

Approved: March 20, 2015

Compensation Commission Public Hearing
Mayor and Council Chambers
March 10, 2015
7:00 pm

Present:

Jim Coyle, Jim Marrinan, Norm Hampton, Tom McKenna

Staff:

Acting City Clerk Sara Ferrell and Deputy City Clerk Brenda Bean

Convene:

Chair Coyle called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Chair Coyle welcomed those present and presented a little background on the work of the Compensation Commission. Commissioner Marrinan mentioned that all Compensation Commission meetings are open to the public and Chair Coyle said that the record for public testimony will close March 17, 2015.

Speakers:

Christina Ginsberg—Ms. Ginsberg stated that she initially believed that the Mayor and Council should not be paid at all and viewed them strictly as volunteers. She has changed her way of thinking. She noted retired or financially independent office holders were in a better position to seek office. She believes that the current compensation is low considering the salaries of the staff that they supervise. She thinks the Mayor and Council compensation should be increased by four or five thousand dollars. More people with varied backgrounds might consider running. This would be good for diversity. She believes the benefit package should remain as it is now.

Brigitta Mullican— Ms. Mullican stated that she thinks the current compensation is too low. Believes \$30,000 for the Mayor and \$28,000 for Council would be appropriate. She believes the Mayor and Council put in many more hours than before. She said that there are many smaller jurisdictions that have 10 councilmembers and believes 7 councilmembers would be better for Rockville. She wants to go on the record as supporting an increase in the number of councilmembers.

Joe Jordan—Mr. Jordan stated that there was not much to review prior to the public hearing. He plans to look at the data when it becomes available and then speak at Community Forum. Mr. Jordan noted concerns with Mayor and Council not taking Commission recommendations in the past. A fair and equitable stipend is necessary to attract more people for the office. Things have changed and the Mayor and Council do spend a lot more time in the performance of their job, outside of council meetings. He noted his concerns that the City Manager interjected herself into the process. Chair Coyle explained that benefits have an impact on the budget which the City Manager controls which Chair Coyle believes is the reason for the City Manager's request to look at benefits for the Mayor and Council. In addition, there is no policy

on reimbursable expenses so this is a good time to look at the issue. Mr. Jordan believes the Mayor and Council are entitled to receive reimbursement for cell phone use.

Mark Pierzchala—Mr. Pierzchala stated that he offers testimony from a recent councilmember perspective. Mr. Pierzchala believes that the current levels are not sufficient and should be doubled or even tripled. When he served as a councilmember, it had a negative impact on his business. A very large reason for not seeking office in 2015 had to do with the financial impact as a small business owner. It irked some members when the Mayor and Council did not fund an increase that had been approved and believes that the recommendations of the Compensation Commission should be mandatory. The Mayor and Council spend a lot of time in the performance of the job, sometimes upwards of 40 hours per week. Mr. Pierzchala also believes that the Mayor and Council should have their own staff who report directly to them. He added that there are ways to make briefbook more efficient and would like to have a task force to look at the whole briefbook process. Some members of the Mayor and Council get too deep into the weeds, and they should deal strictly with policy. He believes it is appropriate for the Mayor and Council to have health benefits and a few others. He does not believe that they should be eligible for retirement.

Gerry Cashin—Ms. Cashin stated that Mark Pierzchala's input was good and it was nice to hear the perspective from someone who recently served on the Council.

Adjournment

There being no further speakers, the public hearing ended at 7:33 pm.

Motion: to adjourn

Moved by Tom McKenna, seconded by Jim Marrinan and unanimously approved.