

**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