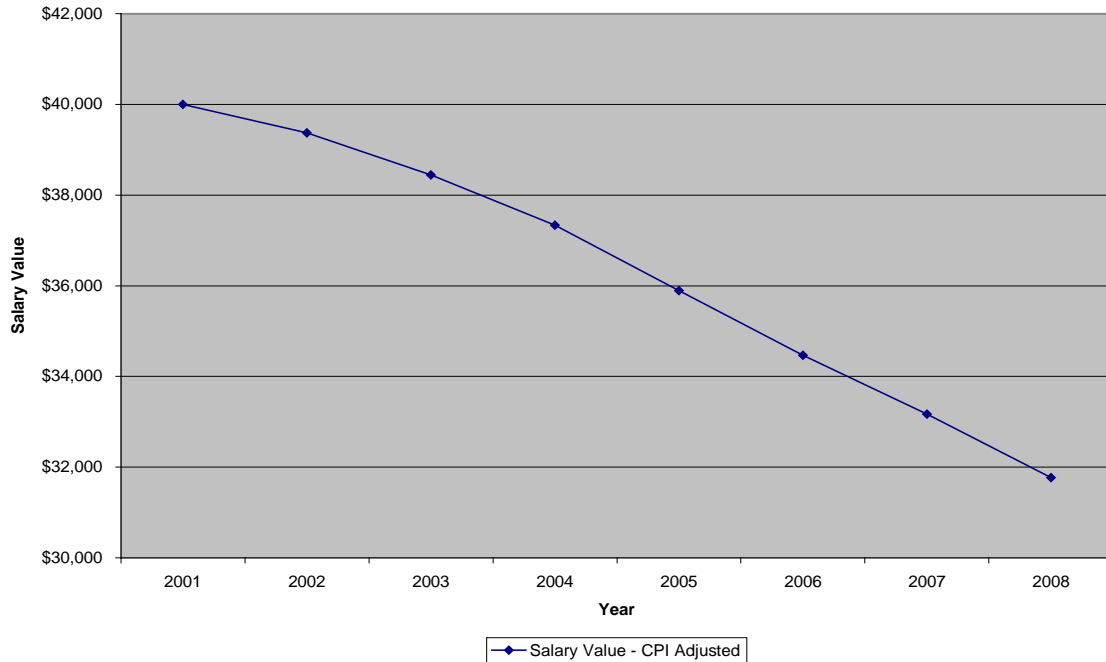
The Consumer Price Index (CPI) provides a measure for gauging buying power over time. The CPI uses the 1982-84 pricing levels as an index for determining buying power. The current CPI level is 214.823. This means that between 1982 and 1984 one-hundred dollars had the same buying power as 214.823 does today. Over time, costs for items rise to keep pace with inflation and factors that cause the prices for goods to rise.

Councilmember Salary Buying Power (CPI Adjusted)



In 1991, the Council salary was set at \$18,000. According to the CPI calculator, the 2008 equivalent is \$28,219.56. The 'Councilmember Salary Buying Power' graph illustrates the decline in councilmember salary buying power since 1991.

Council President Salary Buying Power (CPI Adjusted)



In 2001, the Council President's salary was set at \$40,000 after an original proposal of \$50,000. This was intended to reflect the expectation that the change in form of government would alter the workload demands. According to the CPI calculator, the 2008 equivalent amount is \$48,227.67. The Council President Salary Buying Power graph illustrates the decline in salary buying power since 2001.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

3.0 Literature Review

3.1 Comp Plan

The Spokane City Comprehensive Plan addresses the issue of a living wage in the Economic Development section, ED 4.1 Livable Wage. The Comprehensive Plan states a goal of enhancing the economic future of the community by encouraging the creation of jobs that increase the average livable wage and reduce income disparity. In addition, ED 4.3, Income Equity, discusses the role of income in alleviating disparities among women, minorities, and other economically disadvantaged groups.

The Comprehensive Plan also addresses the issue raised by councilmembers concerning broadening the candidate pool. The Comp Plan states there is a connection between city residents and city government by maintaining diversity, cultural vitality, and a wide range of community philosophies on boards and commissions.

3.2 Salary Reviews in Other Jurisdictions

The City of Spokane doesn't have a City Charter requirement to periodically review council salaries. This could explain the lapse since the last salary revisions. However, many jurisdictions go through reviews due to Charter requirements or for other reasons such as budget considerations, city population growth, change in form of government, noted rise in council time commitment, and others.

3.2.1 City of Vancouver, WA

In 2006, the City of Vancouver Salary Commission raised the salaries of its mayor and council. Some of the reasons for the increase included: testimony and input from mayor and council; results from the comparable cities salary survey; value in attracting and retaining qualified candidates; increased complexity of issues and the city's economic growth; and lack of salary increase since 2001.

3.2.2 City of Olympia, WA

In 2007, the City of Olympia Finance Committee began a review of wage increases for its councilmembers and mayor. The basis for the review was an interest in providing compensation that would attract a diverse pool of candidates that would better reflect the community. The Committee reviewed items in the comprehensive plan related to setting a living wage. The Committee began exploring this option and setting wages for councilmembers and mayor at rates commensurate with a living wage level keyed to an undetermined number of part time hours.

3.2.3 Snohomish County Washington

In April, 2008, the Snohomish County Salary Commission approved cost of living adjustments for councilmembers. The salary was set at 95 percent of the CPI for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton area. The increase is estimated to be between three and four percent. The Snohomish Salary Commission meets every two years to review elected official salaries.

3.3 News articles

News articles from various jurisdictions were reviewed to determine the trends in salaries and also attitudes conveyed by the media and citizens.

News articles reveal a conservative approach by citizens and elected officials regarding salaries. Citizens view elected officials as public servants and are typically leery of wages that could support a 'career politician' or someone who runs for candidacy for the pay rather than to serve. In some instances, councilmembers have refused a pay increase. Spokane's current mayor reflected this approach in salary by not accepting the full council authorized amount for the position.

In Spokane and Spokane Valley, the media has portrayed elected officials as 'overworked and underpaid'. Articles and editorials have stated that councilmembers put in hours that exceed their part time designation. Articles on Spokane Valley's salary review highlighted some of the negative community response to raising council pay even though data showed Valley councilmembers received less compensation than councilmembers in similarly sized cities. The City of Tacoma is currently reviewing salaries and workload for its councilmembers. An article in the Tacoma News Tribune negatively portrayed a move toward full time councilmembers as a move toward 'career politicians'.

Anonymous (2008, Mar. 25). Is city of destiny destined for full time city council?. *The News Tribune*, p. B4.

Barnes, P. (2005, Oct. 27). Valley to vote on council pay raise: Increase to bring salaries closer to that paid by similar cities. *Spokesman Review*, p. B5.

Barnes, P. (2006, Sept. 13). Valley to study council pay raise: City to create panel which would likely recommend increases. *Spokesman Review*, p. B1.

Barnes, P. (2006, Dec. 5). Pay increases backed for city officials: Raises for mayor, council may be contested. *Spokesman Review*, p. B1.

Brunner, J. (2005, Nov. 18). Seattle's council members among highest paid in U.S. *The Seattle Times*.

Chan, S. & Cardwell, D. (2006, Nov. 17). Opponents of pay raise point to members' outside jobs. *New York Times*, P. B1.

Editorial. (2008, April 23). Civic Toil Should Pay. *Spokesman Review*, p. B4.

Hagey, J. (2008, Mar. 19). Tacoma city council approves cheaper health insurance. *The News Tribune*.

Kotsopoulos, N. (2008, Mar. 23). Council pay raise still on the books, but who'll take it?. *Telegram & Gazette*, p. B2.

Nadvornick, D. (2007, Aug. 16). Overworked, underpaid. *Inlander*.

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APPENDICES

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A. SPOKANE MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 02.05 SALARY REVIEW COMMISSION

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 council president and city council members.
Date Passed: Monday, August 20, 2007

ORD C34087 Section 1

Section 02.05.020 Membership – Term – Removal

A. Membership.

The commission shall consist of five members nominated by the mayor and appointed by the city council.

1. The commission members shall be residents and registered voters of the City.
2. Three of the members shall be residents of each of the three city council districts respectively.
3. Applications for positions to the salary review commission shall be reviewed by the City's ethics committee pursuant to [SMC 1.04.120](#) 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 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.

Date Passed: Monday, August 20, 2007

ORD C34087 Section 1

Section 02.05.030 Definitions

- A. "Elected officials" means the positions of 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.

Date Passed: Monday, August 20, 2007

ORD C34087 Section 1

Section 02.05.040 Duties

- A. It is the goal of the commission to base salaries of the 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 council president and council members. The commission shall study the relationship of salaries to the duties of the council president and council members.
- B. A decision by the commission to change the salary of the council president or city council members shall 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 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 incumbent council president or council member at the commencement of their next subsequent terms of office.

E. The commission shall not review the salary of the mayor, whose salary shall be adjusted according to the provisions of [Section 7 of the City Charter](#).

Date Passed: Monday, August 20, 2007

ORD C34087 Section 1

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 public officials to address the commission.

D. The commission shall meet to review the salary schedules of the 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 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 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.

Date Passed: Monday, August 20, 2007

ORD C34087 Section 1

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.

Date Passed: Monday, August 20, 2007

ORD C34087 Section 1

B. COUNCIL PRESIDENT SALARY ORDINANCE C32629

Ordinance C32629

WHEREAS, the charter of the City of Spokane has been amended to provide for the Office of the Council President;

WHEREAS, such charter amendment allows the City Council to set the salary of the Council President;

WHEREAS, it is necessary to pay a salary that allows the Council President to devote sufficient time and energy to the position of Council President and that the position will demand significant time commitment from the person elected to the position;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it enacted, the City of Spokane does ordain that the annual salary of the President of the Spokane City Council shall be \$40,000 per annum.

PASSED this 10th day of July 2000.

C. E-MAIL RESPONSES TO DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION

From: PHYLLIS HOLMES [mailto:phyllisholmes@worldnet.att.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2008 1:45 PM
To: Franklin, Mary
Subject: council pay

Hi Mary, Jerry Saling called and asked if I would provide a little input to the committee considering council pay. (He tells that he has had to resign the committee, unfortunately.)

While the value of the dollar has continued to erode, it was clear during my service years (Nov 1993 to Dec 2001) that the council members were under paid in terms of the time commitments required. For any of us on commission, there was no way that the stipend could cover loss of our earnings or the extra hours we worked. That gap is our public "service". Nonetheless, for those who might not have medical coverage, the benefit package was a valuable piece both from a cost and benefit standpoint.

My opinion was then and is now that the compensation for a council members should not so high as to be an attraction in and of itself. I do not believe we should encourage "professional politicians" or job seekers at the local level. I always felt that we should be , concurrently with our service, working in and living in the environment upon which we legislated. In other words, we need to be our own victims..as the public might want to view it. What all electeds need is time to read and think things through. Can money buy that? If there is a way then that should be the line of thinking. Less "meet and greet"... more equitable distribution of committees and board assignments, etc....

I do believe that the council has, in recent years, voted itself a mileage reimbursement plan...something we did not have. This is form of a raise and needs to be considered with the whole package. If council members have staff to assist them, then that is a compensation as it eases time commitments. (I know this was discussed and am not sure it happened.) Either money pays the council members for time spent or money pays staff to relieve council of some work.

The change in the form of government to strong mayor significantly reduced the management responsibilities of the council. This should also be reflected in the value of the role.

In summary, that magic number is..something high enough so that a qualified person can serve without putting his or her family in a serious jeopardy, but low enough that it attracts those who really want to "serve" and not make political offices a career.

Do I know that number? Not really, but I don't think it is over \$30,000. I would also seriously look at what the real differential should be between council members and council president in terms of time commitment and the support role that staff persons play in the picture.

Questions welcome..

Phyllis Holmes
624-5116 ext 130 office
994-3814 cell
456-8731 home

From: gerald saling [mailto:djsaling@msn.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2008 3:57 PM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject:

Dear Todd and commission,

Hal just called and asked me to send some thoughts to you concerning your upcoming decision. So, here they are.

1. I do not believe we should have full time council members.
 2. The President should have more authority to direct the council members to fulfill certain assignments. This change would have to be made in the Charter.
 3. Job descriptions and requirements should also be a Charter issue.
 4. I would not object to making the Presidents' job full time with adequate compensation.
 5. In my opinion, council members have increased their time spent on council business by their own initiative and have the ability to decrease the time spent.
 6. In view of #5, they have the ability to spend funds to increase their help if they so choose. Otherwise they should not complain about how many hours they put in.
 7. We should always have citizen members that are in touch with the reality of our community.
 8. Salaries of council members should be about \$30,000 per year with cost of living increases built in.
 9. Salary of the President should be about \$50,000 per year with a full time employee as an assistant. If the Charter is changed to give the President authority to direct council members, then I could see a salary of \$75,000 to \$80,000 per year. Much of the above depends on a change of Charter, so Hal, get busy.
- Consider what you wish and ignore the rest. Good luck. Jerry

From: Victor Frazier [mailto:victor.frazier@comcast.net]

Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2008 4:17 PM

To: Babcock, Todd

Subject: Salary Review Commission Input

Todd,

In my humble opinion, a regular city council person should make at least \$33,000, and the council president does not need to be paid as much as \$55,000. \$45k – 50k would be sufficient. How much more time is required to be council president is my main question, and is it considered a “full time” position? If not, then the salary range I have in mind is appropriate.

Thank you,

Victor Frazier
326-4200

From: Linda McHenry [mailto:mchenryl@msn.com]

Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2008 5:27 PM

To: Babcock, Todd

Subject: Council Salary Review

I am in favor of raising our City Councilmembers' salaries to \$30,000 and our Council President's salary to \$55,000. An \$18,000/yr salary for an elected official of a city the size of Spokane is an embarrassment. Why anyone would want to run for office and then taken on the responsibilities of a councilperson for this paltry sum is beyond me. An \$18,000 per year position is nothing more than a "second job" to help pay the rent. Our City deserves better, our City elected officials deserve better.

Please include my name among those in favor of this salary increase.

Regards,

Linda McHenry
1624 S Latawah St
Spokane, WA 99203
509-747-5199

From: Les McCann [mailto:lesjmc1@earthlink.net]
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2008 5:55 PM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: SALARY HEARING

Salaries for are city officials should run the same % below what is paid on the west side of the state. Almost every job in Spokane runs 20% less than the west side of the state and therefore city officials should receive 20% less than their counter parts on the west side of the state and not any higher.

LES

From: Rosemary [mailto:roseycoulson@msn.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2008 8:01 PM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: comments on salary

To comment on this, wouldn't we need a couple key pieces of information that are not included in the newsletter?

1. What has the salary been at for the past 5 years?
2. How many hours is each member & president expected to be present at work?
3. As additional comparison, what do other cities the size of Spokane pay to their comparable public servants?

I was able to download 2007's detail budget and if I read it correctly, it indicates the president's current salary is \$40K – that is a **37.5% increase!** As for the member's salaries, they get a whopping **66.6% increase!**

I wonder what the rate payers of Avista would say to such increases in the salaries of their executives.

From: Susan Millbank [mailto:susanmfm@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2008 9:25 PM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: salary review

It is impossible to pay these people what they deserve for their time, talent, and energy. The least we can do is heartily recommend this relatively small increase. It is unconscionable that this compensation has not been adjusted for so many years. I hope the Salary Commission adds a recommendation for a timely review or an automatic yearly COLA.

Susan Millbank

From: Donna McKereghan [mailto:mckereghan@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, May 21, 2008 3:57 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: Salary Review Comments

Todd,

I'd need to see the draft first and the press release didn't have it attached or say where to access it.

Thanks,

Donna

From: Hanson, Rich
Sent: Wednesday, May 21, 2008 6:54 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: Regarding salary adjustments for the council members

Good morning,

I was wondering if more information supporting these new salary amounts is available for review. I am not against the raises, but would like to understand better how the amounts were arrived at and how they compare with other local governments representative salaries.

Thank you,
Rich Hanson

From: Beverly S Kleeman [mailto:bkleeman@whitworth.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, May 21, 2008 8:10 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: salary raise

I do agree that the council members should receive a pay raise, however, I think a 65% raise is too much at one time. I was surprised to see that the council president makes that much more than the council members and strongly disagree with that. I believe a 10% increase in pay over what the council members make would be more appropriate for the council president. Based on budgets we can't always give the size raise we would like, but can try to raise salaries to the average standard over a period of years. I would recommend that the council take a serious look at the budget and see what we can realistically afford and then give that amount.

Bev Kleeman

From: Quick, David A [mailto:David.Quick@Honeywell.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 5:41 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: Pay Levels

I do not agree with the pay increases that were in today's Spokesman Review for the city council. This needs to be voted on!

Thanks, David Quick

From: ROY CHARLENE DEGENSTEIN [mailto:roychar14@msn.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 7:21 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: City Council Salary Increases

Mr. Babcock, we feel strongly that we should comment on the proposed increase in salaries for city council members. While we agree an increase would be needed, a 67% increase is totally ridiculous. When things like this come up, someone is always saying, in essence, that the Seattle area pays so much more. This is not Seattle and the citizens of Spokane, who ultimately pay the city council salaries, do not make the same wages/salaries that are paid in Seattle. We certainly never are given 67% increases by our employers.

The people that choose to run for a city council position do so with the knowledge that this "part-time" position does not and is not supposed to pay a salary to "raise a family" as someone has mentioned. They go into this with their eyes wide open and supposedly run for the position because they feel they might be able to make a difference for the people of Spokane.

At the very least, this proposal should be put to a vote by the citizens of Spokane since the money is coming out of our pockets - again.

Roy and Charlene Degenstein
Long-time Citizens of Spokane

From: Stephen Berde [mailto:steveberde@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 7:49 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: council pay raises

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a long time resident of the city - by all means the commission should offer and approve the pay raises - these people (not that I always agree with them) are hard working dedicated and are way underpaid -

They deserve to have increased compensation.

Stephen Berde
1221 W Railroad Alley #5
Spokane
455 4031

From: Mayer, Pamela K. [mailto:MayerP@shmc.org]
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 8:58 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: SALARIES

I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING HOW MANY HOURS A WEEK EACH CITY COUNCIL MEMBER ACTUALLY WORKS. THIS WOULD GIVE US A BETTER IDEA OF WORTH.

THANK YOU,

mayerp@shmc.org

From: bobbeehepw@aol.com [mailto:bobbeehepw@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 9:17 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: Raise the pay

Give our Council members an increase in salary. They deserve it.
Bobbee Hepworth

From: ssbarnard@aol.com [mailto:ssbarnard@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 9:43 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: City Council Salaries

1703 East Pinecrest Road
Spokane, WA 99203
May 22, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I write in support of council increases for the Spokane City Council. As a former member of this governmental body, I know from experience the amount of time it takes to be a part of this elected body. Not only are members expected to attend weekly meetings, but they are appointed to many separate council committees. All of these policy making and/or recommending bodies require study, research and in depth knowledge.

Council members are also expected to attend many community events in order to meet and talk with the citizens and to be out in the neighborhoods and surrounding areas. .

They also receive hundreds of e-mails, letters, and phone calls constantly and must try to respond to each.

If they do a good job, they might be re-elected. if not, voters have the choice.

These positions certainly deserve a good salary increase.

Sincerely,

Sheri Barnard

From: Jack Marchant [mailto:jax_on1@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 10:34 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: Council Salaries

Hello Todd,

I am not supportive of any increase in council salaries. These elected officials knew the salaries when they ran for election and any salary increase should be put to voters. This is extremely crass timing and insensitive to the citizens of Spokane given the current condition of the economy and rate of inflation. Perhaps council members should vote for a reduction of their salaries to show that they are aware that all of us have fewer dollars to spend due to inflation and stagnant salaries.

Increasing council salaries will assure that they are voted out next election whether any of them have the courage to oppose the increases or not.

Sincerely,

Jack Marchant

From: JOHNDOWNES@aol.com [mailto:JOHNDOWNES@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 10:51 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: Re: Council raises

Attn: Todd Babcock, City Council Office, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 99201
We support the \$55,000 annual salary for the City Council president and \$30,000 annual salary for council members. We know that serving on Council is far more than a 40 hour per week job for most who serve in that capacity. With all their committee assignments, public appearances, preparation time for meetings and special meetings, site inspections, etc. it is a wonder any have much of a family life -- or have a full time job besides, as many do. We are both long-term residents of Spokane. /s/ John Downes /s/ Susan Downes
1504 W. 7th Avenue, Spokane, WA 99204.

From: Suzanne Harris [mailto:suzanne@icsink.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 6:18 PM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: Proposed pay increases for city council members

Please consider the following comments with reference to the proposed pay increases for city council members:

It is hard for me to see the justification for a \$30,000 salary for what should be a part-time position when a vast number of full-time jobs held by Spokane residents pay significantly less than that. To use taxpayer money to compensate elected public servants at such a high level seems inappropriate, to say the least.

If you want a fair comparison for compensation, how about looking at the average wages in the small businesses around the area. Look at the help wanted ads; you will see many in the \$9 to \$10 per hour range, which works out to less than \$21,000 per year. Some of these provide benefits in addition; many do not.

Let's be realistic!

Suzanne Harris
515 E. 24th Ave.
Spokane, WA 99203

From: Frank Schoonover [mailto:frs5@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 8:26 PM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: Council Pay Raises

Sir:

I am very opposed to the exorbitant pay raises being considered for members of the Spokane City Council. To propose such a travesty at a time when many, if not most citizens are experiencing dire financial difficulties is utterly inconsiderate of the situation that many of us find ourselves in. I probably don't have to reiterate such factors as rising taxes and fees, the exorbitant price of fuel, oil, natural gas and other similar commodities, rock bottom returns on bank investments, stock declines, dividends, etc.

Every single Council member knew going in what the pay schedule was. If it was not sufficient, then they should not have run for office. Regardless of the amount of time they deign to put it, it is community service, not meant to be a full time job and not intended a means of making big money. Their compensation should be a stipend. And it's not just the annual salary. How much do these increases add to their pensions? Has anybody considered that factor? All of this just adds up to more taxes to be levied on the community members.

I for one don't buy the line that higher pay invites better qualified people to run for office. All it does is to take the job out of the realm of citizen legislator and move it into the area of professional politician. We see what that has done at the national level to people of both political parties. Let's not encourage and reward that kind of behavior at the local level.

It has been my experience that those appointed to Salary Review Commissions are generally among the higher earning people who are not cognizant of what the middle and lower classes of wage earners exist on or are willing to pay public servants. I urge you not to raise the salaries one cent. Next election you can judge how "low" the salaries are by the number of qualified individuals who want to run for public office. Let that be your guide as to the value of the office at its current wage level.

Regardless of the Commission's recommendation, let the citizens of Spokane have the final say at the ballot box.

Frank R. Schoonover
4910 W. Fernwood Ct.
Spokane, WA 99208
(509) 466-4905
frs5@comcast.net

From: Bob Wester [mailto:bobwester04@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 8:37 PM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: Proposed city council salary increase.

I read in today's Spokesman that comments are being sought on council salary increases. Here is mine:

First of all, as a taxpayer I would like to know where these funds are going to come from. Everything I read or hear tells me the City of Spokane struggles each year to make budget. Look what happened to the snow removal and de-icing budget last winter. Second of all, as a 50 year resident of Spokane and a business person that has been in retail for 30+years let me tell you NO ONE in the private sector is given the kind of rate increases you are proposing. City council president from \$40,000.00 to \$55,00.00? That's a 27% increase in pay. Council members from \$18,000.00 to \$30,000.00 is a 42%!! increase in pay. That kind of rate increase would be irresponsible to the tax payers of Spokane. I myself just received a rate increase at my place of employment. It was a 1.07% increase. And I was grateful to receive it during these economic times. I am not against a cost of living increase for council members but I would think a 2-3 % increase would be more fiduciary responsible.

Respectfully submitted, Robert L. Wester

From: JAN Quinn [mailto:jquinn5860@msn.com]
Sent: Friday, May 23, 2008 9:35 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject:

Dear Mr. Babcock

I am writing this responding to the City Councils pay raise. They do not need 67% raise in pay for what they do for Spokane or, maybe what they do to the citizen of Spokane. They can't balance the budget but they can give themselves a pay raise. We can't afford to hire new Police Officers or Fire Men, but we can give them a raise. I also want accountability, one the council members stated that they were only required to attend one weekly meeting but work on City business up to or exceeding 40 hour a week. Prove it, I want detailed account of the work they do, if they do it at their other jobs that does not count, because they are not exclusively on city

business. Second the city that were mentioned in the article that a compared to Spokane, do not have the same economic base as Spokane, they have better business base and more people than Spokane that can support their city counsel salaries. And from what is said what the counsel member are paid is well with in the average that other city counsels get paid. One said that no one can survive on 30,000 a year, I survive on 9084.00 a year. There are probably hundered's within Spokane that due just that survive on 30,000 a year, If they can do it so can the counsel members. Mr. McGrath was right the members new what the pay was when they ran for office. They should get a raise but not 67% how about 3% that what I get every year, a cost of living increase.

I am disable and I survive on 9,000 and I can not afford any more tax hikes or property tax hikes, that always seem to come because we have no money to run the city. I read that in one country that the officals of the city, state and so on had to sell on of there possions and it was put into the coffurs of the city. If the city made a profit they got to keep a share of the profit, if it didn't make a profit then they were left penny less. I think that if that was they way goverment's were run we would always have profitable city's, state's etc..... And it should be the people of the city that decide the amount of the raise

Jan Quinn
2723 S. Manito Blvd
Spokane, WA 99203
509-838-5860

From: larryzimm@peoplepc.com [mailto:larryzimm@peoplepc.com]
Sent: Friday, May 23, 2008 6:30 PM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: council salary history of increases

Is there information posted somewhere on the history of salary increases for members of the council, President and Mayor? Shouldn't this type of information be publicly available before you ask for comments by the citizens?
Larry T Zimmerman

From: Ken Beck [mailto:drdocument@mac.com]
Sent: Saturday, May 24, 2008 9:36 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: City Council Salaries

Dear Mr. Babcock:

I object to increasing the salaries of City Council President and City Council Members.

The proposed salaries exceed those of the salaries of the majority of our city residents for full-time work and are unconscionable.

If our Council President and Members are not smart enough or organized enough to manage their time and resources so as to be able to perform their assigned responsibilities on a part-time basis then they are not qualified for the positions they hold.

Sincerely,

Ken Beck
Spokane Resident since 1950

From: Mayer, Pamela K. [mailto:MayerP@shmc.org]
Sent: Monday, May 26, 2008 9:55 AM

To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: RE: SALARIES

THIS IS ALL WELL AND GOOD, BUT, I STILL WOULD LIKE TO KNOW HOW MANY HOURS A WEEK THE COUNCIL MEMBERS WORK.

THANK YOU,

PAM MAYER
mayerp@shmc.org

From: Babcock, Todd [mailto:tbabcock@spokanecity.org]
Sent: Thu 5/22/2008 9:01 AM
To: Mayer, Pamela K.
Subject: RE: SALARIES
Ms. Mayer:

Thank-you for your inquiry.

I have attached the draft version of the Commission report. We are in the process of having it posted to the City website. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Todd Babcock
(509) 625-6224

From: Mayer, Pamela K. [mailto:MayerP@shmc.org]
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 8:58 AM
To: Babcock, Todd
Subject: SALARIES

I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING HOW MANY HOURS A WEEK EACH CITY COUNCIL MEMBER ACTUALLY WORKS. THIS WOULD GIVE US A BETTER IDEA OF WORTH.

THANK YOU,

mayerp@shmc.org