



Salary Commission
Meeting Agenda
Tuesday May 16,2023 - 5:00 pm

Commissioners:

Terrance Everett

Major Freeman

Nicole Gilligan

Nick Hanson

Sarah Oldow

Agenda:

1. Salary Commission Roles and Responsibilities Overview
2. Elect Salary Commission Chairperson
3. Review Compensation of Council and Mayor Comparison Cities
4. Discussion
5. Set Mayor and City Council Salary for 2023



**CITY OF STANWOOD
SALARY COMMISSION
AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

DATE: May 16, 2023
SUBJECT: 2023 Mayor/Council Salary
FROM: David Hammond, Finance Director
ATTACHMENTS: A – SMC 2.10 Salary Commission
B – Description of Council-Manager & City Administrator form of government

Background:

In January 2012, the City Council approved Ordinance 1306 creating a Salary Commission for the City. This authorized an independent Salary Commission with authority to set the salary of the members of the Council and Mayor. The ordinance states that the Salary Commission shall meet between May 1 and July 31 and shall determine salary adjustments which shall become effective on January 1 of each calendar year.

The Stanwood City Council holds twenty-two regular meetings per year, approximately four (4) special workshop meetings (nine in 2022, a budget year), and a joint planning commission/council meeting, as needed. In addition, each Councilmember attends, on average, two subcommittee meetings each month. Regular council meetings generally last 45 to 90 minutes and committee meetings last approximately 45-90 minutes.

The mayor attends council meetings but is not required to attend committee meetings. He/she has historically devoted thirty-six hours per month on meetings and significantly more time on other mayoral duties; however, it varies between mayors and depends on the staffing stability at the city and the workplan in place at a given time. The mayor serves as the chief executive officer for the city, executing policies established by council. Mayor Roberts typically devotes twenty-five hours a week or more to his role.

As a separately elected official, the mayor does not have a job description defined by the city, but rather the mayor is responsible for a broad array of important functions; although this responsibility is shared with the City Administrator who oversees the day-to-day administrative aspects of these functions, including:

- Visioning, Goal setting and Leadership
- Public Relations
- Ceremonial Role
- Intergovernmental Relations
- Working with City Residents
- Dealing with the Media
- City Attorney Communications
- Emergency Management

- Labor Relations/Personnel Management
- City Administrator
- Community Development/Planning
- Public Works/Parks/Water/Sewer/Stormwater
- City Clerk
- Finance/Budget/Risk Management/Public Records

Salary changes set by a salary commission are filed with the city clerk; increases can go into effect during the current terms of office of the elected officials, while decreases may not go into effect until the subsequent terms of office. No action of the city council is required for a change in salaries. In accordance with Ordinance 1306 (SMC 2.10.040), “Any increase or decrease in salary established by the commission shall become effective and incorporated into the city budget for the year following commission review without further action of the city council or the commission.” Salary commission actions to increase or decrease salaries are subject to referendum in cities, and the filing of an adequate petition places the issue before the voters.

In addition to a Salary, the City Municipal Code authorizes the mayor to receive fifty percent of the medical, dental, and vision benefits provided to non-represented employees. This benefit has been problematic in practice as most recent mayors were already insured, as is the case with the current mayor. Stanwood employees are also eligible for a medical “opt-out incentive” that shares savings to the city with an employee who opts out of coverage. For the current mayor, this incentive was \$9,833 in 2022.

FISCAL IMPACT:

In 2022, the Commission increased the mayor’s salary from \$1,600 per month to \$2,100 per month. Councilmember salaries were increased from \$475 per month to \$535 per month.

Meeting Date	Mayor	Council	Decision	Effective
July 15, 2012	\$1,100	\$300	No change	2013
July 18, 2013	\$1,100	\$300	Mayor \$1,200 Council \$325	2014
July 28, 2014	\$1,200	\$325	No change	2015
June 22, 2015	\$1,200	\$325	No Change	2016
June 17, 2016	\$1,200	\$325	Mayor \$1,300 Council \$350	2017
June 8, 2017	\$1,300	\$350	No Change	2018
June 4, 2018	\$1,300	\$350	Mayor \$1,400 Council \$375	2019
June 11, 2019	\$1,400	\$375	Mayor \$1,500 Council \$425	2020
June 23, 2021	\$1,500	\$425	Mayor \$1,600 Council \$475	2022
June 15, 2022	\$1,600	\$475	Mayor \$2,100 Council \$535	2023
May 16, 2023	\$2,100	\$535		2024

The combined 2023 and 2024 operating budgets (General Fund, Street Operating and Utility Operating Funds) is approximately \$12 million per year. Primarily a service provider, the city employs thirty-six personnel, plus five seasonal workers in Summer. All operating funds anticipate ending fund balances in compliance with city financial policy reserve targets adopted by the City Council. The two year capital improvement plan makes project investments of \$35.7 million over the two-year period. The city is projected to end the 2023 - 2024 biennium with an ending fund balance of \$18.7 million for all funds.

Table One, below, reflects 2023 Mayor and Councilmember compensation for cities varying from smaller to much larger than Stanwood, but all operating under the same form of government and in similar communities with growing populations.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Salary Commission’s goal is to decide whether to adopt salary adjustments for the Mayor and City Council for 2024.

Table One

Comparison of Mayor & Councilmember Monthly Compensation , Mayor Council Form of Government				
City	Population	Council Salary	Mayor Salary	Benefits
Bonney Lake	22,990	\$ 850	\$ 2,100	
Monroe	19,700	\$ 900	\$ 4,000	Mayor eligible for benefits
Ferndale	15,970	\$ 715	\$ 2,812	
Snoqualmie	14,490	\$ 900	\$ 4,583	Mayor eligible to participate in health insurance plans, not spouse, mayor pro-tem receives additional \$100/month
Lake Forest Park	13,620	\$ 600	\$ 3,000	Health & pension benefits equivalent to half-time exempt employee
Gig Harbor	12,540	\$ 775	\$ 2,124	Mayor also receives Medical
Sedro-Wooley	12,590	\$ 500	\$ 2,803	Councilmembers also receive \$50/special meeting, Mayor received one-time 2023 \$3,500 inflation bonus
Sumner	10,800	\$ 1,100	\$ 2,500	
Snohomish	10,200	\$ 513	\$ 2,500	Mayor eligible to participate in health insurance plans, including retirement
DuPont	10,180	\$ 600	\$ 2,100	
Yelm	10,680	\$ 800	\$ 2,500	Yes - Medical
Orting	9,055	\$ 300	\$ 2,500	
Stanwood	8,405	\$ 535	\$ 2,100	Same Medical as non-represented for self and spouse
Duval	8,320	\$ 500	\$ 2,000	+\$100/day for meetings, seminars or conferences
North Bend	7,915	\$ 550	\$ 4,000	council & mayor also receive up to \$100/meeting
Brier	6,590	\$ 200	\$ 1,000	council & mayor also receive \$50/meeting, full medical for self/spouse
Average	12,128	646	2,664	

Note: These cities all employ the Hybrid City Administrator System, except for the City of Brier.

Chapter 2.10 SALARY COMMISSION

Sections:

[2.10.010 Created – Membership, appointment, compensation, term.](#)

[2.10.020 Vacancies.](#)

[2.10.030 Removal.](#)

[2.10.040 Duties.](#)

[2.10.050 Referendum.](#)

2.10.010 Created – Membership, appointment, compensation, term.

(1) There is created a salary commission for the city. The commission shall consist of five members, to be appointed by the mayor with the approval of the city council.

(2) A member of the commission shall serve for a three-year term without compensation, and shall be a resident of the city. The initial members shall be appointed for staggered terms of one, two or three years.

(3) No member of the commission shall be appointed to more than two terms.

(4) A member of the commission shall not be an officer, official, or employee of the city or an immediate family member of an officer, official, or employee of the city. For purposes of this section, “immediate family member” means the parents, spouse, siblings, children, or dependent relatives of an officer, official, or employee of the city, whether or not living in the household of the officer, official, or employee. (Ord. 1306 § 1, 2012).

2.10.020 Vacancies.

In the event of a vacancy in office of commissioner, the mayor shall appoint, subject to approval of the city council, a person to serve the unexpired portion of the term of the expired position. (Ord. 1306 § 1, 2012).

2.10.030 Removal.

A member of the commission shall only be removed from office for cause of incapacity, incompetence, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office, a crime involving moral turpitude, or for a disqualifying change of residence. (Ord. 1306 § 1, 2012).

2.10.040 Duties.

(1) The commission shall have the duty, annually, commencing in 2012, to review the salaries paid by the city to each elected city official. If after such review the commission determines that the salary paid to any elected city official should be increased or decreased, the commission shall file a written salary schedule with the city clerk

indicating the increase or decrease in salary. The initial salary commission shall meet between February 1, 2012, and March 31, 2012, and shall determine salary increases or decreases for the balance of calendar year 2012. Thereafter, the salary commission shall meet between May 1st and July 31st and shall determine salary adjustments which shall become effective on January 1st of each calendar year, beginning on January 1, 2013.

(2) Any increase or decrease in salary established by the commission shall become effective and incorporated into the city budget for the year following commission review without further action of the city council or the commission.

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

(4) Salary decreases established by the commission shall become effective as to incumbent city elected officials at the commencement of their next subsequent terms of office. (Ord. 1306 § 1, 2012).

2.10.050 Referendum.

Any salary increase or decrease established by the commission pursuant to this chapter shall be subject to referendum petition by the voters of the city, in the same manner as a city ordinance, upon filing of a referendum petition with the city clerk within 30 days after filing of a salary schedule by the commission. In the event of the filing of a valid referendum petition, the salary increase or decrease shall not go into effect until approved by a vote of the people. Referendum measures under this section shall be submitted to the voters of the city at the next following general or municipal election occurring 30 days or more after the petition is filed, and shall otherwise be governed by the provisions of the State Constitution and the laws generally applicable to referendum measures. By adoption of this provision it shall not be the intent to adopt the powers of referendum generally. (Ord. 1306 § 1, 2012).

Description of Council-Manager and City Administrator Forms of Government¹:

Washington cities and towns are organized under two principal forms of government, sometimes referred to as plans of government: mayor-council and council-manager. (This is in addition to and separate from the [city's classification](#), such as a first class or code city.) In addition, state law permits larger cities to voluntarily adopt charters unique to their communities under certain circumstances as described below.

In general, choosing the form of government is not a matter of *how much* legislative and/or administrative authority the city or town will have, but rather the distribution of authority between the legislative and executive officials.

For a brief overview of the common arguments for and against each form of government, see MRSC's handout on [Common Issues and Pro/Con Arguments in Elections to Change Form of Government](#). More details regarding each form, as well as examples of cities that have changed form of government, are provided below.

Mayor-Council Form

Mayor-council is the oldest and most common form of government in Washington, including small towns and large cities alike. However, while most cities in Washington use the mayor-council system, the vast majority of cities that have incorporated or successfully changed form of government since 1970 have adopted the council-manager system.

The basic structure and organization of mayor-council cities is set out in [chapter 35A.12 RCW](#) for code cities; also see [chapter 35.22 RCW](#) for first class cities, [chapter 35.23 RCW](#) for second class cities, and [chapter 35.27 RCW](#) for towns.

The mayor-council form consists of a mayor elected at-large, who serves as the city's chief administrative officer, and a separately elected council (elected either at-large or from districts) which serves as the municipality's legislative body. This separation of powers is based on the traditional federal and state models in the United States.

The council has the authority to formulate and adopt city policies and the mayor is responsible for carrying them out. The mayor attends and presides over council meetings but does not vote, except in the case of a tie.

The mayor also has veto authority over legislation (except for towns), but the veto can be overridden by the council as specified in the municipality's statutes or charter. (For more information, see our page on [Council Voting](#).)

¹ Excerpt from MRSC: [MRSC - City and Town Forms of Government](#)

In all but the largest cities, elected mayors and councilmembers serve on a part-time basis, leaving most of the day-to-day operations to administrative personnel.

Nationally, mayor-council governments are often classified as either "strong mayor" or "weak mayor" types depending on the degree of executive authority that is concentrated in the mayor's office. However, by providing veto authority (except for towns), the Washington State legislature essentially provided for a strong mayor system.

Hybrid City Administrator System

Many mayor-council cities have hired professional city administrators, chief administrative officers, or similarly titled positions to serve under the mayor. The city administrator is usually a full-time position responsible for many administrative and policy-related duties such as budget preparation, personnel administration, and department supervision.

In essence, this is a hybrid model between the mayor-council and council-manager systems, retaining a separately elected mayor who is responsible for administration, but providing for professional management of the city's day-to-day operations. In theory, this also frees the mayor from the need to attend to administrative details and allows the mayor to focus greater attention on policy development, political leadership, and potentially their own private employment apart from city government.