

THE CITIZENS' COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SERVICE AND COMPENSATION
FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

July 2, 2021

RECOMMENDATION

The Citizens' Commission on Public Service and Compensation recommends that the City of Tucson's Charter be amended by adjusting the present salaries for the Mayor and Council Members as follows:

- Increase the Council Member's salary from the current \$24,000 per year to \$36,000 per year
- Increase the Mayor's salary from the current \$42,000 per year to \$54,000 per year
- Increase wages in future years based on the national consumer price index (inflation), mirroring Arizona's 2016 voter-approved minimum wage statute.
- Implement proposed wage increases in 2023 following the next Tucson City Council elections

CONSIDERATIONS AND RATIONALE

The Citizens' Commission on Public Service and Compensation is recommending these salary increases be approved based on the following premises:

- Tucson Mayor & Council serve in a full-time capacity. They have not received a salary increase in more than 20 years, since 1999
- The cost to Tucson citizens would be approximately \$0.15 per citizen annually
- Tucson City Council members currently make less than the Arizona minimum wage
- Since the most recent salary increase to Mayor & Council, the City of Tucson has increased the budget by 48.54% to \$1,862,342,690 reflecting greater fiduciary responsibilities to the community
- Tucson lags far behind the 7 largest cities in Arizona when it comes to compensating elected leaders, despite being the second largest city in the state
- The commission holds that a living wage will attract qualified applicants to public service and allow for more diverse candidates to serve. Current salary structures prevent working class Tucsonans from seeking these positions.
- Over the last twenty years and since the city's most recent increase, Tucson's population has increased by 54,783
- Indexing future wage increases for Mayor & Council will mirror Arizona's existing minimum wage statute by tying annual increases to inflation. Arizona voters have approved and trust this metric. The commission holds this can automate modest increases in compensation, providing a living wage to city leaders

Final Report and Recommendation (continued)

- Implementing wage increases in 2023 will apply these raises to the next Tucson City Council. The commission anticipates that this delay will further de-politicize the question of salary increases and clear a path for broader support from community

BACKGROUND

In the 1993 election, the City of Tucson’s Charter was amended to require establishing a seven-member volunteer Citizens’ Commission on Public Service and Compensation, which is to meet every two years so that it can “. . .conduct a review of the salaries of elected city officials. Such review shall be made for the purpose of determining and recommending the appropriate salaries. . .” The Commission members are drawn from the community at large after public advertisements, are appointed by the City Manager, and must be representative of the diversity in Tucson.

This volunteer commission took office on May 25, 2021. The Commission, comprised of eligible citizens from different cultural backgrounds and professional areas, met on a regular basis for several weeks. Members participated by attending the meetings and by researching information requested of and provided by City staff members.

RESOURCES

- A. City of Tucson Mayor and Council History of Propositions related to compensating the Mayor and Council dating back to June 1948.
- B. Legislative changes to Arizona Revised Statutes § 11-419 related to compensating the Pima County Board of Supervisors.
- C. The Charter for the City of Tucson, Arizona, and specifically the chapters relating to the powers of the Mayor and Council and relating to compensating elected city officers and regarding the commission on recommending salaries for elected officers.
- D. Minutes and notes from previous Citizens’ Commissions on Public Service and Compensation.
- E. Salary survey information on similarly sized cities in Arizona, and specifically requested information on comparably sized cities in other states.
- F. Tucson community profile and consumer price index information.
- G. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development information on median household income.
- H. Fair Wages Healthy Families ballot language

Final Report and Recommendation (continued)

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission meetings were held virtually. The Commission voted to approve this recommendation by a vote of 7-0 and authorized the City Clerk to forward to the Mayor and Council for placement on the November 2, 2021 General Election Ballot. The members of the Commission who authored this recommendation are:

Laura Dent, Chairperson
Alfredo Araiza
Patrick Burns
Gregory Facey
Kelly Griffith
Claire Knipe
Joy Noriega