

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE COUNCIL COMPENSATION  
AND CHARTER STUDY COMMITTEE**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Council Compensation and Charter Study Committee convened in a regular meeting at 7:15 p.m. on March 1, 2007, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Assembly Room.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Present: Members Bailey, Busch, Fox, Lee, Messerlian, Rische, Sargent, Shwartz, and Skoll

Absent: Member Fitch

Also Present: Assistant to the City Manager Chaparyan  
Deputy City Attorney Strader

**3. REPORT OF STAFF ON THE POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

Assistant to the City Manager Chaparyan reported that the affidavit had been posted.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 15, 2007**

**MOTION:** Member Messerlian, seconded by Member Busch, moved for the approval of the February 15, 2007 Council Compensation and Charter Study Committee minutes as submitted; hearing no objection, Chairperson Lee so ordered.

**6. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**1. City Council provisions for compensation;**

Assistant to the City Manager Chaparyan reviewed the following information, as requested by the Committee on February 15, 2007:

1. Dates of Surveys
2. Total compensation and benefit package of current Council members
3. Matrix spreadsheet of South Bay Cities, Southern California and Northern California Charter cities (research in process)
4. Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) for City Council, City Clerk and City Treasurer
5. Compensation of General Law cities of similar size
6. Finance department's reimbursement procedures
7. How City Charter cities set their compensation levels-either through Charter of Resolution (research in process)
8. Test of Assembly Bill (AB) 1234

9. Prior Charter amendments from 1956, 1966, 1968, and 1976
10. Total number of Torrance residents and number of registered voters
11. Information on cities that have changed their compensation over the last few years (research in process)
12. Chart of elected City Clerks for General Law and Charter cities
13. Email communication from member Karen Fitch on 2/27/07

Committee members clarified the reimbursement of expenses process with staff and requested additional information on appointed City Clerks and Treasures relative to who is the appointing authority and supervisor (City Council or City Manager).

Chairperson Lee then asked each Committee member their thoughts on City Council's current compensation and possible adjustment.

Noting Member Fitch's submitted comparison chart on compensation, Member Fox stated that \$100 seems like a slap in the face to the City's elected officials. She noted that the majority of the electorate don't understand, or are unaware of the enormous amount of time and effort put in by City Council members.

Member Skoll stated she believes the \$100 compensation amount is antiquated and needs to be improved upon. Referring to Long Beach's compensation of \$16,875, she inquired as to how many meetings their council members attend compared to Torrance council members.

Member Busch agreed that the \$100.00 compensation should be increased, but noted that Long Beach is three times the size of Torrance and is not a good comparison. He suggested Pasadena be used as a comparison city.

Member Rische concurred that \$100 is low and the amount should be adjusted; however, she believes City Council candidates are aware of this amount when they run for office, and the current compensation amount will not stop those who are interested from running.

Member Bailey noted his agreement that \$100 is too low, but stated his concern with including a Charter provision that would automatically adjust the salary using cost of living or some other type of component. Member Rische indicated that she would not support a Charter amendment that included such a provision.

Member Sargent indicated that she too believes the compensation should be adjusted, but believes such an amendment will be difficult to pass with the voters. She agreed that Long Beach is not a good comparison city and pointed out that Assembly Bill 1234 regulates automatic salary adjustments to no more than 5%.

Member Shwartz commented on the importance of using comparable cities. She shared that at this point she is unclear as to if the \$100 is appropriate, because it is difficult to separate out the additional compensation, i.e. car allowance, insurance, etc.

In regard to comparison cities, Member Busch suggested Santa Clarita be used in addition to Pasadena.

Chairperson Lee suggested that a compensation chart of Charter cities under the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and within populations of 100,000 to 200,000 to Torrance, be used as a comparison tool.

Member Messerlian stated that \$100 is probably not sufficient compensation, but put forth the question on whether there should be compensation in the first place. He shared that in his eight years on City Council, he never looked at the \$100 as a salary but rather as an honorarium for service, and that he declined the insurance benefits because he didn't need it. He also noted his agreement with Member Sargent that an amendment to increase compensation will be hard to pass with the voters.

Chairperson Lee pointed out that City Council's "total" compensation including other items like travel, car allowances, is more like \$900 per month, and that all expense records are open to the public for review. He also talked on the possibility of using a mechanism to adjust the compensation to those of General Law cities.

Member Shwartz shared that as a resident and commissioner, she believes the City is run well by its employees with the blessing of the City Council. She wants employees paid fairly across the board and believes City Council should receive the amount of compensation necessary to perform their duties.

The Committee discussed reimbursable expenses, with staff clarifying that Council members are reimbursed for "actual and necessary expenses" and does not include expenses of a spouse.

Member Sargent commented that a compensation increase may allow candidates who couldn't afford to run the opportunity to do so. Chairperson Lee felt that was a good point, noting that time requirements of the office and time off from work may result in loss of pay for some.

Member Bailey referred to the bond issue that is also scheduled for the November ballot, and questioned the possible impact that fiscal decision will have on a proposed compensation adjustment. Chairperson Lee reiterated his believe that the Committee's job is to make recommendations; the City Council will then decide what will be voted on.

- 2. a) Information and agenda for next meeting;**
- b) Instruction to staff.**

Chairperson Lee asked that for next meeting, each Committee member come up with their own personal recommendation for compensation adjustment. The Committee will further discuss the issue and see if a consensus can be reached.

The Committee discussed the importance of using total compensation amounts not just salary for their review process. Member Rische pointed out that the Charter provision is specific to a salary compensation amount, and that voters need to be aware that the amount does not represent total compensation.

Chairperson Lee asked staff to provide a total compensation comparison of those Charter cities under the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

that are within populations of 100,000 to 200,000 to Torrance. Member Messerlian asked that any differed compensation benefits be included as well.

**6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Kurt Weiderman, 3337 West 166<sup>th</sup> Street, noted that the Committee's mission is broad in scope and short in timeline, and shared that he found Member Messerlian comments on whether Council should be compensated at all thought provoking.

Charles Deemer, 212 25<sup>th</sup> Street, spoke on the issue of adjusting compensation by using a neutral compensation factor. He talked on the process of adjusting minimum wage and how something along that line may be something the electorate can understand and buy into.

Committee members thanked staff for their responsiveness and the high quality of their submittals.

To ensure that all committee members are reviewing the same information, Chairperson Lee asked staff to forward the requested information to members through Saturday (March 10<sup>th</sup>). After that date, any remaining information should be distributed at the March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:40 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Thursday, March 15, 2007 p.m., in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Assembly Room.

Approved as Submitted March 15, 2007 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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