

COMPENSATION COMMISSION

The Compensation Commission meeting was held on March 22, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. with Chairman Leary presiding. Members present were Mrs. Taylor, Mr. Wagner, and Mrs. Mitchell (Controller/Treasurer). Mr. Brockton and Mrs. Hawkins (Human Resources Director) were absent.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mrs. Mitchell moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Mrs. Taylor and unanimously carried.

Determination of Data to be Collected

Mr. Leary advised that the first task before members was to have some consensus as to the general data members wanted to review so that staff would have a cogent task to perform. Mr. Leary referred to the samples of information that were provided in the past for Compensation Commission studies, stating that members would not necessarily accept them. Referring to the Survey of City Council Member Responsibilities, he noted that he completed such a survey in years past and suggested that members obtain these surveys.

Mrs. Taylor concurred, stating that in order to make a sound decision, she would need to know what members do and how much of their time it requires. She indicated that she also liked the data that was provided regarding how cities of similar sizes are run and how they choose to compensate. Mrs. Taylor noted that she was starting from ground zero and did not have a lot of history and would like to know what she is looking at before she decides. In response to Mr. Leary, Mrs. Taylor stated that she was in favor of surveying other municipalities. Mr. Wagner pointed out that members had that information. Responding, Mrs. Taylor explained that the data was collected by the Compensation Commission in 2011 and was, therefore, old.

Mrs. Jody Stein, Administrative Assistant, City Clerk's Office, noted that the Survey of City Council Member Responsibilities indicated that it was only for City Council members. Mr. Leary stated that members would consider distributing it to the Mayor as well.

Mr. Leary advised that, prior to the meeting, Mr. Wagner had mentioned job descriptions for the Mayor and Council and asked if Mr. Wagner would like to see if other municipalities had job descriptions. Responding, Mr. Wagner indicated that it would depend on what other members thought, noting that there was only so much that members could do. Mr. Wagner stated that the public should know about the job so that someone would not come back saying that they were attending more meetings than they wanted to attend. Mr. Wagner expressed the desire to find out how many meetings members attended. He stated he was unsure if members could get job descriptions.

Mrs. Mitchell noted that Mr. Wagner was not asking just for a job description but to know how many meetings members attended so they would know that a Councilperson was really involved and active when they come up for elections. She indicated that there was no score card for the public to see that information.

Mr. Wagner advised, when looking at City elections, that there is no ruler to evaluate those who are serving or those who are running. He noted that there are pseudo debates where these things should

come up. Mr. Wagner stated that Mr. Leary had mentioned that members were previously paid per meeting and Mr. Wagner advised that he thought this was the right way to do it. He noted that this was discontinued because Council wanted a salary and that they are paid approximately \$7,400. He stated that this should encompass everything that a Councilperson does. Mr. Wagner indicated that if Council members have to attend six (6) meetings, then they should do so, this is part of the job, and members should not complain that they have too many meetings to attend. He stated that the school board members were the only ones left in the State of Delaware with no compensation, noting that as a school board member he worked very hard for no pay. Mr. Wagner advised that he thought it would be very valuable from a public standpoint to begin evaluating Council and educating the public as to what these individuals do and whether people qualify. He stated that this may be why the public is not interested.

Mr. Leary noted that he had also brought up the subject of attendance, stating his understanding that Council members would be expected to attend normal and customary Council meetings, executive sessions, and the meetings of committees that Council members are assigned to, and he asked if he was missing anything else. Mrs. Jody Stein, Administrative Assistant, explained that the City Clerk's Office had been tracking attendance for approximately the last year on a specific checklist, and that this information was available.

Mrs. Taylor asked if just attending the meetings was all of the job description. Mr. Leary advised that hopefully those attending the meetings would be active participants and do the types of things they were supposed to do to prepare for or participate in meetings. Mrs. Taylor noted that a bit of time should be spent before meetings. Mr. Leary commented that this would be part of the survey that would be distributed to members.

Mr. Wagner stated that Council had accepted a deal to be paid \$7,400 to get the job done, and Mr. Leary concurred. Mr. Wagner commented that he had no objection to members being paid per meeting, as Mr. Leary had been paid previously. Responding, Mr. Leary suggested seeing what the data would show. Mrs. Mitchell explained that Mr. Wagner was basically saying the Council members should be like exempt employees who have to work whatever it takes to get the job done. Mr. Wagner noted that this was public service. Mrs. Mitchell noted that members are paid whether or not they are present at meetings.

Mr. Leary advised that he had not heard any objections to getting a fresh survey of the numbers from other municipalities and doing the survey for members of Dover City Council. He asked if members wanted to add the Mayor to the survey. Mr. Wagner and Mrs. Taylor indicated that they did. Mr. Leary noted that attendance figures could be obtained from the City Clerk's Office.

Mr. Leary informed members that the National League of Cities (NLC) is a good resource on a number of topics dealing with local government and suggested that information might be easily garnered from their website. Mrs. Mitchell stated that she could ask Mrs. Yvonne Martine, Secretary, City Manager's Office, to perform this task, and members concurred.

Mr. Wagner reiterated the importance of the Commission's opportunity to educate the public about what was going on. Mr. Leary stated his belief that members would want to present their recommendations to Council in open chambers.

Mrs. Taylor noted that she is a business person and when she has an open position in her company she creates at least a bare minimum job description that would at least include things like the number of meetings members should attend. She advised that she states the compensation that goes along with the position and it is then up to her as a business owner to choose the right person. Mrs. Taylor indicated that this would also be true for the public.

Mr. Leary suggested asking for job descriptions for Councilpersons or Mayor as part of the survey of other jurisdictions and Mrs. Taylor concurred.

Mrs. Mitchell recalled that former Mayor Stephen Speed had written a job description for Mayor when he was serving but was unsure if it went through a Council adoption process or not. Mrs. Taylor asked if this record would still be available and Mrs. Mitchell advised that it would.

Mr. Wagner stated that the tax base of each city being compared should have some bearing on what is paid or not paid, for instance, when trying to compare Dover to Newark or Annapolis.

Mrs. Mitchell stated her understanding that, when looking for this information through the NLC, members would like to use NLC cities rather than those listed on the municipal survey. In response, Mr. Leary stated his recollection that the NLC's information was organized and broken down somehow, noting that there were small city and big city committees. Mrs. Mitchell commented that there may be a population range. Mr. Leary advised that he was not as interested in what the NLC had for salaries as much as job descriptions; however, whatever Mrs. Martine could find would be helpful.

Mr. Wagner stated that the Mayor of Annapolis, Maryland, receives \$98,000 a year and Annapolis has three (3) times the taxpayers that Dover has; therefore, \$98,000 was probably not enough.

Mrs. Stein asked if members wished to survey the municipalities and jurisdictions that were used previously and Mr. Wagner responded yes. Mr. Leary stated, hypothetically, that members may get into a discussion about whether Dover's Mayor should be paid as much as the Mayor of Annapolis. He noted that this data could be used to indicate that apples and oranges were being compared.

Mrs. Taylor advised that in 2011, the populations that matched most closely were Dover and Newark in Delaware, Chester in Pennsylvania, and Annapolis and Salisbury in Maryland; however, the other municipalities' tax bases were quite different from Dover's. She noted that these may not actually be appropriate cities to look at.

Mr. Wagner questioned where the Mayor's \$45,000 salary came from originally. Mr. Leary advised that Mayor Hutchison was the first to receive this salary; however, he did not recall that being the original figure and that he thought it was a lower number.

Mrs. Taylor stated her recollection that the salary may have been in the \$20,000s; however, Mr. Leary stated that he thought this was low and the minutes would have to be researched to see what happened back in approximately 1990. He advised that he could provide a history of what the rationale was for paying the salary in the first place; however, he could not recall why this number was picked.

Mrs. Mitchell commented that the Mayor does not normally stay for the entirety of City Council meetings but listens to them in his office; therefore, it may appear that he is absent. She was unsure if this was true for every meeting. Mrs. Mitchell explained that when the dynamics changed and the Mayor was taken off the dais, he did not feel it proper for him to be there since these meetings were Council deliberations.

Mrs. Taylor noted that there were no other benefits for Council members and asked if benefits could be part of the comparison with other municipalities.

Mrs. Taylor asked, when members were talking about responsibilities, if they were talking about the Mayor's responsibilities as well as Council members. Mr. Leary replied that they were.

Future Meeting Dates

Members agreed to schedule their next meeting for April 26, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

In regard to the Survey of Mayor and Council Member Responsibilities, Mr. Leary asked if these surveys could be returned before April 26, 2017. He noted that this would be the best opportunity for the Mayor or members of Council to have input because the Commission has no interface with them on this subject. Mr. Leary stated that it would be to their benefit to submit the survey, and if they did not do so he would assume that they do not care.

Mrs. Mitchell noted that, because there was an upcoming election, some members may not fill out surveys.

By unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

Thomas J. Leary
Chairman

TJL/JS/

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