

James, Sheena

From: Howard Garson <hgarson@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 12, 2020 3:48 PM
To: Merino, Jennifer; Klopp, Keven; James, Sheena; Chavarria, Greg
Subject: One more for the Commission

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I did not include this before because I wasn't sure if it was something that should be in the charter.

I believe that the pay of the Commissioners should not be left to them. Any changes in their compensation can become quite political. Also, I think there are some real problems with how they are compensated now.

I have no problem with their base pay which I believe is \$35,000 per year. I have a big problem with how the travel allowance is handled, and to be honest, I am not sure how the health insurance reimbursement is set up.

If the Commissioners pay is in the Charter, it should not be fixed until the next charter review. I would increase it every year using some COLA figure. I would have 2020 finish at the present rate, and use the COLA to determine their pay for 2021 and going forward.

The way travel expenses are handled is a disaster in my opinion. Essentially we are asking the Commissioners to pay for their own travel. They have \$10,000 in an account to pay for travel related to their job as a Commissioner and whatever they don't spend, they keep. In essence, they start the year getting \$45,000 and deduct from that any travel that they do on city business. It comes from their pay. Why should they have to pay themselves for travel for the city? We should go back to the old system where each elected official has a budget of \$10,000 for city related travel. If they don't use all of the money, the balance stays with the city. If they use up the \$10,000, they can ask the Commission to approve an additional money for travel. This takes away the disincentive to travel for city business.

As I said, I am not sure how the payment for health benefits work now. I would propose a couple of things. An elected official can be reimbursed for their health care insurance costs up to the amount the city pays for the insurance of a full time employee. If the costs of a city employee are greater than the elected official pays for their health insurance, they only get what they pay out themselves. If the officials health insurance costs more than the city pays for their employees, then the official would get an amount equal to what the city pays. Also, if it was possible, I would let an elected official opt into the city health insurance plan. Their costs would be the same as any other city employee gets. I am assuming that the cost to the city is the same for hourly and salaried employees. If there is a difference, the cost to the city of the salaried employee would be the figure used.

Howard Garson