

**Meeting of the Northampton Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board
Report Review Subcommittee**

Thursday, April 27, 2023 • 9:00 a.m.

[Online Zoom Meeting](#) (Meeting ID: 830 5186 9329)

Minutes

Board members present

- Tara Brewster
- Deb Henson
- Sam Hopper – Clerk

Board members absent

- *None*

Additional attendees

- *None*

Minutes

Call Meeting to Order

- Meeting called to order at 9:03 a.m.
- Announcement meeting is being audio and video recorded
- Roll Call
 - Tara Brewster: Present
 - Deb Henson: Present
 - Sam Hopper: Present

Public Comment

- *None*

Discussion Items

Discuss report & make recommended edits (Vote)

- Agreement to Scrivener's errors corrections and minor typo corrections throughout document
- Agreement to remove contractions; fully spell out contractions
- Agreement to formatting edits of the report for consistency with spacing, indentation, font color
- Agreement that any linked sources should not be linked to anyone's personal Google Drive or other personal file storage - ask City to host documents currently in personal storage and then link to City-hosted link
- Amendments by report section

- Background
 - Correct the first sentence to note the Board was created in accordance by ordinance, not the charter
- Process
 - Add sentence noting the Board’s intention to survey current and former elected officials but the barriers that led to only surveying current elected officials
- Consideration: The Role of Compensation in Increasing Diversity of Elected Officials
 - *The majority of elected officials in Northampton are white and identify as women.*
 - Add “current”
 - Discussion if this is referring to current elected officials
 - Add source for this sentence, and further context if it’s not referring to current elected officials
 - *As a representational governing body, the City of Northampton strives to be a model for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA)*
 - Discussion on what bold and broad statement is based on
 - Add source(s) and/or reference to evidence that backs this
 - *Although the vast majority of surveyed Northampton elected officials find their work rewarding and fulfilling, most felt the compensation was not adequate and was a deterrent to citizens running for positions.*
 - Amend to further clarify it was officials who responded to the survey
 - Survey responses do not back the statement that the vast majority reported compensation was a deterrent to residents running
 - *Careful consideration on issues takes considerable time. Said one elected official: “Most of the regular school committee meetings are 5-6 hours long, ending around midnight which is late to be making thoughtful decisions.” While this degree of commitment can be laudable, it can also be a deterrent.*
 - Remove and replace with different quote from survey response to question 16 - use middle two sentences: “Serving on City Council can be very rewarding. I am lucky that my families finances allow me the latitude to both serve on council and determine whether I want to continue.”
 - Add sentence about time commitment being a major thing survey respondents shared about
 - *Most elected officials said they knew people who have considered running but have stayed away because of the perceived time commitment and/or lack of compensation and support.*
 - Remove “perceived”

- Discussion that in survey responses, time was more explicitly shared, but the Board made the connection that time is also related to money/compensation
 - Amend to “and/or” - the majority of respondents reported not either of those but did not report both
- Consideration: Health Insurance & Retirement Benefits
 - Move “Feedback and input” subsection to the top of section and remove the header - information is a summary and the next two subsections go into detail about the summary
 - Change “half” to “some” - more accurate of survey responses
- Health Insurance Benefits
 - Amend first sentence to be complete sentence
 - Remove City Treasurer and City Clerk as neither is a current elected official in Northampton
 - Update source to a more current document
 - Add context on how much of insurance premiums the city pays
 - Add description of table before table
- Recommendations
 - Overview
 - Amend Header to be “Recommendations” with subheader of “Overview” that shares the broad recommendations before going into detail for each elected official
 - Label Overview tables “Salary Recommendations” and “Additional Recommendations”
 - Additional Recommendations table
 - Remove City Treasurer and City Clerk
 - Amend language to COLA (and have it spelled out) to be consistent with COLA language used throughout survey
 - Full-Time Elected Official - Mayor
 - Agreement that table is helpful for seeing the salary history, but recommendation column should be removed as there aren’t recommendations for each year
 - Instead, add information similar to how the 2014 report laid it out with current info and recommendations
 - Agreement to do this consistently for part-time elected official sections and remove part-time elected official tables
 - Add reference to benefits the Mayor receives
 - Rationale
 - *The final recommendation is a 29% increase, based on the 27% COLA plus 2%, acknowledging a perceived increase in time required.*
 - Add additional context to the 27% COLA
 - Discussion on where the additional 2% comes from bringing to 29% - was not discussed at Monday’s meeting and unclear how another 2% was decided

- Add context/evidence supporting the additional 2%
 - *The current salary is ranked 98th (see Addendum 3 - FY2022 Northampton Salaries). In 2014, the last time the Board made its recommendations, the mayor's salary ranked 64th. An increase of 27% to keep up with inflation would be a salary of \$117,549 (source: CPI Inflation Calculator).*
 - Agreement that this bullet point is highlighting the ranking of the mayor's salary but final sentence adds information that may confuse the point - remove
 - Add context of where Board's recommendation would rank the mayor's salary
 - *The average mayoral salary in the 6 benchmarking cities/towns for which we have data is \$102,700.*
 - Add "current"
 - Part-Time Elected Officials
 - Discussion that the tables don't currently include a comparison of the benefits in addition to the stipend, but to add would make the table too wide and not visually appealing
 - Remove all tables and instead lay out recommendations in the same manner/format done in the 2014 report
 - Rationale
 - Amend all to be consistent with new wording under the Mayor's rationale that adds the context on the 27% cumulative COLA
 - Discussion on where the additional 2% comes from bringing to 29% - was not discussed at Monday's meeting and unclear how another 2% was decided
 - Add context/evidence supporting the additional 2%
 - Recommendation: Add Annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)
 - Remove "Recommendation" as it's under the Recommendations header
 - *The Board recommends a 2.0% increase beginning in 2025 in elected officials compensation in the years that the Compensation Board doesn't convene.*
 - Add clarification that this increase would begin in 2025
 - Discussion that 27% calculated COLA is for 10 years so includes when our recommendations would ideally go into effect in January 2024 - 10 years after 2014 Board made previous recommendations
 - *Considering the need for compensation to remain competitive, it is important that increases occur annually and just when the Board convenes, which can be as long as ten years.*
 - Clarify sentence to state increases should not only happen when the Board convenes

- Correct from 9 years to 10 years (per ordinance creating Board - Addendum 1) - “The Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board shall periodically, but not less frequently than 10 years...”
 - Recommendation: A More Efficient Compensation Review Process
 - Remove “Recommendation” as it’s under the Recommendations header
 - *The Board recommends that the City provide compensation data to be used for compensation review rather than relying on the Compensation Board to find and gather such data.*
 - Remove “Compensation” and remove “find and”
 - *This would likely reduce the Board’s commitment, making it easier to find future Board members and encourage more frequent review.*
 - Discussion that providing extra support doesn’t reduce the Board’s commitment, rather frees up time focus on the Board’s charge, as described in the previous sentence
 - Discussion that the Board had very little time to do their work this year
 - Remove sentence
 - Addendum 1
 - Correct from “City Charter” to “Code of Ordinances” which is what dictates the creation of the Board
 - Addendum 2
 - Add sources
 - Make sure Census Bureau data source is hosted by City
 - Discussion that text before the benchmarking benefits provides too much context that can be confusing and the gist of how benchmarking cities were identified is already included in the Process section
 - Remove all text from *The Board decided to identify between 5-10 municipalities...* to the description of the 6 tabs
 - Instead, add the data from the spreadsheets as tables in the report
 - Clean up data from tables to be clear
 - Agreement that the report should not link to Sam’s personal Google Drive
 - Agreement that having tables in the report is more visually appealing and more reader friendly
 - Addendum 4
 - Add “Responses” at the end
 - Current link doesn’t go to anything - instead send most recent version of survey responses for city to host and link to in report

New Business

- *None*

Adjourn

- Meeting adjourned at 10:38 a.m.