

**City of Northampton, 210 Main Street,
Northampton, MA 01060**

ELECTED OFFICIALS COMPENSATION ADVISORY BOARD

**Meeting Agenda for January 9, 2023
Meeting Time: 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM**

Meeting held via Zoom: Join Zoom Meeting LINK:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84804350600>

Meeting ID: 848 0435 0600

**One tap mobile +16469313860,,84804350600# US OR +19294362866,,84804350600#
US (New York)**

**Join via phone: +1 646 931 3860 US OR +1 929 436 2866 US (New York)
Meeting ID: 848 0435 0600**

Advisory Board's Scope: To review the equity and adequacy in compensation and benefits of elected Northampton officials subject to compensation pursuant to ordinance

1. Reference Documents From 2014 Advisory Board

- Meeting Minutes:
 - 4/24/2014
 - 5/21/2014
 - 6-24-2014
 - 7/24/2014
 - 8/28/2014
 - 9/4/2014
 - 10/2/2014
 - 10/15/2014

- Final Report
- Solicitor Opinion

Documents:

[2014 EOCAB MINUTES 4-24-2014.PDF](#)
[2014 EOCAB MINUTES 5-21-2014.PDF](#)
[2014 EOCAB MINUTES 6-24-2014.PDF](#)
[2014 EOCAB MINUTES 7-24-2014.PDF](#)
[2014 EOCAB MINUTES 8-28-2014.PDF](#)
[2014 EOCAB MINUTES 9-4-2014.PDF](#)
[2014 EOCAB MINUTES - 10-2-2014.PDF](#)
[2014 EOCAB - MINUTES 10-15-2014.PDF](#)
[2014 EOCAB - FINAL REPORT 10-27-2014.PDF](#)
[2014 EOCAB SOLICITOR OPINION 12-17-2014.PDF](#)

MEMBERS:

John Bidwell, Chair	Tara Brewster	Felicia Corbeil
Sam Hopper, Clerk	Javier Luengo-Garrido	Noreen Mickiewicz Hayes
	Peter Whalen, Vice Chair	

EOCAB Minutes

Next Meeting: TBA

Date: Thursday, April 24, 2014

Attendance: Vicki Baum-Hommes, Glenda Stoddard, John (Trey) Fortier, Dennis Helmus, Jennifer Higgins, Douglas Loux, Linda Matson

Goal	Due Date	Lead	Status
Officer Assignment	5/31/2014	Jennifer Higgins	<p>Todd Thompson was nominated to serve as Chair. Jennifer sent an email message to him inquiring about his level of interest in serving as chair.</p> <p>Secretary position will be rotated. Jennifer will serve as the initial secretary.</p> <p>Meeting room reservations and agenda posting on website. Jennifer will conduct both of these activities for the time being.</p>
Meeting Dates	5/31/2014	Vicki Baum-Hommes	<p>It was suggested that the EOCAB meet monthly, at a designated day/time.</p> <p>Vicki will send Doodle polls to EOCAB to identify both the next meeting date in May 2014 and all subsequent meetings.</p>
Historical Data	5/31/2014	Glenda Stoddard	<p>EOCAB decided that it would be best to have access to all previously completed analyses and reports used to inform the Charter Drafting Committee. Glenda offered to research what if anything is available for EOCAB to review and will distribute materials.</p>
New Data	5/31/2014	Linda Matson Trey Fortier Dennis Helmus	<p>EOCAB decided that it would like to begin reviewing currently available statistics about personnel salaries (i.e., mayoral and town manager) to be used as benchmarking data. Linda will review DOR website to learn about salaries across the state, New England region and perhaps nationally. Dennis will send email to MMPA list-serv to inquire about like towns' mayoral salaries. Trey will investigate GIC health plan rates for the City of Northampton.</p>

JUL 17 2014

230pm

Minutes of Northampton, MA, Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board
[EOCAB], May 21, 2014

Meeting was called to order at 6:41 p.m.

Present: V. Baum-Hommes, T. Fortier, J. Higgins, D. Loux, L. Matson, T. Thompson

Absent: D. Helmus

Public comment period: No members of the public present.

T. Thompson accepted nomination and election for Chair from previous meeting.

Review of minutes of previous meeting.

1. We have received no information from Northampton HR Glenda Stoddard.

2. Executive summary of Charter Commission proceedings provided by T.

Thompson previously. There is no official report.

Questions about summary of the charter commission.

Charter committee did consider doubling salaries and removing benefits.

Average hours of council person's worktime arrived at by interview.

School committee members worktime not even throughout the year.

Most at budget prep time.

3. Discussion of the EOCAB holding a meeting for public comment

How do we provide access for city officials who have strong feelings?

Need for transparency discussed.

Motion by L. Matson to approve previous meeting minutes as written, seconded by T. Fortier. Unanimously approved.

General discussion of EOCAB objective

EOCAB is to review and make recommendations on salary and benefits

Discussion of how to post meetings dates/times for public

How do meeting sites/dates get into the Daily Hamp. Gazette? Does the paper just check the website? We have not received information on how to post on the website that we requested.

Review of L. Matson's suggestions for cities to use in benchmarking. See attached spreadsheet.

Discussion of criteria for benchmarking. EOCAB members decided to add data for:

Population

Cost of living factor(s)

Number of council persons

EOCAB members decided to disregard out of state cities.

JUL 17 2014
2:30pm

Members decided to add the following cities to the matrix of benchmarking data:

Westfield
Holyoke
Pittsfield
Greenfield
Northampton

Tasks for the next month:

L. Matson will set up the spreadsheet in Google Docs with the changes discussed, add data collected to date and distribute access info.

V. Baum-Hommes will investigate a cost of living factors website she has used in the past to look at factors for benchmark cities.

T. Thompson will look into requirements for posting notices of meetings, minutes, and whether using Google Docs for working documents is acceptable.

Once the spreadsheet is available J. Higgins will call city clerks. All members will fill in data as they are able with the goal of populating the spreadsheet fully by next meeting.

There was a short discussion of adding communities to the matrix which are subjectively like Northampton regarding college atmosphere, values, etc. e.g. Burlington, Vt.

It was agreed that in general meetings will be planned for the third Thursday of each month, beginning in July. The next (June) meeting is scheduled for June 26th at 6:30 p.m. V. Baum-Hommes will be minute-taker.

We will seek to find a more public venue for meetings.

Another discussion of how we would conduct a public forum and factors to consider.

Public forum as preliminary to our report or give them data in advance before meeting?

Consideration of bringing in public officials

This topic will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Matson

AUG 22 2014

Northampton Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
June 24, 2014

In Attendance: Todd Thompson, Dennis Helmus, Trey Fortier, Douglas Loux, Linda Matson, Vicki Baum-Hommes

Absent – Jennifer Higgins

Minutes from the May 21, 2014 meeting approved

Todd shared that the Mayor had expected us to be done with our work already. This had not been previously shared so we reviewed our timeline to assure we would finish up our recommendations by early November. This includes offering a public forum to elicit feedback before the group deliberates on recommendations.

Dennis shared the data he had collected on 24 peer cities in the Commonwealth. We combined that data with the previous benchmark data that was collected on a smaller sample and reviewed it to determine what information made the most sense to gather and assess moving forward.

We agreed to include the following data on our spreadsheet in preparation for our next meeting:

- Health Insurance offered/% paid
- Average city population
- Per capita income
- # of households
- Median household income
- City budget
- Total compensation per position
- Rank of total compensation cost

Additionally since Jennifer was not able to be present at the meeting and had suggested we consider some qualitative factors for review. The committee debated the value of those factors but in the end agreed to collect it and look at it all with all the other information we gather and at that time decide whether to include any of it in our final deliberations.

After we assess all of the data, the committee will be in a better place to determine which should be the final group of towns we utilize for comparison purposes and what factors we want to include in our deliberations.

Other areas we discussed were important considerations in this process included:

- Median income is more important than population
- It's important to count the value of health insurance for non-employees for equity purposes i.e. city council, school committee

- The committee needs to be able to explain/justify why we chose the towns and comparison factors when making the final recommendations

It as suggested that at the end of our work we should also make a recommendation as to whether moving forward this committee makes periodic reviews or if those reviews are tied to something concrete.

All meetings will be held in the Lilly Library meeting room. Follow-up meeting schedule:

July 24, 2014 6:30 PM
August 28, 2014 6:30 PM
October 2, 2014 6:00 PM

The Public Forum date to be determined at our July meeting and will be held in the early fall.

We agreed that our October 2 meeting would start and end earlier to allow us to finalize our recommendations and to that end we will bring in dinner.

Minutes submitted by Vicki Baum-Hommes

Northampton Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date: July 24th, 2014

Members Present: Todd Thompson (Chair), Dennis Helmus, Trey Fortier, Douglas Loux, Linda Matson, Vicki Baum-Hommes, and Jennifer Higgins.

Public Comment – None.

Review Prior Minutes – The minutes of the June 24th, 2014 Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board were accepted as presented.

Confirm Dates and Format for Soliciting Stakeholder and Public Input.

- Chair to invite elected officials to the board's next meeting on August 28th, 2014.
- Public hearing is to be held on September 4th, 2014.

Presentation and Discussion of Benchmarking Data

- Member to add column to benchmarking worksheet that will specify (yes or no) whether elected position is eligible for health benefits.
- Members recommend excluding PPO percentage data from benchmarking criteria.
- Member suggested including different, more qualitative data to consider supplementing the Board's final recommendations, such as a town's walk score, or citizen's creditworthiness.
 - One member will gather this data and present it to the other members who will then collectively decide what may or may not be relevant to the final recommendations of the board.
- Board members decided to include all 24 cities with populations less than 50K in their preliminary benchmarking worksheet. Members will then decide, based on this data, which cities may or may not be relevant to the board's final recommendations.
- Members will determine questions they would like to ask elected officials. These questions will be sent to the board chair, who will then forward them to the elected officials for review prior to the joint meeting between the board and elected officials.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 28th at 6:30PM.

AUG 28 2014
11 05AM

Northampton Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

August 28, 2014

In Attendance: Todd Thompson, Jennifer Higgins, Trey Fortier, Douglas Loux, Linda Matson, Vicki Baum-Hommes

Absent: Dennis Helmus

Guests: City Clerk Wendy Mazza, City Councilor Paul Spector, Smith Vocational Trustees Michael Cahillane and John Cotton

Wendy Mazza

Wendy commented that the city clerk has a dual role; not only is she an elected official, but she is also a department head. As such, she supervises other employees and has administrative oversight over her department, the office of the city clerk.

Wendy believes that the clerk salary is not adequate. She suggested that to arrive at fair compensation, we should look at comparable communities, and particularly cities and not towns. The duties and responsibilities of a city clerk are much greater and more complex than those of a town clerk.

Paul Spector

Paul said that the health insurance benefit he receives as a city councilor is more valuable to him than the amount of his salary.

He has already announced that he is not running for reelection, so could be frank with his opinions. He felt that his average workload as a councilor is about 10-12 hours per week. The council president and at-large councilors spend significantly more time than that. The workload of school committee members is not comparable; rather than the current 2:1 salary ratio between councilors and school committee, he believes that 3:1 would be more in line with their relative responsibilities. Also, the council president and at-large members should be more highly compensated than ward councilors.

When asked, Paul expressed the opinion that the mayor's salary is too low.

Michael Cahillane & John Cotton

The trustees explained the structure of Smith Vocational and their role as trustees. Smith Voke is a unique institution in Massachusetts, operating under the terms of the will of

Oliver Smith as well as under the jurisdiction of the city, with an independent board of trustees, elected by the voters of Northampton.

Committee Business

All guests left, and the committee went on to its business. The issue of qualitative data was brought up, and discussion was deferred until the next meeting.

The next meeting will open with public comment, and then we plan to move on to benchmarking. Up for discussion will be process; what do we do with the data we have gathered? Are job descriptions of elected officials available?

The minutes of the July 24 meeting were approved unanimously.

Our next meeting will be Thursday, September 4, at 6:30 PM in the Lilly Library Community Room.

Minutes submitted by Douglas Loux

Northampton Elected officials Compensation Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
September 4, 2014

Attending: Thompson, Higgins, Loux (late arrival), Matson, Baum-Hommes, Helmus

Absent: Fortier

Elected Official Guests: Mayor Narkewicz, School Committee members Downey Meyer, Blue Duval, Chair Thompson will send written submission to Committee from member Lisa Minnick.

Mayor

Northampton has strong Mayor form of government so he is CEO of corporate entity responding to everything and anything. Responsible for Annual budget, Capital Planning, Appointments, Organizing city government, collective bargaining for city unions and sits as Chair of School Committee for city unions, long range planning, supervisory role over department heads; is Trustee of Smith Vocational, Look Park, Child's Park, Academy of Music; essentially on-call 24/7 if disaster or hot button issues arise from Fire/Police/DPW. Although hard to quantify, estimates 60-80 hours per week between office, ceremonial duties, committee work, school events. Does not have recommended salary for position; larger cities such as Worcester also have city managers; comparables are usual metrics such as population, size of budget, etc. Town Managers as 'professionals' are usually paid more than Mayors as have by education and training (e.g. MPA) are professional public employees vs. elected officials.

Meyer and Duval (Minnick)

By law in MA school committee has 3 main responsibilities – hire and evaluate superintendent; create policy; and approve annual budget. Members are appointed to one of 3 standing sub-committees but there are other ad hoc committees from time to time as well as 6 other appointed positions to serve on; member of MA Association of School Committees which offer training sessions. Meets monthly for most of year but for 3 or 4 months during budget season generally are 2 meetings. During school year are School Councils in the District. Often contacted by members of public or parents – so amount of time can vary

depending on level of involvement. Minimum number of hours estimated at 10-20 hours per month and going up from there depending on level of involvement and committee work or Association meetings or trainings.

Committee Business

- Minutes of 8/28/14 approved unanimously.
- Discussion of what, if any, other qualitative data should also be considered or included other than what currently working from (e.g. number of Council committees in each city, number of meetings, hours spent per week, number of councilors, specific job duties; research Higgins had previously brought forward such as youth crime statistics, etc.). Consensus was that some of the information would be more time consuming or difficult to obtain; or the value added was not germane or essential to the task at hand and given our timeline.
- Next meeting 10/2/14 at 6:00 p.m. at Lilly Library.
- Adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Helmus

OCT - 7 2014

EOCAB Meeting Minutes Table

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 15, 2014

Date: Thursday, October 2, 2014

Attendance: Vicki Baum-Hommes, John (Trey) Fortier, Dennis Helmus, Jennifer Higgins, Douglas Loux, Linda Matson, Todd Thompson

Goal	Motion	Outcome	Status
Discussion of mayoral salary	Motion: Dennis Helmus Second: Vicki Baum-Hommes	Unanimously approved	<p>Todd suggested that we stick to a number with respect to making recommendations for salary.</p> <p>Doug suggested the board recommend to the Council to revisit the issue every third year of mayoral cycle, so in a sense every four years.</p> <p>Vicki urged the board to consider the fact that the mayoral salary dictates who can afford to run.</p> <p>Dennis suggested basing the salary increase on a 2% cost of living increase annually. These need to be done for retroactive payments as well going forward.</p> <p>Jennifer reminded the board of the mayor's comments regarding the professionalization of the position, and asked whether the mayor should be paid similarly to a town manager.</p> <p>Dennis to draft the board's report text for the mayor's salary, which was unanimously voted on to be \$92,500 for FY16.</p>
Discussion of city clerk's salary	Motion: Linda Matson Second: Dennis Helmus	Unanimously approved	<p>Trey suggested that the board take a similar approach to arriving at city clerk's salary.</p> <p>Dennis pointed out the fact that he regards Gloucester and Agawam to be outliers on account of how their salaries are drastically out of step with others the board is reviewing.</p> <p>Todd pointed out that the average salary of all towns is \$75,000.</p> <p>Linda stated that she believes it is closer to \$74,000 when she averages based on local towns only.</p> <p>Trey added that he believes the figure is closer to \$64,504 when local towns are considered.</p>

001 23 00

			<p>Linda offered to draft the city clerk text for the board's recommendation, which was unanimously voted on to be \$75,000 for FY16.</p> <p>[N.B. This recommendation was subsequently revised at the October 15 meeting.]</p>
Discussion of city councilor's salary	<p>Motion: Doug Loux</p> <p>Second: Trey Fortier</p>	Unanimously approved	<p>Todd stated that he prefers to get rid of benefits for all part-time elected officials.</p> <p>Dennis informed the board that according to MGL 32B, part-time employees must work 20 hours per week to be entitled to receive benefits.</p> <p>Doug stated that he thought it is within the board's jurisdiction to recommend doing away with benefits and deciding the amount of the councilor's stipend.</p> <p>Vicki informed the board that she used the following mathematical equation to arrive at a figure: divided the \$32,651 used for health insurance by 9 councilors to arrive at a figure of \$3600 per year for a stipend.</p> <p>Linda motioned, and Vicki seconded, that the board remove benefits for part-time elected officials, which was unanimously approved.</p> <p>Dennis recommended using a 3-tier system for determining the salaries of the council president, at large council member, and councils.</p> <p>Jennifer inquired about what was the rationale for going higher than \$8600, which was what the figure that the board initially considered.</p> <p>Vicki replied that most other city councilors receive higher salaries and also receive health benefits.</p> <p>Trey added that he felt more comfortable with a figure of \$9,000 than \$10,000. This is closer to the average, he further added.</p> <p>Doug reminded the board that not everyone takes the benefits, and that it is a matter of equality as well.</p> <p>Trey to draft the board's report text for the city councilor's salary, which was unanimously voted on to be \$9,000 for FY16.</p>
Discussion of at-large city councilor's salary	<p>Motion: Linda Matson</p> <p>Second: Trey Fortier</p>	Unanimously approved	<p>Trey to draft the board's report text for the at-large city councilor's salary, which was unanimously voted on to be \$9,500 for FY16.</p>
Discussion of city	Motion:	Unanimously	Trey to draft the board's report text for the city council president's salary, which

council president's salary	Doug Loux Second: Jennifer Higgins	approved	was unanimously voted on to be \$10,000 for FY16.
Discussion of school committee member salary	Motion: Jenniifer Higgins Second: Doug Loux	Unanimously approved	Jennifer recommended a figure of \$5,000 for school committee members. Dennis offered up a suggestion of \$5,500 for committee at-large members. Doug stated that he still preferred a figure of \$4,500 but that he could be convinced to go higher. Vicki to draft the board's report text for the school committee member's salary, which was unanimously voted on to be \$5,000 for FY16.
Discussion of school committee at-large member salary	Motion: Jenniifer Higgins Second: Linda Matson	Unanimously approved	Jennifer recommended a figure of \$5,500 for school committee at-large members. Vicki to draft the board's report text for the school committee member's salary, which was unanimously voted on to be \$5,000 for FY16.
Discussion of Smith Vocational Trustee salary	Motion: Vicki Baum-Hommes Second: Linda Matson	Unanimously approved	Jennifer recommended a figure of \$5,000 for Smith Vocational Trustees, stating that she felt uncomfortable providing them with a lower figure than that which is afforded school committee members. Dennis added that the Smith Vocation Trustees' work is broad in scope. Doug to draft the board's report text for the school committee member's salary, which was unanimously voted on to be \$5,000 for FY16.

**Minutes of Northampton, MA, Elected Officials Compensation
Advisory Board [EOCAB], October 15, 2014**

Meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

Present: V. Baum-Hommes, T. Fortier, D. Helmus, J. Higgins, D. Loux,
L. Matson, T. Thompson (Chair)

Absent: none

No members of the public attended.

Review of Minutes

Minutes of previous meeting (October 2) were reviewed for additions and corrections.

Minor corrections were suggested to:

First section: D. Helmus was maker of motion in mayoral discussion.

Second section: Text describing motion of proposed raise of Clerk's salary to \$75,000 will be added, and a note that some of the salary values listed in this section are incorrect.

Third section: Correct to read that T. Fortier drafted the city councilor section of the recommendation report.

Charter Issues

T. Thompson informed EOCAB that the city charter currently has language that may require the city to offer health insurance to part-time elected officials. This is a concern because of the EOCAB's decision at the previous meeting to recommend that health insurance not be offered to part-time officials. Legal question: Does the mayor have the ability to issue an executive order to countermand the charter?

Should the city solicitor be asked whether the mayor has authority or does the charter have to be changed?

This discussion was tabled until later in the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes were unanimously approved with the changes listed in the Review above.

Discussion of past salary increases vs. CPI increases

T. Thompson discussed his analysis of historical salary raises over time vs. CPI changes over that time, with particular focus on the clerk's position. Raising the mayor's salary to our recommendation is just

keeping up with inflation. Clerk's salary is therefore given a substantial percentage raise relative to mayor. School committee and councilors not really being given a raise in real dollars, but clerk is.

Reconsideration of previous clerk salary recommendation

There was a lengthy discussion of reconsideration of the Board's recommendation at the previous meeting of \$75,000 per annum for the Clerk's position. Factors included:

- Have Clerk's responsibilities increased or not?

- Discussion of whether we rely on benchmarking data.

- \$70,000 would be a 7.7 per cent raise.

- Clerk cannot get regular raises as non-elected city employees do.

- Value of CPI changes and looking at the pattern of raises.

- Several Board members were concerned that when EOCAB made the \$75K recommendation, we thought the last raise was in 2008, which is not correct; there was a 2013 adjustment.

The board agreed in general that perhaps \$75K was out of line with the other increase recommendations. Then a discussion of what the recommendation should be ensued.

EOCAB discussed the differences between elected and appointed clerks.

EOCAB discussed what might be acceptable to City Council considering the recent pay adjustment for City Clerk. We discussed mean salaries of clerks in various benchmark city groupings.

It was noted that the same percentage raise as proposed for mayor would keep clerk position at current salary.

V. Baum-Hommes moved that EOCAB recommend \$70,000 per annum for the City Clerk. D. Loux seconded. Further discussion:

Clerk doesn't get overtime, is a manager. Looking at raises over time doesn't account for a low initial salary that has not yet been addressed/adjusted. Relationship between mayoral and clerk's salary was discussed. Problem of justifying large increase when there was a recent raise was discussed. Fiscal prudence, fact that immediate surrounding towns are lower were concerns. The fact that we are recommending reevaluation in 4 years, not 10 was discussed.

The motion for \$70,000 was withdrawn. V. Baum-Holmes moved we recommend \$71,250.

D. Loux seconded. EOCAB approved this motion unanimously.

Continuation of tabled health insurance discussion

EOCAB discussed whether removing health insurance availability should be part of the justification for raises for part-time officials.

The Board decided we will just recommend that insurance not be offered to part-time officials. It isn't part of our charge to instruct Council or the Mayor on how these changes should be made.

Review of first draft of recommendation to Council

Regarding formatting issues, T. Fortier and J. Higgins will work on formatting issues. T. Thompson will finalize the language.

Several changes to the first draft of the recommendation document were proposed:

Change to indicating meetings were held May – October.

At Large School Committee position missing from first table.

Pages should be numbered.

Discussion of how we refer to the Board. Decision to use EOCAB.

Edits to Summary table on page 2 to recommendation wording.

T. Thompson will rewrite the Benefit section on pages 2 -3.

Minor corrections to several bullets on page 4 were proposed.

City Clerk recommendation on page 5 will be rewritten to edit salary history and salary recommendation and to add Pittsfield to "nearby cities" benchmark data group.

City councilors section will be edited to add salary history, recommendation for council president, and move some of the justification language to the overall summary section.

Discussion of when to recommend periodic review: Consensus was to just recommend a review within a minimum of every 4 years.

Suggestions for other language edits: Use "stipend" for part-time officials, use "Rationale" instead of Justification.

Discussion of whether set another meeting date

At present we will try review of final document by email. No further meeting unless there are other than typo/formatting/grammatical edits needed.

T. Thompson will call the City Council's clerk about presenting at a council meeting after we've approved the document.

Motion to adjourn by T. Fortier. Seconded by J. Higgins. Meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Matson

Advisory Report on the Compensation of Northampton Elected Officials

Recommendations of the Elected Officials
Compensation Advisory Board

October 27, 2014

Vicki Baum-Hommes
John (Trey) Fortier
Dennis Helmus
Jennifer Higgins
Douglas Loux
Linda Matson
Todd Thompson, Chair

Received Oct 28 2014

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Background

The Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board (“the Board”) was created by the City Council in accordance with the new City Charter (Sec. 5-5 of Admin. Code, see Addendum 1). The Board was tasked with reviewing “the adequacy and equity of compensation, benefits, and expense allowances of municipal elected officials and report[ing] its findings and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council.”

Process

The Board convened in April 2014 and set about reviewing current compensation practices for elected officials. Publicized meetings were held monthly from May through October in accordance with open meeting laws. The City’s compensation policies, including both salary and benefits, were benchmarked against 23 communities in the Commonwealth with populations under 50,000 that had Mayor/Council forms of government (see Addendum 2, Benchmarking Tables). Particular weight was given to a subset of eight cities in western Massachusetts for which costs of living and city budgets were comparable to that of Northampton. Input was solicited from elected officials to better understand the responsibilities, duties, and time commitments of their respective positions.

Discussion and deliberations focused on the following issues:

- The adequacy of current salaries and stipends
- The appropriateness and equity surrounding the current practice of extending eligibility for health insurance and retirement benefits to part-time elected officials, specifically city councilors, school committee members, and trustees of the Smith Vocational School
- The need to ensure competitive salaries and stipends so as to attract qualified candidates and encourage contested elections
- The need for periodic review and update of compensation policies so as to keep compensation current and competitive

The tables below summarize the consensus recommendations of the Board. The rationale for each recommendation is presented in the following sections.

Elected Official	Current Salary	Proposed Salary
Mayor	\$80,000	\$92,500
City Clerk	\$65,000	\$71,250
City Council President	\$5,500	\$10,000
At-Large City Councilor	\$5,000	\$9,500
Ward City Councilor	\$5,000	\$9,000
At-Large School Committee Member	\$2,500	\$5,500
Ward School Committee Member	\$2,500	\$5,000
Trustees of Smith Vocational School	\$2,500	\$5,000

Issue	Current Practice	Recommendation
Extension of Health Insurance Benefits to Part-time Elected Officials	Offered, but with limited enrollment	Discontinue
Periodic Review and Update of Elected Official Compensation	None	Minimum once every four years, preferably aligned with mayoral elections

Full Time Elected Officials

Mayor

Salary History	
January 1, 2000	\$65,000
January 1, 2002	\$66,950
January 1, 2003	\$68,958
January 1, 2007	\$80,000
July 1, 2009	\$75,000 ¹
July 1, 2010	\$80,000 ²
Current	\$80,000

¹Mayor Higgins took voluntary pay cut

²Salary restored

Recommendation

Increase salary to \$92,500

Responsibilities

Under Northampton's "strong mayor" form of government, the executive and administrative powers of the city are vested in the mayor. S/he is responsible for the administration of all city activities and functions placed under the control of the mayor by law or by charter; coordinates the activities of all agencies of the city and all persons serving the city; and serves as a member of every appointed multiple-member body of the city.

In addition, the mayor serves as Chair of the School Committee; a trustee of Smith Vocational School, Look Park, Child's Park, and the Academy of Music; a board member of the Pioneer Valley Transportation Association (PVTa); and Hampshire County representative on the Franklin Hampshire Employment & Training Consortium (FHETC) where responsibilities include the co-signing of all warrants for expenditures of agency funds, among other duties.

Rationale

In recommending an adjustment to the current salary the following factors were taken into account:

- Under the Charter, the mayor is prohibited from outside employment or remuneration. The Board felt strongly that the mayor's salary should be competitive with those in the private sector in order to attract and retain competent public servants.
- Northampton's mayor is a "working mayor" whose responsibilities include active, hands-on, day-to-day management of the City in addition to his/her role as political leader and policy maker.
- The mayor is on call 24/7, with an average workweek estimated between 60-80 hours. The average workweek includes official duties, ceremonial duties, committee work, school events, public forums, and regional and state meetings and functions.
- The mayor's gross salary was last increased in 2007, and in 2014 ranked behind 64 other city employees. (See Addendum 3, <http://www.northamptonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2943>). On an inflation-adjusted basis, the \$65,000 salary paid in 2000 would be equivalent to \$89,782 in current 2014 dollars (based on CPI inflation calculator at <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>).

- The average mayoral salary in the statewide, 23 Cities Benchmark (see Addendum 2) was \$91,396; the average salary in the Eight Surrounding Cities Benchmark (see Addendum 2) was \$84,536. Three comparable cities in the Eight Surrounding Cities Benchmark have mayoral salaries as follows: Westfield \$100,000; West Springfield \$90,000; and Pittsfield \$87,787. Statewide, comparable “destination cities” (entertainment hubs for dining, art, recreation, etc.) include Gloucester \$100,000 and Newburyport \$101,000.

City Clerk

Salary History	
January 1, 2004	\$51,091 ¹
July 1, 2006	\$55,723
July 1, 2007	\$56,923
July 1, 2008	\$62,495
June 6, 2013	\$65,000
Current	\$65,000

¹Year elected

Recommendation

Increase salary to \$71,250

Responsibilities

The responsibilities and duties of the office of the city clerk are prescribed under state law and include serving as the public information and public records officer, chief election officer, census/voter administrator, and local registrar of vital statistics. The city clerk is responsible for: records management; licensing; maintaining the city code; issuing and recording certificates, registrations, petitions and certain trusts; filings and statements under the conflict of interest laws and open meeting laws; and recording birth, death and marriage records, including the issuance of records in accordance with relevant statutes.

Rationale

In recommending an adjustment to the current salary the following factors were taken into account:

- Over time staffing in the City Clerk’s office has decreased while the workload has increased.
- Despite a recent adjustment in 2013, the current salary lags behind the \$75,679 average of the 23 Cities Benchmark and the \$68,477 average of the Eight Surrounding Cities Benchmark.
- The average salary for comparably-sized western Massachusetts cities (Agawam, Westfield, Holyoke, Chicopee, Pittsfield and West Springfield) is \$74,051.
- The Board focused on the adequacy of the salary given the responsibilities of the position and felt it was important to offer a competitive salary to attract qualified candidates.
- The salary recommendation of \$71,250 falls between the averages for the statewide (\$75,679) and surrounding cities benchmarks (\$68,477).

Part-Time Elected Officials

A key component of the current compensation for *some, but not all* part-time elected officials is participation in the municipal health insurance plan offered to city employees, under which the City offers a menu of individual and family plans and pays 80% of the insurance premium.

The table below shows only nine of the City’s 21 part-time elected officials currently enrolled in the municipal health plan. (While the exact enrollment figure varies from year to year, the pattern of participation is consistent.) The total cost to the City was \$76,087. Of the nine participating officials, five are enrolled in family plans at an average cost to the City of \$11,691, and four are enrolled in individual plans at an average cost to the City of \$4,410—which is to say: five officials are currently receiving benefits valued at an average of \$11,691; four are receiving benefits valued at \$4,410; and the remaining twelve officials are receiving *no* remuneration in the form of benefits.

Part-time Elected Officials Enrolled in Municipal Health Plan - FY 2015			
	Number of Members in Body	Number of Members Enrolled	Cost to City FY15
City Council	9	4	\$32,651
School Committee	9	4	\$39,035
Trustees of Smith Vocational School	3	1	\$4,401
Total	21	9	\$76,087

Source: City of Northampton Department of Human Resources, May 7, 2014

The practice of extending benefits valued at multiples of the stipend to a minority of the elected officials creates a significant disparity in the total value of compensation received by councilors and school committee members who elect to receive benefits and those who do not. This raises serious questions of equity and fairness. City councilors and school committee members who appeared before the Board echoed these concerns and expressed their preference to discontinue the practice. Among those who expressed this opinion were councilors who acknowledged taking advantage of this benefit.

Additional concern was raised about the potential conflict of interest that arises when elected officials, one of whose primary responsibilities is oversight and approval of the budget for municipal and school employee compensation, are eligible to receive the same benefits extended to City employees.

Given that health insurance exchanges now provide access to more affordable “non-group” health insurance, and given that part-time (less than 20 hours/week) city employees are not eligible to enroll in municipal health plans, the Board concluded that the historical practice of extending eligibility to part-time elected officials was neither warranted nor appropriate.

Recommendation

The consensus recommendation of the Board is to discontinue the practice of extending health and retirement plan eligibility to city councilors, school committee members, and trustees of Smith Vocational School while simultaneously increasing stipends to compensate for the loss of this benefit (see recommendations below). The proposed cost of the stipend increases (\$68,000) would be fully offset by the savings realized through discontinuation of health benefits (\$76,087).

Ward City Councilors/Councilors At-Large/Council President

Current Compensation

Stipend:

Ward Councilor: \$5,000
Councilor At-Large: \$5,000
Council President: \$5,500

Benefits:

Eligibility to enroll in municipal health and retirement plans

Stipend History

\$5,000 since at least 1990; the Board was unable to determine initial date

Recommendations

Stipend:

Ward Councilor: \$9,000
Councilor At-Large: \$9,500
Council President: \$10,000

Benefits:

Discontinue eligibility to enroll in municipal health and retirement plans

Rationale

In recommending an increase in the current stipend and discontinuation of benefits the following factors were taken into account:

- The stipend for city councilors has not been adjusted for at least 24 years. On an inflation-adjusted basis, a \$5,000 stipend in 1990 would be equivalent to \$9,099 in current dollars (based on CPI inflation calculator at <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>).
- Northampton currently ranks second-to-last amongst surrounding communities in its stipend for city councilors.
- In light of the accompanying recommendation to discontinue eligibility for health insurance benefits, the Board thought it appropriate to increase stipends to compensate members for the loss of these benefits. The increased cost of the stipend is offset by the savings realized through discontinuation of health benefits.
- The larger constituency and expanded signature-gathering requirements (nomination papers) for councilors at-large merit modest increased compensation over ward councilors.
- The current stipend “bonus” for the Council President should be maintained to compensate for the increased responsibilities associated with the position.

Ward & At-Large School Committee Members

Current Compensation

Stipend:

\$2,500

Benefits:

Eligibility to enroll in municipal health and retirement plans

Stipend History

\$2,500 since at least 1990; the Board was unable to determine initial date

Recommendations

Stipend:

Ward School Committee Member: \$5,000

At-Large School Committee Member: \$5,500

Benefits:

Discontinue eligibility to enroll in municipal health and retirement plans

Rationale

In recommending an increase in the current stipend and discontinuation of benefits the following factors were taken into account:

- The stipend for school committee members has not been adjusted for at least 24 years. On an inflation-adjusted basis, a \$2,500 stipend in 1990 would be equivalent to \$4,550 in current dollars (based on CPI inflation calculator at <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>).
- In light of the accompanying recommendation to discontinue eligibility for health insurance benefits, the Board thought it appropriate to increase stipends to compensate members for the loss of these benefits. The increased cost of the stipends is more than offset by the savings realized through discontinuation of health benefits.
- The larger constituency and expanded signature-gathering requirements (nomination papers) for at-large members warrant modest increased compensation over ward committee members.
- Most school committee elections are uncontested. An increased stipend would provide additional incentive to potential candidates, hopefully increasing the number of contested elections.

Smith Vocational Trustees

Current Compensation

Stipend: \$2,500

Benefits:

Eligibility to enroll in municipal health and retirement plans

Stipend History

\$2,500 since at least 1990; the Board was unable to determine initial date

Recommendations

Stipend:

Increase stipend to \$5,000

Benefits:

Discontinue eligibility to enroll in municipal health and retirement plans

Rationale

In recommending an increase in the current stipend and discontinuation of benefits the following factors were taken into account:

- The stipend for trustees has not been adjusted for at least 24 years. On an inflation-adjusted basis, a \$2,500 stipend in 1990 would be equivalent to \$4,550 in current dollars (based on CPI inflation calculator at <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>).
- In light of the accompanying recommendation to discontinue eligibility for health insurance benefits, the Board thought it was appropriate to increase stipends to compensate members for the loss of these benefits. The increased cost of the stipends is more than offset by the savings realized through discontinuation of health benefits.
- The Board thought it was appropriate to maintain the current parity with stipends for school committee members.

Addendum 1 - Northampton City Charter

§ 5-5 Compensation of elected officials. *Source: <http://ecode360.com/27410398#27410398>*
[Added 6-6-2013]

A. Compensation

Elected officials' annual compensation shall be as follows:

Mayor	\$80,000
City Clerk	\$65,000
City Council President	\$5,500
City Council	\$5,000
School Committee	\$2,500
Superintendents of Smith's Agricultural School	\$2,500
Elector under the Oliver Smith Will	\$10
Trustees under the Will of Charles E. Forbes	\$0
Community Preservation at Large	\$0

B. Benefits and expenses

The Mayor, City Clerk, City Council, School Committee and Superintendents of Smith's Agricultural School shall be eligible to enroll in the municipal health insurance and retirement plans.

C. Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board; members; term; compensation

1. The Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board shall periodically, but not less frequently than 10 years, study the adequacy and equity of the compensation, benefits and expense allowances of municipal elected officials and report its findings and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council, and said reports shall be filed with the City Clerk.
2. The Board shall be composed of seven members, each appointed by the Mayor subject to confirmation by the City Council. The members shall each serve a term of two years.
3. Members of the Board shall serve without compensation. Members of the Board are subject to State Ethics Commission and conflict of interest laws.
4. Former and current elected officials, and relatives of elected officials, shall not be eligible to serve on this committee.
5. The committee will submit recommendations to the City Council, which will have the authorization to act/not act on these recommendations.

Addendum 2 - Benchmarking Tables

23 Surrounding Cities Benchmark

City of Northampton is designated by blue shading.

Median Compensation is designated by orange shading.

Sources: United States Census Bureau; Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association Benchmark Salary Survey; and city H.R. department heads

Mayor

		Average City Population	Per Capita Income	# of Households	Median Household Income	City Budget	Total Compensation Per Position	Rank Total Compensation	% HMO Paid by City
Mayor	Melrose	26,983	41,454	11,221	86,264	87,169,353	125,000	1	87%
	Braintree	35,744	36,227	13,220	85,208	129,747,386	125,000	1	58%
	Attleboro	43,593	30,511	16,354	65,767	137,148,705	120,851	2	75%
	Everett	41,667	24,263	15,285	49,702	178,565,888	107,100	3	85%
	Beverly	39,502	37,016	15,406	67,958	124,974,276	106,000	4	80%
	Newburyport	17,416	48,439	7,502	83,509	72,238,301	101,000	5	75%
	Gloucester	28,787	36,919	12,140	62,059	114,354,707	100,000	6	85%
	Westfield	42,094	27,596	15,237	57,018	140,567,143	100,000	6	80%
	West Springfield	28,391	27,966	11,694	54,434	99,939,580	90,000	7	75%
	Pittsfield	44,737	26,080	19,926	42,076	145,952,513	87,787	8	85%
	Holyoke	39,880	20,294	16,032	34,961	152,361,297	85,000	9	70%
	Chicopee	55,298	24,264	22,957	46,861	184,854,584	85,000	9	70%
	Agawam	28,438	30,672	11,470	66,409	92,263,452	85,000	9	70%
	North Adams	13,708	20,481	5,889	36,510	40,890,354	84,000	10	75%
	Fitchburg	40,318	22,949	14,901	47,442	127,138,952	83,000	11	75%
	Marlborough	39,499	36,895	15,918	70,849	148,425,129	81,860	12	70%
	Leominster	40,759	29,146	16,544	59,604	131,520,776	80,363	13	75%
	Northampton	28,549	33,440	11,739	56,999	101,950,305	80,000	14	80%
	Methuen	47,255	30,043	17,598	65,855	144,808,588	80,000	14	0%
	Amesbury	16,283	40,517	6,694	80,062	60,495,015	80,000	14	75%
Gardner	20,228	24,156	7,795	48,934	60,382,427	78,650	15	75%	
Greenfield	17,456	26,258	7,724	48,370	54,002,485	73,500	16	80%	
Woburn	38,120	34,030	15,264	72,434	142,928,435	73,000	17	80%	
Easthampton	16,053	31,282	7,342	55,621	40,834,443	70,000	18	75%	
Mayor Average		32,948	30,871	13,161	60,204	113,063,087	90,921		73%

City Clerk

		Average City Population	Per Capita Income	# of Households	Median Household Income	City Budget	Total Compensation Per Position	Rank Total Compensation	% HMO Paid by City
City Clerk	Agawam	28,438	30,672	11,470	66,409	92,263,452	96,285	1	70%
	Gloucester	28,787	36,919	12,140	62,059	114,354,707	96,036	2	85%
	Newburyport	17,416	48,439	7,502	83,509	72,238,301	90,000	3	75%
	Woburn	38,120	34,030	15,264	72,434	142,928,435	88,748	4	80%
	Fitchburg	40,318	22,949	14,901	47,442	127,138,952	88,000	5	75%
	Melrose	26,983	41,454	11,221	86,264	87,169,353	84,736	6	87%
	Leominster	40,759	29,146	16,544	59,604	131,520,776	84,491	7	75%
	Attleboro	43,593	30,511	16,354	65,767	137,148,705	84,064	8	75%
	Methuen	47,255	30,043	17,598	65,855	144,808,588	82,596	9	0%
	Marlborough	39,499	36,895	15,918	70,849	148,425,129	81,117	10	70%
	Beverly	39,502	37,016	15,406	67,958	124,974,276	79,562	11	80%
	Braintree	35,744	36,227	13,220	85,208	129,747,386	79,536	12	58%
	Westfield	42,094	27,596	15,237	57,018	140,567,143	78,650	13	80%
	Everett	41,667	24,263	15,285	49,702	178,565,888	76,720	14	85%
	Holyoke	39,880	20,294	16,032	34,961	152,361,297	75,832	15	70%
	Gardner	20,228	24,156	7,795	48,934	60,382,427	68,500	16	75%
	Chicopee	55,298	24,264	22,957	46,861	184,854,584	65,000	17	70%
	Northampton	28,549	33,440	11,739	56,999	101,950,305	65,000	17	80%
	West Springfield	28,391	27,966	11,694	54,434	99,939,580	64,740	18	75%
	Amesbury	16,283	40,517	6,694	80,062	60,495,015	60,672	19	75%
	Greenfield	17,456	26,258	7,724	48,370	54,002,485	58,658	20	80%
	Pittsfield	44,737	26,080	19,926	42,076	145,952,513	54,489	21	85%
	Easthampton	16,053	31,282	7,342	55,621	40,834,443	54,163	22	75%
North Adams	13,708	20,481	5,889	36,510	40,890,354	48,114	23	75%	
City Clerk Average		32,948	30,871	13,161	60,204	113,063,087	75,234		73%

Council President

		Average City Population	Per Capita Income	# of Households	Median Household Income	City Budget	Total Compensation Per Position	Rank Total Compensation	% HMO Paid by City
Council President	Everett	41,667	24,263	15,285	49,702	178,565,888	15,000	1	0%
	Chicopee	55,298	24,264	22,957	46,861	184,854,584	13,000	2	70%
	Beverly	39,502	37,016	15,406	67,958	124,974,276	12,333	3	80%
	Agawam	28,438	30,672	11,470	66,409	92,263,452	12,000	4	70%
	Gloucester	28,787	36,919	12,140	62,059	114,354,707	11,500	5	85%
	Holyoke	39,880	20,294	16,032	34,961	152,361,297	11,000	6	70%
	Leominster	40,759	29,146	16,544	59,604	131,520,776	10,666	7	75%
	West Springfield	28,391	27,966	11,694	54,434	99,939,580	10,000	8	75%
	Pittsfield	44,737	26,080	19,926	42,076	145,952,513	10,000	8	85%
	Westfield	42,094	27,596	15,237	57,018	140,567,143	10,000	8	80%
	Woburn	38,120	34,030	15,264	72,434	142,928,435	10,000	8	80%
	Gardner	20,228	24,156	7,795	48,934	60,382,427	9,500	9	0%
	Marlborough	39,499	36,895	15,918	70,849	148,425,129	9,449	10	70%
	Fitchburg	40,318	22,949	14,901	47,442	127,138,952	9,000	11	0%
	Attleboro	43,593	30,511	16,354	65,767	137,148,705	7,727	12	75%
	Braintree	35,744	36,227	13,220	85,208	129,747,386	7,500	13	58%
	Methuen	47,255	30,043	17,598	65,855	144,808,588	6,000	14	0%
	Newburyport	17,416	48,439	7,502	83,509	72,238,301	6,000	14	75%
	Northampton	28,549	33,440	11,739	56,999	101,950,305	5,500	15	80%
	Melrose	26,983	41,454	11,221	86,264	87,169,353	5,000	16	87%
Amesbury	16,283	40,517	6,694	80,062	60,495,015	4,000	17	0%	
North Adams	13,708	20,481	5,889	36,510	40,890,354	3,600	18	75%	
Easthampton	16,053	31,282	7,342	55,621	40,834,443	3,000	19	75%	
Greenfield	17,456	26,258	7,724	48,370	54,002,485	0	20	0%	
Council President Average		32,948	30,871	13,161	60,204	113,063,087	8,407		57%

Councilor

		Average City Population	Per Capita Income	# of Households	Median Household Income	City Budget	Total Compensation Per Position	Rank Total Compensation	% HMO Paid by City
Councilor	Everett	41,667	24,263	15,285	49,702	178,565,888	15,000	1	0%
	Chicopee	55,298	24,264	22,957	46,861	184,854,584	12,000	2	70%
	Beverly	39,502	37,016	15,406	67,958	124,974,276	11,700	3	80%
	Gloucester	28,787	36,919	12,140	62,059	114,354,707	11,500	4	85%
	Leominster	40,759	29,146	16,544	59,604	131,520,776	10,666	5	75%
	Holyoke	39,880	20,294	16,032	34,961	152,361,297	10,000	6	70%
	Westfield	42,094	27,596	15,237	57,018	140,567,143	10,000	6	80%
	Agawam	28,438	30,672	11,470	66,409	92,263,452	10,000	6	70%
	Marlborough	39,499	36,895	15,918	70,849	148,425,129	9,449	7	70%
	Fitchburg	40,318	22,949	14,901	47,442	127,138,952	9,000	8	0%
	Woburn	38,120	34,030	15,264	72,434	142,928,435	9,000	8	80%
	Pittsfield	44,737	26,080	19,926	42,076	145,952,513	8,000	9	85%
	West Springfield	28,391	27,966	11,694	54,434	99,939,580	8,000	9	75%
	Attleboro	43,593	30,511	16,354	65,767	137,148,705	7,727	10	75%
	Gardner	20,228	24,156	7,795	48,934	60,382,427	6,500	11	0%
	Northampton	28,549	33,440	11,739	56,999	101,950,305	5,000	12	80%
	Braintree	35,744	36,227	13,220	85,208	129,747,386	5,000	12	58%
	Newburyport	17,416	48,439	7,502	83,509	72,238,301	5,000	12	75%
	Melrose	26,983	41,454	11,221	86,264	87,169,353	5,000	12	87%
	Methuen	47,255	30,043	17,598	65,855	144,808,588	4,800	13	0%
North Adams	13,708	20,481	5,889	36,510	40,890,354	3,000	14	75%	
Amesbury	16,283	40,517	6,694	80,062	60,495,015	3,000	14	0%	
Easthampton	16,053	31,282	7,342	55,621	40,834,443	3,000	14	75%	
Greenfield	17,456	26,258	7,724	48,370	54,002,485	0	15	0%	
Councilor Average		32,948	30,871	13,161	60,204	113,063,087	7,598		57%

School Committee Member

		Average City Population	Per Capita Income	# of Households	Median Household Income	City Budget	Total Compensation Per Position	Rank Total Compensation	% HMO Paid by City
School Comm. Member	Chicopee	55,298	24,264	22,957	46,861	184,854,584	6,000	1	0%
	Everett	41,667	24,263	15,285	49,702	178,565,888	5,500	2	0%
	Westfield	42,094	27,596	15,237	57,018	140,567,143	5,000	3	80%
	Holyoke	39,880	20,294	16,032	34,961	152,361,297	5,000	3	70%
	Gloucester	28,787	36,919	12,140	62,059	114,354,707	5,000	3	85%
	Agawam	28,438	30,672	11,470	66,409	92,263,452	5,000	3	70%
	Attleboro	43,593	30,511	16,354	65,767	137,148,705	3,863	4	75%
	Beverly	39,502	37,016	15,406	67,958	124,974,276	3,600	5	80%
	Gardner	20,228	24,156	7,795	48,934	60,382,427	3,500	6	0%
	Woburn	38,120	34,030	15,264	72,434	142,928,435	3,000	7	80%
	Marlborough	39,499	36,895	15,918	70,849	148,425,129	3,000	7	70%
	Newburyport	17,416	48,439	7,502	83,509	72,238,301	2,500	8	75%
	Northampton	28,549	33,440	11,739	56,999	101,950,305	2,500	8	80%
	Methuen	47,255	30,043	17,598	65,855	144,808,588	2,500	8	0%
	Easthampton	16,053	31,282	7,342	55,621	40,834,443	900	9	75%
	Leominster	40,759	29,146	16,544	59,604	131,520,776	0	10	0%
	West Springfield	28,391	27,966	11,694	54,434	99,939,580	0	10	75%
	Melrose	26,983	41,454	11,221	86,264	87,169,353	0	10	0%
	Pittsfield	44,737	26,080	19,926	42,076	145,952,513	0	10	0%
	Fitchburg	40,318	22,949	14,901	47,442	127,138,952	0	10	0%
Amesbury	16,283	40,517	6,694	80,062	60,495,015	0	10	0%	
Braintree	35,744	36,227	13,220	85,208	129,747,386	0	10	0%	
North Adams	13,708	20,481	5,889	36,510	40,890,354	0	10	0%	
Greenfield	17,456	26,258	7,724	48,370	54,002,485	0	10	0%	
School Comm. Member Average		32,948	30,871	13,161	60,204	113,063,087	2,369		38%
Grand Total		32,948	30,871	13,161	60,204	113,063,087	31,163		56%

Eight Surrounding Cities Benchmark

City of Northampton is designated by blue shading.

Median Compensation is designated by orange shading.

Sources: Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association Benchmark Salary Survey and city H.R. department heads

Mayor

		Average City Population	Per Capita Income	# of Households	Median Household Income	City Budget	Total Compensation Per Position	Rank Total Compensation	% HMO Paid by City
Mayor	Westfield	42,094	27,596	15,237	57,018	140,567,143	100,000	1	80%
	West Springfield	28,391	27,966	11,694	54,434	99,939,580	90,000	2	75%
	Pittsfield	44,737	26,080	19,926	42,076	145,952,513	87,787	3	85%
	Chicopee	55,298	24,264	22,957	46,861	184,854,584	85,000	4	70%
	Agawam	28,438	30,672	11,470	66,409	92,263,452	85,000	4	70%
	Holyoke	39,880	20,294	16,032	34,961	152,361,297	85,000	4	70%
	Northampton	28,549	33,440	11,739	56,999	101,950,305	80,000	5	80%
	Greenfield	17,456	26,258	7,724	48,370	54,002,485	73,500	6	80%
	Easthampton	16,053	31,282	7,342	55,621	40,834,443	70,000	7	75%
Mayor Average		33,433	27,539	13,791	51,417	112,525,089	84,032		76%

City Clerk

		Average City Population	Per Capita Income	# of Households	Median Household Income	City Budget	Total Compensation Per Position	Rank Total Compensation	% HMO Paid by City
City Clerk	Agawam	28,438	30,672	11,470	66,409	92,263,452	96,285	1	70%
	Westfield	42,094	27,596	15,237	57,018	140,567,143	78,650	2	80%
	Holyoke	39,880	20,294	16,032	34,961	152,361,297	75,832	3	70%
	Chicopee	55,298	24,264	22,957	46,861	184,854,584	65,000	4	70%
	Northampton	28,549	33,440	11,739	56,999	101,950,305	65,000	4	80%
	West Springfield	28,391	27,966	11,694	54,434	99,939,580	64,740	5	75%
	Greenfield	17,456	26,258	7,724	48,370	54,002,485	58,658	6	80%
	Pittsfield	44,737	26,080	19,926	42,076	145,952,513	54,489	7	85%
	Easthampton	16,053	31,282	7,342	55,621	40,834,443	54,163	8	75%
City Clerk Average		33,433	27,539	13,791	51,417	112,525,089	68,091		76%

Council President

		Average City Population	Per Capita Income	# of Households	Median Household Income	City Budget	Total Compensation Per Position	Rank Total Compensation	% HMO Paid by City
Council President	Chicopee	55,298	24,264	22,957	46,861	184,854,584	13,000	1	70%
	Agawam	28,438	30,672	11,470	66,409	92,263,452	12,000	2	70%
	Holyoke	39,880	20,294	16,032	34,961	152,361,297	11,000	3	70%
	West Springfield	28,391	27,966	11,694	54,434	99,939,580	10,000	4	75%
	Pittsfield	44,737	26,080	19,926	42,076	145,952,513	10,000	4	85%
	Northampton	28,549	33,440	11,739	56,999	101,950,305	5,500	5	80%
	Easthampton	16,053	31,282	7,342	55,621	40,834,443	3,000	6	75%
	Greenfield	17,456	26,258	7,724	48,370	54,002,485	0	7	0%
Council President Average		33,433	27,539	13,791	51,417	112,525,089	8,278		67%

Councilor

		Average City Population	Per Capita Income	# of Households	Median Household Income	City Budget	Total Compensation Per Position	Rank Total Compensation	% HMO Paid by City
Councilor	Chicopee	55,298	24,264	22,957	46,861	184,854,584	12,000	1	70%
	Agawam	28,438	30,672	11,470	66,409	92,263,452	10,000	2	70%
	Westfield	42,094	27,596	15,237	57,018	140,567,143	10,000	2	80%
	Holyoke	39,880	20,294	16,032	34,961	152,361,297	10,000	2	70%
	West Springfield	28,391	27,966	11,694	54,434	99,939,580	8,000	3	75%
	Pittsfield	44,737	26,080	19,926	42,076	145,952,513	8,000	3	85%
	Northampton	28,549	33,440	11,739	56,999	101,950,305	5,000	4	80%
	Easthampton	16,053	31,282	7,342	55,621	40,834,443	3,000	5	75%
	Greenfield	17,456	26,258	7,724	48,370	54,002,485	0	6	0%
Councilor Average		33,433	27,539	13,791	51,417	112,525,089	7,333		67%

School Committee Member

		Average City Population	Per Capita Income	# of Households	Median Household Income	City Budget	Total Compensation Per Position	Rank Total Compensation	% HMO Paid by City
School Comm. Chair	Chicopee	55,298	24,264	22,957	46,861	184,854,584	6,500	1	0%
	Agawam	28,438	30,672	11,470	66,409	92,263,452	5,000	2	70%
	Westfield	42,094	27,596	15,237	57,018	140,567,143	5,000	2	80%
	Holyoke	39,880	20,294	16,032	34,961	152,361,297	5,000	2	70%
	Northampton	28,549	33,440	11,739	56,999	101,950,305	2,500	3	80%
	Easthampton	16,053	31,282	7,342	55,621	40,834,443	900	4	75%
	West Springfield	28,391	27,966	11,694	54,434	99,939,580	0	5	75%
	Pittsfield	44,737	26,080	19,926	42,076	145,952,513	0	5	0%
School Comm. Chair Average		33,433	27,539	13,791	51,417	112,525,089	2,767		50%

Addendum 3–City Employee Gross Earnings FY 2014 (top 70)

CITY OF NORTHAMPTON						
EMPLOYEE GROSS EARNINGS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014						
JULY 1, 2013 TO JUNE 30, 2014						
Employee Last Name	Employee First Name	MI	Year	Employee Gross	Department	
1	KONCAS	JOSEPH	W	2014	188,657.20	LEFT CITY EMPLOYMENT
2	SIENKIEWICZ	RUSSELL	P	2014	148,003.47	POLICE
3	DUGGAN	BRIAN	P	2014	145,741.76	FIRE AND RESCUE
4	BOROWSKI	ALAN	C	2014	122,605.27	POLICE
5	DAVINE	JON	M	2014	115,747.51	FIRE AND RESCUE
6	NICHOLS	DUANE	A	2014	113,552.18	FIRE AND RESCUE
7	CLAYTON	DOROTHY	A	2014	105,124.16	POLICE
8	MCQUESTON	TIMOTHY	E	2014	105,101.66	FIRE AND RESCUE
9	LEMBERG	MATTHEW	J	2014	105,022.46	FIRE AND RESCUE
10	KASPER	JODY	D	2014	104,995.33	POLICE
11	HUNTLEY	EDWARD	S	2014	104,625.96	ADMINISTRATION - DPW
12	GAGNE	DAVID	D	2014	104,201.19	FIRE AND RESCUE
13	PETERSON	JEFFREY	R	2014	103,913.52	SMITH VOCATIONAL
14	PELIS	ANDREW	S	2014	102,805.71	FIRE AND RESCUE
15	NORRIS	CHRISTOPHER	W	2014	101,095.21	FIRE AND RESCUE
16	WRIGHT	SUSAN	L	2014	100,211.41	MAYOR'S OFFICE
17	FARKAS	LAURIE	B	2014	100,169.79	NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
18	MILLIN	WILLIAM	K	2014	99,742.75	FIRE AND RESCUE
19	GARRIEPY	JOHN	P	2014	99,492.00	FIRE AND RESCUE
20	WILSON	LESLEY		2014	99,461.89	NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
21	CARTLEDGE	JOHN	D	2014	99,221.51	POLICE
22	VANASSE	STEPHEN	F	2014	98,298.55	FIRE AND RESCUE
23	LOMBARDI	BRYAN	N	2014	97,563.71	NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
24	NASH	REGINA	H	2014	97,055.67	LEFT CITY EMPLOYMENT
25	LAURILA	JAMES	R	2014	95,343.14	ENGINEERING - DPW
26	ROBINSON	COREY	J	2014	94,164.57	POLICE
27	AGNA	GWEN		2014	93,742.23	NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
28	MCCARTHY	JOHN	N	2014	93,254.32	POLICE
29	DENKIEWICZ	SHAWN	T	2014	93,226.81	FIRE AND RESCUE
30	MCLAUGHLIN	MARK	S	2014	93,211.91	LEFT CITY EMPLOYMENT
31	CAPUTO	VICTOR	F	2014	92,022.86	POLICE
32	DZIALO	BRENT	M	2014	91,728.25	POLICE
33	CHOQUETTE	BETH	N	2014	88,673.15	NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
34	ZIMMERMAN	GEORGE	R	2014	87,841.88	LEFT CITY EMPLOYMENT
35	SKANTZ-HODGSON	LESLIE	C	2014	87,329.69	SMITH VOCATIONAL
36	CALLAHAN	DAVID		2014	87,130.76	POLICE
37	CANATA	SAL	J	2014	86,986.74	NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
38	CLARK	THOMAS	R	2014	86,656.43	FIRE AND RESCUE
39	LEBRON	CARLOS	A	2014	86,285.27	POLICE
40	MCMAHON	ANNE	M	2014	85,866.04	POLICE
41	STAPLES	JEFFREY	L	2014	85,655.29	POLICE
42	PARASILITI	RICHARD	C	2014	85,375.07	STREETS - DPW
43	CURTIN	MARK	G	2014	84,720.50	FIRE AND RESCUE
44	DIGIAMMO	STEVEN	P	2014	84,689.27	POLICE
45	BRIGGS	MICHAEL	J	2014	84,653.66	POLICE
46	KELLY	JOHN	E	2014	84,600.43	NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
47	KOREPTA	GRZEGORZ	P	2014	84,538.16	POLICE
48	ROBERTS	NANCY	C	2014	84,423.11	SMITH VOCATIONAL
49	BRIOTTA	THOMAS	A	2014	84,321.49	POLICE
50	KIROUAC	CRAIG	R	2014	84,085.38	POLICE

CITY OF NORTHAMPTON
EMPLOYEE GROSS EARNINGS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014
JULY 1, 2013 TO JUNE 30, 2014

Employee Last Name	Employee First Name	MI	Year	Employee Gross	Department
51 BETSOLD	JOHN	P	2014	83,883.81	FIRE AND RESCUE
52 ROTA	N. ANGELO		2014	83,816.85	NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
53 MADDEN	SARAH	J	2014	83,653.77	NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
54 POWERS	ROBERT	J	2014	83,293.63	POLICE
55 THERRIEN	LAWRENCE	H	2014	83,121.36	FIRE AND RESCUE
56 PAWLOSKI	MICHAEL	J	2014	83,059.35	FIRE AND RESCUE
57 MCLAUGHLIN	MICHAEL	J	2014	82,875.47	POLICE
58 FAPPIANO	PETER		2014	82,799.65	POLICE
59 FEIDEN	WAYNE	M	2014	82,619.43	PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY
60 STODDARD	GLENDA	G	2014	82,236.39	HUMAN RESOURCES
61 BRENNAN	CHRISTOPHER		2014	81,565.81	NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
62 ROBITAILLE	KAREN	L	2014	81,284.88	NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
63 BREEN	ANDREW	D	2014	80,446.09	FIRE AND RESCUE
64 ANDREW	SCOTT	J	2014	80,383.77	NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
65 NARKEWICZ	DAVID	J	2014	79,999.92	MAYOR
66 TELLIER	RYAN	N	2014	79,537.58	POLICE
67 SATKOWSKI	TIMOTHY	J	2014	78,809.54	POLICE
68 POMERANTZ	DAVID	S	2014	78,595.91	CENTRAL SERVICES
69 HATCH	MICHAEL	A	2014	78,241.32	FIRE AND RESCUE
70 SCHUETZE	WILLIAM	N	2014	78,188.95	FIRE AND RESCUE

Source: City of Northampton website, <http://www.northamptonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2943>



Office of City Solicitor
City of Northampton
210 Main Street, Room 12
Northampton, MA 01060

December 17, 2014

Please reply to:

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City Solicitor

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(413) 584-4455
aseewald@northamptonma.gov

Mayor David J. Narkewicz
City of Northampton
City Hall
Northampton, MA 01060

RE: Conflict of Interest
Compensation of Elected Officials – Mayor

Dear Mayor Narkewicz:

You have requested my opinion regarding a potential conflict of interest that may arise should the City Council vote to raise the mayor's salary in accordance with the final report of the Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board, dated October 27, 2014, and amended on October 31, 2014. The facts are as follows:

In accordance with St. 2012, c. 277, § 2 (10), a so-called outside section of the Charter of the City of Northampton, the City Council was required to enact an ordinance establishing an Elected Official Compensation Advisory Board. The Council established the Board and, on October 27, 2014, the Board issued its final report regarding elected official compensation. The Board recommended that the compensation of certain elected officials be increased, including both city councilors and the mayor. Both § 2-4 and § 3-1(c) of the Charter require that any amendment to the ordinance increasing the compensation of the councilors or the mayor, respectively, must provide "that the salary increase is to take effect upon the organization of the city government following the next regular city election." The President of the City Council has proffered a proposed amendment to § 5-5A of the Code of Ordinances increasing the mayor's salary. Such increase would be effective upon the organization of the City government after the 2015 city election. However, because the Charter provides for a four-year term for the mayor, the position of mayor will not be on the 2015 election ballot. Therefore, should the Council pass the proposed amendment proffered by the Council President, the question arises as to whether you may approve or veto the measure without violating any of the proscriptions contained in M.G.L. c. 268A.

M.G.L. C. 268A, § 19 provides that "a municipal employee who participates as such an employee in a particular matter in which to his knowledge he ... has a financial interest, shall be

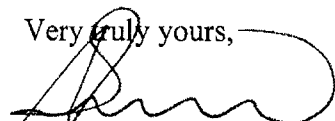
Mayor David J. Narkewicz
December 16, 2014
Page 2

punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000, or by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than 5 years, or in a jail or house of correction for not more than 2 ½ years, or both.” The word “participate” is defined as “participate in agency action or in a particular matter personally and substantially as a state, county or municipal employee, through approval, disapproval, decision, recommendation, the rendering of advice, investigation or otherwise.” M.G.L. c. 268A § 1. Clearly, approval or disapproval by you of the proposed increase in the mayor’s compensation would constitute participation in a particular matter in which you have a financial interest.¹ For that reason, my opinion is that you may not approve or disapprove a midterm increase in the mayor’s compensation.

Section 19, quoted above, prohibits you from participating in a matter such as mayoral salary increase in which you have a financial interest. In my opinion, you would not violate § 19 by failing to act on the proposed salary increase for a period of ten days, thereby allowing it to be deemed approved and in force in accordance with § 3-6 of the Charter. Nothing in the definition of “participate” suggests that failing to act constitutes participation.

Please let me know if you need anything further in this regard.

Very truly yours,



Alan Seewald
City Solicitor

AS/A

¹ In a related matter, the State Ethics Commission has ruled that participation by city councilors who were contemplating a run for mayor in a vote to increase the mayor’s salary was not a conflict where the increase would not take effect until after the next election in which the position of mayor would be on the ballot. The Commission ruled that where there is an intervening election and the vote to increase the salary would take place before the nomination deadline, the financial interest of councilors contemplating a run for mayor was too speculative to constitute an ethical violation. EC-COI-87-16. Here, there is no intervening mayoral election, and the Mayor’s financial interest is not speculative.