

**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
AUGUST 17, 2020
MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY**

Present: Councilmembers Bullock, Kepple, Litten, Neff, O'Malley, Rader, Shachner

Also Present: Assistant Law Director Swallow, Maria Shinn & Ken Kowalski of the Civil Service Commission, IT Manager Michael Coletta, Deputy Clerk Lascu and Clerk Bach taking minutes

Call to Order: 6:37 p.m.

Communication from the Civil Service Commission regarding recommendation for Council Members & Mayor Salaries.

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Kowalski remarked on the recommendations of the Civil Service Commission. This is Mr. Kowalski's second term in the Commission, and he noted that this year's recommendation is like the previous recommendation. He concluded that the salaries of Lakewood's elected officials are less than those of similarly situated communities because it is politically unattractive for officials to raise their own salaries. To correct this, the Commission recommended a revised process whereby elected officials receive automatic increases through an administrative procedure, like that of other city employees. He remarked that the mayor's salary is particularly out of step with the City's neighboring communities, particularly since Lakewood's mayor serves also as Director of Public Safety. Some communities have a separate position for the Director of Public Safety.

President O'Malley thanked the Commission for its service. He questioned the Commission's recommendation to revise the mechanism for salary increases, noting that the Commission's role in the process is relatively new and approved by voters in the Charter re-write a few years prior. He reminded everyone that Council went 34 years without a pay increase. Without a recommendation for an increase to consider this year, Council will go eight years without an increase.

Mr. Kowalski replied that the Civil Service Commission had made recommendations to the Charter Commission regarding the process and the Charter Commission declined to act. He noted that because salaries can not be increased during current terms that the process is automatically behind the curve in a way in which an annual adjustment would not be.

President O'Malley articulated that the current process allows Council to receive an increase by taking no action on Civil Service recommendations, which is different from Council voting for an increase.

The Committee discussed the mayor's salary rank relative to other salaries within the City. Ms. Swallow noted that the chiefs and directors typically make at or above \$100,000, which are competitive and appropriate salaries for the jobs. She also referenced collective bargaining agreements where sergeants, lieutenants and captains have potential to make over \$100,000.

President O'Malley remarked that having the mayor's direct reports could result in a leadership crisis if the office were vacated. He noted that when the mayor resigned in 2010 and each person in the line of succession declined to take the position.

Councilmember Bullock disagreed that the situation in 2010 was related to compensation and stated that Lakewood has an abundance of candidates. He remarked that although he is uncomfortable talking about salary adjustments during the current budget challenges that he is hopeful those challenges will be resolved by 2024 when the proposed increase will take effect. He stated that the proposed increase is reasonable.

Councilmembers discussed the importance of providing fair compensation for the position. President O'Malley stated that the position should not be lucrative, but the salary should be enough so that the position is possible for everyone.

Ms. Swallow remarked on the process moving forward explaining that Council may accept, reject, or take no action with in 90 days. The ongoing process by which salaries are increased can be addressed separately at a future time.

Mr. Kowalski concluded that should Council reject the proposed increase in the mayor's salary that no raise will be possible until 2028.

Approval of the minutes of the July 13, 2020 Committee of the Whole.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2020 Committee of the Whole. A roll call vote was conducted as follows:

Yeas: Bullock, Kepple, Litten, Neff, O'Malley, Rader, Shachner

Nays: none

Motion passed. Minutes approved.

Communication from Councilmember Kepple regarding virtual meeting technology & accessibility.

President O'Malley articulated that he agreed with the recommendations in Ms. Kepple's communication which include moving to Zoom. He expressed optimism that Zoom may be a solution to the meeting disruptions Council has been experiencing.

IT Manager Michael Coletta explained that his department is currently in the process of purchasing Zoom. He expressed confidence that now is a good time to make the transition and discussed some features of Zoom that make it preferable. He noted that back in April, Zoom was getting a lot of negative attention for security issues which it has since fixed.

The Committee discussed renewing the Granicus eComment feature which Council used on a trial basis from April through June. Councilmember Kepple advocated for the feature, discussing its potential to pair well with Zoom.

Clerk Bach provided the price point of that feature and pointed to areas of the Council Office budget which could be used to pay for it.

Councilmember Rader pointed to features within YouTube and Zoom that may serve the same purpose of eComment. Councilmember Kepple replied that eComment is preferred because it is asynchronous with the meetings.

It was concluded that Council leadership and staff will work with IT to implement and test out best practices over the next three weeks and have something ready to go by September 8th.

Committee of the Whole adjourned at 7:17 p.m.