

RES 16-060

Wilmington, Delaware

~~July 7, 2016~~

July 14, 2016

#4244

Sponsors:

Council
President
Gregory

Council
Member
Congo

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of Section 2-100 of the Wilmington City Charter, the City Council, by ordinance, is directed to set and revise the salaries of Council members from time to time, when deemed appropriate; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to City Council Resolution No. 86-135, a review of salaries and salary structures of members of City Council was conducted by a Council Compensation Commission, which issued a report in May 1987 with recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the May 1987 report recommended salaries for Council members at that time, while also recommending that Council “review its salary structure every four years...to avoid overly long periods between adjustments or a need for large catch-up increases”; and

WHEREAS, since that time, Council has periodically reviewed and made adjustments to the salaries of Council members, owing both to the recommendations of the Council Compensation Commission and Council Rule 25, which calls for increases in Council member salaries commensurate with general increases given, by ordinance, to non-union classified employees under the merit system; and

WHEREAS, the May 1987 report also encompassed a broader review of the structure and functions of City Council, considering issues beyond compensation; and

WHEREAS, the report recommended that Council consider a referendum on a City Charter amendment to reduce the number of Council members to reflect declines in City population since 1960 – declines that have continued in the years following the report’s issuance; and

WHEREAS, the report also included a discussion of the time commitments of Council members, noting that “the part-time character” of Council membership should be preserved, “for it helps to assure that City policy will be formulated by people from a

diversity of backgrounds, for whom public office is not their primary source of livelihood”; and

WHEREAS, the report also recognized, however, the additional leadership duties that fall on the Council President – duties which have evolved since then, and now encompass additional areas of oversight, supervision and policy development; and

WHEREAS, it has been nearly 30 years since the Council Compensation Commission conducted its review and offered findings and recommendations – three decades in which City government functions have changed and responsibilities have evolved; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to fulfilling City Council’s fiduciary responsibility, to routinely assess and evaluate governmental structures and the effectiveness, efficiency and practicality of public institutions and operations, as well as to afford appropriate consideration to opportunities to transform city government – including City Council; and

WHEREAS, in order to ensure a careful and deliberate review of the structure and time commitments of City Council and its members, Council has determined that a formal, independent review is necessary.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, that the Council Organization Commission is established, comprised of five members to be appointed by the President of City Council, from residents of Wilmington who are not holding and/or seeking an elected public office.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council Organization Commission is requested to conduct its review of City Council’s structure and organization – including, but not limited to, the enumerated points below – and make findings and recommendations to this Council within 180 days of its appointment:

- 1) An appropriate number of Council members for the City of Wilmington, accounting for current and historic population figures and trends, as well as the needs of City residents, and

- 2) An appropriate distribution of district and at-large Council member positions, and
- 3) Whether the duties and responsibilities of the City Council President more closely constitute a part-time or full-time position, weighing the various expectations of the officeholder – as well as an appropriate salary level for the City Council President commensurate with such determination, and
- 4) The reasonableness of establishing staggered Council member terms, and the associated benefits that might arise from ensuring a determined level of continuity among City Council members across election cycles.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council Deputy Chief of Staff, as designated and directed by the Council president, is directed to provide staff assistance to the Council Organization Commission, and the Law Department is requested to provide counsel to the Commission as required.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that findings and recommendations made by the Council Organization Commission should be subsequently discussed and considered among the full body of City Council, and the adoption of all or part of the findings and recommendations, if approved, shall take effect at the start of the term of the 108th Session of City Council, beginning in January 2021.

Passed by City Council,
July 14, 2016

Attest: Maribely Seijo
City Clerk

Approved as to form this 6th
day of July, 2016.

Danny Shaton
Assistant City Solicitor