

EVERETT SALARY REVIEW COMMISSION MEETING

March 10, 2015, 1:00 PM

8th Floor Planning Hearing Room

Those present:

Commission Members:

Chris Adams

John Dickson

Catherine Havener

Caroline Mason

Angie Sievers

Bobby Thompson

Art Thomson

City Staff:

Sharon DeHaan, Labor Relations/Human Resources Director

Joni Siewert, Labor Relations/Human Resources Department, minutes

Christina Wiersma, City Attorney's Office

Deborah Wright, Executive Administrator

Guests:

Susy Haugen, Finance Manager/Treasurer

Scott Murphy, City Council

Ramsey Ramerman, City Attorney's Office

The meeting commenced 1:00 PM.

Commission Chair Angie Sievers began the meeting by asking all at the table to introduce themselves.

Appointment of new members

Bobby Thompson and Art Thomson are the new Commission-appointed members. Angie Sievers called for a motion to officially appoint them to the Commission. Chris Adams so moved, seconded by Bobby Thompson. The motion carried.

Minutes from March 4, 2015 meeting

Angie Sievers asked the Commission to review the minutes from last week's meeting. John Dickson moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Catherine Havener. The motion carried.

Open Public Meetings Act, Public Records Act Ramsey Ramerman

The package distributed at the beginning of the meeting contained a memorandum from Ramsey Ramerman about the Open Public Meetings Act and the Public Records Act. He began his presentation by saying that everything the Commission does will be a public record.

Ramsey Ramerman continued that any meeting of a governing body needs to be public. He cautioned that any gathering involving a majority of the members discussing the Commission's business is a meeting, even going down in the elevator together and talking. He added that serial meetings, a series of smaller gatherings when the majority is never together, are always illegal under the Open Public Meetings Act.

A series of e-mails or texts can create a discussion, be considered a serial meeting, and violate the law. Ramsey Ramerman advised that Salary Review Commission business should not be discussed outside of the scheduled meetings. E-mail communication is acceptable for the City to deliver information one-way, but "reply all" risks being considered a serial meeting, and he discouraged it. He described e-mail as a good way to receive information, but not a good venue for discussion.

Continuing to the Public Records Act, Ramsey Ramerman said any writing is a public record. Any notes or marks on a handout distributed at a Commission meeting make it a public record. He asked the members to copy Christina Wiersma on any e-mails on their personal accounts dealing with Salary Commission business so the City has a record. As those e-mails will be from the members' own accounts, he advised they label the e-mails well to differentiate them from their own e-mails so they can easily search for messages pertaining to Salary Commission business. As long as Christina Wiersma has a copy of the e-mails they can be deleted from the Commission member's personal account as long as there is no pending request for public disclosure. He encouraged the members to purge such e-mails and not keep them longer than they have to. He added personal notes don't have a retention value, so it is acceptable to destroy them or turn them in to Christina Wiersma.

2014 General Government Financial Results

Susy Haugen

Susy Haugen distributed a package of printed PowerPoint slides. The City's General Government revenue was just over \$118 million in 2014, which was 103.3% higher than budgeted. The 5 year outlook shows growing deficits over 5 years.

One of the items delineated on the revenue slide was property tax. Bobby Thompson asked about property tax delinquency. Susy Haugen explained collection can be cyclical, some people will not pay their taxes until they are almost in foreclosure with the County. She related that last year a lot of back taxes were paid.

The presentation continued to expenditures. Susy Haugen said there will be revenues carried forward to cover future expenses. John Dickson asked her to elaborate. She replied of about \$10 million, more than half will be part of reappropriation requests. For example, large labor contract contingencies have to be set aside because all six of the City's labor agreements are in negotiation. She also said the City needs to reserve for landslide issues, and there are tax refund matters waiting for completion. There is \$118 million in 2014 revenue, expenses are around \$108 million, so there is \$10 million to carry forward. Of that, \$5 million will be reappropriated, and \$5 million will be for Council to make a decision. She added that the City has eliminated 40 employment positions, and 43 are currently vacant.

Caroline Mason asked if actions have been taken to increase revenue. Susy Haugen replied utility tax on electricity, natural gas, and telephone was increased from 4% to 6%. Also utility tax on garbage and cable will increase by 2% annually until it reaches 6% in 2017. Business license fees have increased and are now renewable. It used to be a City of Everett business license was \$10 lifetime. Now it is renewable and \$75. The City also took back animal licensing from the County, and is increasing planning and mitigation fees.

Art Thomson asked if the City tracks CPI. Susy Haugen replied the City uses CPI June to June, Seattle/Tacoma/Bremerton-Urban. It ran 2% this year, and has been running low. A few years ago it was actually negative. The current estimate is 2%, and from what she reads it's running lower than that.

Susy Haugen added that jail costs will more than double, so that will cost another \$500,000. Because of interest expressed, she will provide the Commission with expenditures from last year.

Salary comparison data
Sharon DeHaan

Sharon DeHaan distributed salary comparison information, showing City of Everett positions the Salary Commission is reviewing alongside other cities. She pointed out all the City of Everett elected officials pay 10% of their medical premiums.

Mayor

Regarding the position of Mayor, Sharon DeHaan pointed out the City of Everett has a full-time Mayor, and the full-time Mayors listed on the comparison sheet are elected by the public.

Some entities have a City Manager who runs the City's business and reports to the Council, in which case the Mayor's position is more ceremonial. Some of those Mayors actually serve on the Council. The City Manager is hired for professional expertise, it is not an elected position.

Caroline Mason noted Everett's Mayor receives a car allowance. She asked if the Salary Commission is to address car allowance. Sharon DeHaan replied no, it is set by ordinance.

City Council

Moving to the City Council comparison sheet, Sharon DeHaan stated the City of Everett has part-time Council members, so there are not any comparables listed with full-time City Council members. She also brought to the Commission's attention that Shoreline, Seattle, and Vancouver's information is out of date because they have not replied to Everett's request for information yet, and Seattle's salary is there only for information purposes because the Councilmembers are full-time.

John Dickson asked about requirements of meetings for City Councils. Sharon DeHaan replied most meet once a week. In some places like Lynnwood members' pay gets docked if they don't attend a meeting. Caroline Mason gave the example that on the School Board members are paid \$50 a day for days they work regardless of how many hours are worked, but there is a predetermined limit.

Municipal Court Judges

Regarding Municipal Court Judges, Sharon DeHaan related they are historically tied to State District Court Judge salaries. Each Salary Commission has chosen to continue with that arrangement, but it is not required.

Miscellaneous salaries

Moving to a sheet showing miscellaneous salary data, Sharon DeHaan explained the Snohomish County PUD, County executive positions, and State executive positions are provided for information purposes only. She pointed out the PUD has about the same employee count as the City of Everett, but the PUD executive positions pay much more. She added the State Citizens Salary Review Commission is also meeting right now.

City labor groups COLA history

In response to a request from last week's meeting, Sharon DeHaan reviewed a sheet of COLA history for all the City's labor groups.

Catherine Havener asked if the Commission could be provided with what COLA is being offered to the bargaining groups. Sharon DeHaan replied no because negotiations are ongoing, and the figures may be different between the groups depending upon benefits.

Community income

In response to another request from last week, Sharon DeHaan distributed a sheet of income for community households in the past 12 months obtained from the Planning Department. Bobby Thompson asked for difference of family households. Chris Adams requested the last 5 years of data. Sharon DeHaan explained the staff member who worked on this project found County numbers on-line. Bobby Thompson said the HUD and Census websites should be helpful. Chris Adams asked for employment projections within the City limits, how many people are employed within the City of Everett and at what positions they are employed. The Commission wants to know what is happening in the inside of a household in the City. Sharon DeHaan said she would go back to the Planning Department for assistance with the data requests.

City Council duties

Chris Adams said he was unsure how to measure City Council duties. Scott Murphy offered that he has been on the City Council 3 years. Each Councilmember is a liaison to 3 to 5 committees or departments. He is on the Budget Committee, and as such he interacts with all departments. Christina Wiersma offered to provide the Committee with the liaison list. Scott Murphy added that the liaison assignments are made by the Council President on an annual basis. Chris Adams requested the last 3 to 5 years of liaison assignments.

John Dickson said there was uncertainty because they do not know the duties of Councilmembers in other jurisdictions. Catherine Havener asked if there is any legal requirement for Councilmembers to attend meetings, Sharon DeHaan replied no. Scott Murphy said Council meetings range in length, and estimated that the average is 2 hours.

Next meeting

On the agenda will be questions about today's presentations, and discussion of elected officials' duties.

The meeting adjourned 2:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joni Siewert