



BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION

Report

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Present: Co-Chair Claudia Dumond-Henderson, Co-Chair James Simons, Karen Carroll Bennett, Carolyn Gabbay, Sue Flicop, Greg Reibman, Timothy Moran, Donald Siegel, Andrea Steenstrup, Sharon Chan, John Stewart, Doug Cornelius and Committee Clerk, Danielle Delaney

Absent: Kathy Sun

Also Present: City Council President Marc Laredo

Council President Marc Laredo said he deliberately did not come to meetings as he didn't want to impose his views in any way on this Commission. The whole purpose of this exercise was to have a group of representatives from the community with different backgrounds and experiences coming together to look at compensation structure and make some suggestions. He has been reading their reports and sees all the hard work put in. This had not been done for a long time and feels it was overdue regarding the compensation structure. There will be a docket item filed for the June 3rd City Council meeting. He anticipates that it will then go to Programs and Services Committee in the middle of June for initial discussion. He hoped all commission members would attend. They will then have an opportunity to explain their work and answer questions. He hopes that any votes on the council are done before the election in November. In his opinion this is the type of issue that shouldn't be decided by council members leaving and feels this is agreed upon by most, but not all his colleagues. It is also possible that after some deliberation the decision is made to put this over to the next term. There will be a new council coming in January with at least three new councilors as some have announced they are not running again. It is possible that this will be taken up again in the spring. There may be a change to the Mayor's salary but not to the council or to the school committee. Even if nothing is done at the council level, merely having these discussions; examining compensation is critical. Compensation for our elected officials should be done on a regular basis. The council may divide this up or take it up all at once. Councilor Laredo thanked the committee a great deal for all their efforts and said it was greatly appreciated.

Commission members discussed in length and in detail the draft Blue Ribbon Commission Report. Appropriate verbiage, new verbiage, suggestions, edits and sections of the report were discussed thoroughly.

Draft Report as written shall become the Final Report with tonight's edits:

Commission members voted on the draft report as written to become final with edits made. The votes were 9-3. Siegel, Steenstrup, Simons, Carroll Bennett, Chan, Dumond-Henderson, Cornelius, Stewart and Moran in favor; Gabbay, Reibman and Flicop opposed. Commission members Gabbay, Reibman and Flicop stated that they would submit their written dissent to be included in the final report. The dissent will solely be the opinion of the writer, the dissent will not be reviewed, agreed to or approved by this Commission.

A final Blue Ribbon Commission report will be forwarded to City Council President Marc Laredo and City Clerk David Olson prior to May 27, 2019 as requested.

The Final Report and Commission's Recommendations:

Mayor:

The Commission recommends that the Mayor shall receive an increase in pay to \$140,000 and continue to be eligible for all current benefits.

City Council:

The Commission also recommends that the City Council receive an increase in their stipend to \$14,000, continued health benefits and, for those who do not participate in the city's health plan, a \$5,000 increment to salary (referred to as the "equity payment"). The \$5,000 so-called equity pay would be provided to those Councilors who either discontinue electing health benefits for a plan year, as well as those Councilors who have not elected health benefits without regard to whether they previously elected health benefits.

School Committee:

The Commission also recommends that School Committee members receive an increase in stipend to \$7,500, continued benefits eligibility with a \$2,500 increment to salary for those Committee members who either discontinue electing health benefits for a plan year, as well as those Committee members who have not elected health benefits without regard to whether they previously elected health benefits.

Future Adjustments:

Tonight, the Commission recommended making future adjustments to elected officials' compensation. Rather than making a recommendation on a formulaic approach to future adjustments to elected officials' compensation, the Commission recommends that the City Council vote to convene a Blue Ribbon Commission in five years (i.e., in 2024) and every four years thereafter to ensure a regular review of total compensation to avoid the review occurring during an election year. This recommendation is not intended to suggest that adjustments to compensation should or should not be made at those intervals but rather to establish a system by which compensation will be evaluated at regular intervals. It will be up to future Blue Ribbon Commissions to determine whether any adjustment to the compensation of some or all officials is then warranted the amount thereof.

Tonight, was the last meeting of the 2019 Blue Ribbon Commission. The Commission adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Claudia Dumond-Henderson, Co-Chair
James Simons, Co-Chair**