

KIRKLAND SALARY COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

Thursday, November 29, 2012

1. CALL TO ORDER

On November 29, 2012, the Kirkland Salary Commission held a meeting in the City Council Chamber at Kirkland City Hall, 123 Fifth Avenue. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Anna Rising, Chair.

2. INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL

Commission Members present were: Santos Contreras, Steven Hopkins, and Anna Rising. Staff members present were: Kathi Anderson, City Clerk, Tracey Dunlap, Director of Finance and Administration, Robin Jenkinson, City Attorney, and James Lopez, Director of Human Resources and Performance Management.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Salary Commission unanimously approved the minutes of October 23, 2012, as presented.

4. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE/PUBLIC

William Spears spoke and was critical of the fact that the City Council appointed the members of the Salary Commission.

Commission Chair Rising read into the record the following email/voice mail comments that had been provided to the Salary Commission:

October 17, 2012 – Carolyn Yabui wrote in opposition to an increase in the salaries of the Mayor and Council Members;

November 15, 2012 – Margaret Wiggins was critical of the fact that the City Council appointed the members of the Salary Commission; and

November 29, 2012 – Virginia Constanzo left a voice-mail message in opposition to any increase in salaries for the Mayor and Council Members. Ms. Constanzo added that she would like to see the Salary Commission reduce or eliminate the Council benefits and salaries.

5. COMMISSION BUSINESS

Commission Member Contreras asked to hear from the Human Resources Director on his recommendation and thought process. Human Resources Director James Lopez referred to the memorandum that he had submitted to the Salary Commission. The Human Resources Department reviewed the Council positions relative to the market as represented by the ten

cities that the City uses as comparators. Based upon the review, Mr. Lopez said that restoration of the 3.4% by which the Council salaries were reduced in 2010 was justified. Mr. Lopez explained that in 2010 the Council and Management and Confidential Unit (“MAC”) employees had their salaries reduced by 3.4%, along with many other City employees. The 3.4% was restored to MAC and the other affected employees the following year, but Council salaries have remained at the reduced level up to the present time. Mr. Lopez said that with the restoration of the 3.4%, the Council salaries would be more closely aligned with the council salaries of the other comparable cities. Mr. Lopez also noted that there is no historical correlation between MAC and Council salaries, but that restoring the 3.4% would answer the equity question.

Commission Chair Rising asked about the stipend received by the Council and whether the stipend was taken into consideration in the Human Resource Department’s review. Mr. Lopez replied that the Council receives a \$300 monthly allowance in lieu of medical benefits and pointed to Attachment C attached to his memorandum, which provided a comparison of council benefits. Commissioner Contreras observed that it is difficult to draw “apples to apples comparisons” with respect to benefits.

Commissioner Hopkins asked the Finance Director about a \$5.3 million City budget deficit about which he had read. Ms. Dunlap explained that the budget was balanced by the time it was adopted by the Council. Commissioner Contreras asked about upcoming salary increases for City employees. Mr. Lopez responded that MAC employees and many bargaining units were going to receive a 2.5% salary increase in 2013 with no increase in 2014.

In response to the public comments, Commissioner Contreras said that it was not the Salary Commission’s job to cut salaries and that the City Council deserves compensation. Commissioner Santos said the issue for the Salary Commission was the appropriate level of compensation. Commission Chair Rising pointed out that, in the time she has been on the Salary Commission, the salaries of the Council Members have not been increased.

Commissioner Hopkins noted that the City budget document showed a 4.3% increase in the budget for the City Council. Ms. Dunlap explained that the increase was the result of increased dues for memberships in organizations such as the Association of Washington Cities and the Puget Sound Regional Council. The City’s dues had increased because of the population increase with annexation.

Commission Chair Rising observed that restoring 3.4% to the salaries of the Council Members would not represent very much money for the Members: \$48 per month for the Mayor and \$37 per month for the Council Members. The Chair was supportive of restoring the 3.4%. Commissioner Contreras agreed with the Chair and said that restoring the 3.4% would get the Council closer to parity. Commissioner Contreras asked his fellow Commissioners about their response to the MAC employees and other City employees receiving a 2.5% increase in 2013.

The Commission unanimously approved restoring the 3.4% to the salaries of the Mayor and Council. There was not a consensus for any additional increase. The Commission Members signed Resolution No. 12-001 reinstating the salaries for the Mayor and Council to the 2009 levels, effective January 1, 2013, as follows:

Mayor \$1,400/month; and
Council \$1,100/month.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The November 29, 2012, meeting of the Kirkland Salary Commission adjourned at 7:34 p.m.