



City of Tacoma
Citizen Commission on Elected Salaries

Dalvin Yarbrough, Chair
Danette Knowles
Keoni Ho
David Koenig
Amanda Robison
Thomas Brewster
Judy Loveless-Morris

MINUTES
CITIZEN COMMISSION ON ELECTED SALARIES
Monday February 27, 2023
6:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER: 6:03 PM

II. ROLL CALL: Chair Dalvin Yarbrough
Commission Chair Dalvin Yarbrough took roll call of the Commissioners in attendance.

Present: Chair Dalvin Yarbrough

Commissioners: Keoni Ho, Thomas (Jed) Brewster, Judy Loveless-Morris

Absent: Danette Knowles, David Koenig, Amanda Robison

Staff Present: Council Member John Hines, Council Member Olgy Diaz, Deputy City Attorney Charles Lee, HR Manager Jen Peters, HR Liaison Monica Rutledge

Guests Present: One community member

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM November 7, 2022 MEETING

There was a motion to approve the November 7, 2022 meeting minutes as presented.

First: Commissioner Jed Brewster
Second: Commissioner Judy Loveless-Morris
Ayes: 4
Nays: 0

The motion passed.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments submitted.

V. CITY OF TACOMA COUNCIL MEMBERS OLGY DIAZ AND JOHN HINES

Chair Yarbrough asked the Council Members if they had a preference for the questioning format, then asked them to introduce themselves.

Council Member Hines thanked the Commissioners for serving, then introduced himself and reviewed his history on the Council and the area that he serves.

Council Member Diaz also thanked the Commissioners for serving. She introduced herself and noted she was the newest member on the Council and was appointed to fill a vacancy through the end of next year in the at large 7 area.

Chair Yarbrough asked the Council Members to describe their jobs for the City. CM Hines summarized the primary duties such as writing City policy, managing and approving the City budget and overseeing the City Manager in her role. In addition, they communicate with community constituents, bringing their ideas and concerns back to the City Manager. CM Diaz concurred, adding the importance of being responsive to community needs and wants as well as communicating changes and ensuring that new policies are being implemented and followed.

Chair Yarbrough asked them each to estimate how much time they spend serving in this role. CM Diaz stated that it fluctuates based on City and Committee calendars, and she spends from 12 – 30 hours per week. She also holds a full-time outside job and tries to balance responsibilities of both. CM Hines concurred that the time varies from week to week. He also holds an outside job and has a schedule which allows him to dedicate Tuesdays for Council business, in addition to spending time on evenings and weekends answering emails, communicating with constituents, and attending events. He spends anywhere between 15 – 40 hours per week on his duties.

Chair Yarbrough asked the Council Members how they balanced their duties with their outside jobs. CM Diaz stated she is currently at peak workload for her day job for the Dept. of Natural Resources, so focuses on her CM duties primarily on evenings and weekends. CM Hines works Mondays, and Wednesday-Friday at his day job with the school district, and spends Tuesdays, evenings and weekends on his CM duties. Since the COVID emergency, holding meetings via ZOOM has cut down on travel time which has helped, as he also has family responsibilities to incorporate into his schedule. He really enjoys the Council work that he does.

Chair Yarbrough asked the CM's if they had communicated with Council Members from other Districts and how their roles compare. CM Hines has met others within the state and nationally and finds the roles to be very similar, although Tacoma is a larger City with additional challenges, including increased requests from the public to be involved in the Policy making process. CM Diaz has worked with Council Members from other

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smaller cities in the County and feels they have responsibilities more reflective of a part-time Council. She also noted that families who have relocated to Tacoma from Seattle, a larger City, have expectations for the City governments to work the same, which they do not.

Chair Yarbrough asked the CM's what Committees they serve on, and whether they see any disparities in the workload. CM Diaz replied that she serves on the Economic Development Committee and the Infrastructure Planning Sustainability Committee both which meet bi-weekly. CM Hines also serves on two Committees, the Infrastructure Planning Sustainability Committee and the Government Performance and Finance Committee and is an alternate on the Community Vitality and Safety Committee. There are also National, Regional and State-wide Committees to serve on, divided amongst the CM's.

Chair Yarbrough asked if the CM's inability to make some of the outside Committee meetings during the workday put the City at a disadvantage. CM Diaz replied that it can but can also be a disadvantage for others to not hear The City's perspective on issues. CM Hines noted that Seattle is the only City with a full-time Council, and that most councils do not have term limits like Tacoma does, which may be a larger impediment to those Committees.

Commissioner Ho thanked the Council members for their time and service. He asked them to describe how money affects their lives, working full-time outside jobs and serving on the Council. CM Hines replied that the pay from his full-time position along with the part-time Council pay allows him to support his family. He could not do it on the Council salary alone. CM Diaz stated that she is in a similar situation and noted she had to switch employers when she started on the Council to allow for more flexibility in her schedule and concurred that she could not make it on the Council salary alone.

Commissioner Ho asked the CM's how they felt about proposing an income-based or affirmative action style salary schedule to incentivize individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to run for and serve full-time on the Council. CM Diaz replied that she is the first Latina to be appointed to the Council. She doesn't feel an increased salary would do a service to herself or others due to the additional expectations that it would bring, nor would it help remove existing barriers. She doesn't feel it would be the proper tool to use and makes her a little uncomfortable as it may not be perceived well by the community. CM Hines replied that it is a good question, since we want to attract a wide range of people into these roles, especially those who may have previously been precluded. He stated the challenge is that the job is hard, and we don't want to potentially make the job harder by adding additional expectations, as CM Diaz mentioned. He stated that we need to be creative with different ways to attract people to the Council and get them engaged. He stated the Mayor speaks of having the most diverse Council in the City's history, without making any changes to how members are recruited. He is open to exploring different ways to continue supporting that effort.

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He also feels barriers exist on the campaign end, and we need ways to better recruit people to run for office.

Commissioner Ho asked the CM's to describe their volunteer obligations. CM Hines replied that he really likes the work and that there is a component of public service obligation. He ran for office because he wants to serve the community. CM Diaz replied that she is of a similar mindset, and she sees this as a public service role. She has the tools to serve and give back to her community, though everyone has different motives for running for office. She was also ready to serve as the first Latina on the Council.

Commissioner Loveless-Morris thanked the CM's for their time and service and asked them to describe the most complex challenges that the Council is working through. CM Hines answered that homelessness and housing were among the most difficult. CM Diaz agrees, adding that mental illness is a factor and one of the root causes of homelessness. Commissioner Loveless-Morris then asked the CM's how the group measures their successes. CM Hines replied that they use clear benchmarks to track and monitor progress, though some issues may not be resolved during their limited time in office. CM Diaz agreed, stating the statistics can be indicators for which policies or services may need adjusting.

Chair Yarbrough asked the CM's about the possibility of going to a full-time status, and if the Commission could expect an update if/when that happens. CM's Diaz & Hines both replied that they would be glad to come back for another discussion if/when that happens.

CM Hines thanked the Commission for their volunteerism and work and for taking the time to listen to each of the Council Members. CM Diaz also thanked the Commission for all the work they are doing. Chair Yarbrough thanked the CM's for their work and service and for taking the time to meet with the Commission and answer questions.

VI. COMMISSION BY-LAWS, OPEN QUESTION FORUM: CHARLES LEE, DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY

Deputy City Attorney Charles Lee introduced himself and gave a brief summary of his background. Chair Yarbrough asked how COVID and the new hybrid meeting settings have affected OPMA requirements. Deputy Attorney Lee replied that once the emergency declaration was lifted by the state, the obligations haven't changed. We are still required to have a physical meeting location and post meeting notifications. The state does not require a hybrid setting but the City has asks CBC's to offer them if possible. He stated COVID has allowed increased participation due to use of TEAMS and ZOOM technology.

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Chair Yarbrough asked Deputy Attorney Lee about the OPMA training requirements. Deputy Lee clarified the difference between state law requirements and City recommendations. The City recommends the training series available on the state Attorney General's website. The training provides a thorough review of OPMA requirements to help the City's CBC's remain in compliance with the law. Training videos are all available online. Once each commissioner has completed the training they were asked to submit a completion certificate to the HR liaison. An email containing links to all the trainings will be sent out via email.

Deputy Attorney Charles Lee asked about Commission Bylaws. Chair Yarbrough stated they were currently using the Charter provision. Deputy Lee gave a brief review, and recommended CBC's who have bylaws may consider posting them to the City webpage for current and future reference. Deputy Lee shared a draft version of Commission Bylaws and reviewed some of the basic detail. The draft document would be subject to Commission review, edits, and final vote before being implemented. Commissioner Brewster asked if there was a downside to adopting Bylaws. Deputy Lee replied that one downside could be that any action the Commission makes may be deemed invalid if Bylaws aren't followed. Otherwise, he doesn't see a downside. Bylaws may be a discussion item on a future Commission meeting agenda.

VII. COMPENSATION DATA REVIEW: JEN PETERS, HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

Human Resources Manager Jen Peters gave an overview of the data she is collecting to share with the Commission at the next meeting and clarified which data they are requesting. Commissioner Ho confirmed he would still like to review examples of the Council Members' calendars. There was discussion on different ways to collect data on how their time is spent. Jen shared a copy of her data template and reviewed some of the data fields. Commissioner Loveless-Morris suggested a column for the Mayors' salaries as a percentage of total City budgets. A request was made to expand on the CCES Decision tab, perhaps to include a 5-year history. Commissioner Brewster asked if compensation was typically paid by salary, or if there had been any exceptions of hourly wages. Jen replied that compensation was typically salary, and all data collected will be converted to annual salary. Chair Yarbrough commented that City benefit information is also helpful to consider. The Commissioners thanked the HR staff for all their work gathering the requested data.

VIII. TOPICS FOR MAY 1, 2023 AGENDA

- Commissioner Ho shared information from a Qualitative review he performed independently. He would like to discuss this in more detail at a future meeting. There was brief discussion on his preliminary findings.
- Chair Yarbrough would like to include a City budget staff member on a future meeting agenda.

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- Guests: Mayor Woodards, Deputy Mayor Walker, Council Member Blocker, Council Member Ushka

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to end the meeting

First: Commissioner Judy Loveless-Morris

Second: Commissioner Jed Brewster

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Meeting adjourned 7:46PM