



## General Government Committee

### Discussion of Council Salaries

**Agenda Date:** 11/18/2015  
**Agenda Item Number:** 4.D  
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**Title**

Discussion of Council Salaries

**Recommended Action**

**Committee Recommendation:**

Not referred to a Committee.

**City Manager Recommendation:**

Review and discuss information presented on Council salaries. Briefing only; no action requested.

**Report**

**Issue:**

Consider how Olympia City Council salaries compare to similar sized cities; and what is a "salary commission?"

**Staff Contact:**

Joe Olson, Human Resources Director, Administrative Services Department 360.753.8309

**Presenter(s):**

Joe Olson, Human Resources Director

**Background and Analysis:**

1) Council requested information on how its salary compares to similar sized cities.

Background: The attached table compares salaries from AWC member cities that have a council/city manager form of government and a population 10,000 more or less than Olympia's. (The City is a member of the Association of Washington (AWC). Every year AWC does a salary survey of member cities on certain classifications including city council salaries.)

Analysis: Of the cities surveyed, Olympia has the highest rate of pay for council members.

2) Council requested information on how the City of Tumwater formed a salary commission which determines council salaries.

Background: The State Constitution prohibits elected officials from raising their own salaries during

their term in office. However, the state Constitution does permit mid-term salary increases for municipal officers who do not fix their own compensation.

The legislature passed RCW 35.21.015 which allows cities to establish a salary commission by ordinance. Such a commission is empowered to raise salaries of city elected officials at the time set by ordinance (including mid-term) as long as the commission is:

- Appointed by the mayor with approval of the city council;
- Not appointed for more than two terms;
- Only removed during their terms of office for cause of incapacity, incompetence, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office or for a disqualifying change of residence; and
- Not composed of any officer, official, or employee of the city or town or any of their immediate family members.

Salary increases established by the commission shall be effective as to all city or town elected officials, regardless of their terms of office.

Salary decreases established by the commission shall become effective as to incumbent city or town elected officials at the commencement of their next subsequent terms of office.

Salary increases and decreases shall be subject to referendum petition by the people of the City.

The action fixing the salary by a commission established in conformity with this section shall supersede any other provision of state statute or city or town ordinance related to municipal budgets or to the fixing of salaries.

Analysis: Council can pass an ordinance establishing a salary commission. The commission can set salaries for elected officials at the time identified in the ordinance, including during the mid-term of a city council member.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

N/A

**Options:**

- 1) Create a salary commission.
- 2) Do not create a salary commission.

**Financial Impact:**

Unknown.