

2022-2023 Compensation Review Committee & Recommendation

Every four (4) years, at least one hundred and eighty (180) days prior to a mayoral election, the Mayor shall appoint, with Council approval, a seven person committee whose membership shall be comprised of at least one member from each Ward of the City, to review and make recommendations for the compensation of both the Mayor to be elected in the next municipal election and all City Council members serving during that upcoming four year term. The Compensation Review Committee shall make its recommendation as to any compensation increase, decrease or lack of change in the existing compensation to the Mayor and City Council at least ninety (90) days prior to the election. The Mayor and Council shall have no power to alter or amend the Commission's recommendation, but shall either accept or reject it, by motion, resolution or ordinance.

To continue transparency into compensation and budgetary decisions, a Compensation and Review Committee was convened November 7, 2022 to evaluate and recommend compensation for the years 2025 through 2029. The 2022 Committee roster includes:

Juan Castillo - Ward 1 - Committee Chair

Michael Horlick - Ward 2

Bette Dickerson - Ward 2

Melinda Baldwin - Ward 2

Tom Wright - Ward 3

Alexi Sanchez de Boado - Ward 4

Patricia Page - Ward 5

The Committee focused its work on exploring different ways to approach salary and compensation through secondary research, interviews, and surveys. This included the review of publicly accessible data about other nearby cities and municipalities with similar population size and budgets; interviews and surveys with a former Mayor and former Council Members; and the solicitation of the opinions of the public through a survey on Hello Hyattsville marketed through the Hyattsville Reporter. Through these methods, the Committee sought to learn what motivates candidates to run for office, the typical number of hours spent by the Mayor and the Council conducting the city's business, and ideas about what type of compensation is ideal for Council Members from their perspective and from the perspective of the public.

The results of this research revealed important facts that helped inform the Committee's recommendations on compensation, and all recommendations have been rooted in these principles. First, the primary motivation of Mayors and City Council Members in running for office is to perform a civic duty and to support their community (this, based on individual responses to the questions in the survey and during interviews.) Financial compensation was found to be a low or lower-ranking criteria for running for office for a significant plurality 8 of the nine former City Council Member respondents. Second, while the number of responses to the public survey does not provide an adequate sampling size (7 respondents), the following data was acquired: 67% of the public believes that the Mayor works 40+ hours per month conducting

city business as well as political and public engagement, while 56% of the respondents believe that City Council Members work between 31-40 hours per month.

During our committee meetings, we discussed the findings from our research and the options that emerged. Our discussions led to:

- 1) Trying to balance an appropriate level of compensation that will attract qualified and diverse candidates.
- 2) Evaluation of the 2019 recommendations.
- 3) Debating whether an increase in salary will act as an incentive to attract more candidates and a greater diversity of candidates (ethnicity, income, gender)
- 4) Discussing whether the Mayor and City Council Member seats should be full-time or part-time roles as well as whether or not this topic falls outside the scope of the Committee's intended role.
- 5) Exploring other perks to consider and be used to incentivize and support future council members.
- 6) Discussions about the role of the City's current budget allocations and the role of future revenue in the compensation of the Mayor and City Council Members.
- 7) The impact that additional fringe benefits might have on attracting candidates to run for office such as refunded childcare costs for evening meetings and other events.

We met with the City Treasurer to discuss the past, current, and future budget environment and funds available for salaries generally. Generally speaking we were advised that council plus mayoral salaries account for just under 1% (0.9% at present) of the city's budget and we felt an obligation to remain within that 1% range. For the 2024 budget year, all City Council Members salaries plus the mayor will add up to \$131,849.00, \$11,471.00 per year for City Council Members and \$17,139.00 for the mayor. This left us with little room to increase the salaries to a significant degree.

During this conversation with the City Treasurer we also learned that the constant yield tax rate is not valuable as a guide for the city's future revenue and the funds available or not available for salaries. Additionally, development and its impact on the budget is not immediately relevant because there is a 3–4 year delay between development and full realization of property tax revenue and other revenues to the city. As such the impact of the perceived heavy development in the City could not be used to anticipate extra funds for larger increases in salaries. This also limited the amount of increase in compensation we thought appropriate.

After some deliberation the Committee decided on a compensation increase over a four-year period (2025 through 2029) for the Mayor and City Council Members. Noted in the analysis and review of the data gathered from interviews and surveys, the city thrives with council candidates committed to constituents and the city for the sole purpose of performing their civic duty and to support their communities. Total compensation is not a major factor in candidates' decisions to run for office. Additionally, we didn't have enough information to know if a significant increase in salary, perhaps enough to make the salary enough to survive on as a sole income source, or

perhaps as half-time (thereby attracting stay at home parents), would increase interest in the position. We did however spend quite some time discussing this possibility. As a result, by the consent and approval of the Committee, we recommend an increase of 3% for Council Members which is on track with the long term inflation rate from [1913-2020](#) and which will have a consistent increase for the indicated four years to offset the anticipated increases in the cost of living but without changing expectations for the role of Council Members.

The analysis also indicated a clear imbalance of duties and responsibilities between City Council Members and the Mayor. One former Council Member and one former Mayor indicated that the Mayor's position needed to be full time in order to prevent a choke point for decision making while City staff wait for a part-time mayor to give approvals. Significant discussion was had on the ability of the committee to rewrite the position description for the mayor via a budget suggestion that would increase the pay to that of a full professional in the \$80k annual salary range. Ultimately we felt we did not have that charge or capability but we did come to an agreement that the Mayor's role is significantly more time intensive than that of Council Member and as such we recommend an increase of 5% for the Mayor annually to account for this while keeping in the confines of our charge and not redefining the role via a budget process or exceeding 1% dedicated to salaries in the City budget.

We would encourage the City to put together a committee to consider the role and the job description for the Mayor and City Council Members because we foresee the distinct possibility that the role of Mayor in particular could be or perhaps should be full time, particularly as Hyattsville continues to grow in population and attracts more commercial entities. That discussion and not one limited to minor salary changes might devise ways to attract more candidates and a more diverse bench of candidates for elected office.

We utilized the data collected from each of these methods to determine our recommendations on compensation which are outlined in the table below.

City of Hyattsville, Maryland
Recommendation of Compensation Review Committee:
Budget Years 2024-2028

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Percentage		
						2025	2026-2027	2028
Council Member	\$11,471.00	\$11,815.13	\$12,169.58	\$12,534.67	\$12,910.71	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Mayor	\$17,139.00	\$17,995.95	\$18,895.75	\$19,840.53	\$20,832.56	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Total Compensation	\$131,849.00	\$136,147.25	\$140,591.59	\$145,187.25	\$149,939.68			