

Meeting of the Northampton Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board (EOCAB)

Monday, January 30, 2022 • 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

[Online Zoom Meeting](#) (Meeting ID: 848 0435 0600)

Minutes

Board members present

- John Bidwell – Chair
- Tara Brewster
- Felicia Corbeil
- Sam Hopper – Clerk
- Javier Luengo-Garrido

Board members absent

- Peter Whalen – Vice Chair

Minutes

Call Meeting To Order

- Meeting called to order at 5:33 p.m.
- Roll Call
 - John Bidwell: Present
 - Sam Hopper: Present
 - Felicia Corbeil: Present
 - Javier Luengo-Garrido: Present
- *Tara Brewster joined meeting after roll call*
- Meeting is being video recorded

Public Comment

- *None - no members of the public present*

Approval Of Minutes From Previous Meeting(s)

- Javier Luengo-Garrido moved to approve the minutes from January 9, 2023 meeting;
Felicia Corbeil seconded
 - John Bidwell: Yes
 - Felicia Corbeil: Yes
 - Sam Hopper: Yes
 - Javier Luengo-Garrido: Yes
- Minutes approved unanimously

Discussion Items

Assignment Updates Regarding Information Gathering Plan

- Update on compiling data based on what was discussed at last meeting
 - Sam compiled data from the Mayor's office, Northampton Human Resources, and U.S. Census Bureau data that was shared with the board including:
 - Northampton [ordinance](#) regarding compensation of elected officials - update to Addendum 1 from [2014 EOCAB report](#)
 - FY22 benchmark survey results - partial update to Addendum 2 from [2014 EOCAB report](#)
 - Benchmark survey results only available for Chief Administrative Officer (i.e., Mayor for cities)
 - No information available in the benchmark survey for city council and school committee salaries
 - We also have mayoral salaries in Massachusetts from Collins Center for Public Management at UMass Boston's survey in October 2022
 - Mayor's office shared an update to Addendum 2 from [2014 EOCAB report](#), but based off the 2014 benchmarking cities, which are not necessarily comparable today
 - Sam compiled U.S. Census Bureau data and narrowed to 20 municipalities similar to Northampton in both median household income and population
 - Of those 20, 12 have Mayor/Council forms of government, as opposed to Council/Manager or Town Meetings with a Manager and Selectboard
 - [FY22 list of Northampton employees' gross earnings](#) - update to Addendum 3 from [2014 EOCAB report](#)
 - The Mayor's salary is behind 100 other city employees (employees' city departments are listed)
 - Job descriptions for the city's elected officials are listed in the city's [Charter](#)
 - Human Resources shared an update to part-time elected officials enrolled in the Municipal Health Plan - update to the table on page 6 from [2014 EOCAB report](#)
 - Discussion on data found and what's still needed
 - Important to get salaries and part-time/full-time status for City Council and School Committees
 - Understand how much time is being put into the job
 - Will narrow list to 10 similar municipalities and only look at western Massachusetts, maybe some central Massachusetts municipalities
 - Eastern Massachusetts isn't comparable with cost of living and other price points

- Also look at cost of living - previous board looked at cost of living
- Will use government inflation index
 - [Consumer Price Index Inflation Calculator](#) referenced to in 2014 report
- 2014 report used the following data points to benchmark similar municipalities
 - Average city population
 - Per capita income
 - Number of households
 - Median Household income
 - City budget
 - Total compensation per position
 - Sam will revisit with Northampton Human Resources to specifically ask if these data points are available
- How many hours part-time elected officials are working
- Have departments increased in Northampton since 2014 - additional department is additional department head for Mayor to oversee
- Next steps for data
 - Sam and Javier will decide 5-10 comparable cities to use as benchmarking
 - Javier will find salaries and part-time/full time status for city council and school committee members of the 5-10 comparable cities
 - Felicia will find cost of living information for the 5-10 comparable cities
 - Sam will ask Northampton Human Resources if there is updated info for all the data points used in the 2014 report
- Update on questionnaire to send to current and past Northampton elected officials
 - Felicia and Tara put together a Google Doc and will share with the board so it can be workshopped at the next meeting
 - Allowed to be anonymous
 - Questions include:
 - What position, how long was it held, and what years
 - Questions about pay & benefits
 - If they believe the compensation is/was fair
 - Why they sought out the position they served in
 - Reasons for stepping down from position
 - Final question asks if they have interest in meeting with a member of EOCAB to share more information
 - If yes, add name and contact info (no longer anonymous)
 - Suggestions for additional questions
 - What type of work are you doing concurrently

- Include more context, e.g., time commitment, on what a follow up conversation would be with a board member
 - Important to understand both how much time spent doing the work and how much time they believe is necessary to do the work well
 - Suggestion to invite elected officials to a meeting to share more information
- Update on conversations had with 2014 EOCAB
 - Things not understood early in process that caused confusion, including how process of the EOCAB's work unfolds
 - Clarification that EOCAB recommendations are merely recommendations
 - Any recommendations would need 2/3 of the Council to approve for them to go into effect
 - Emphasized importance of interviews with city leaders - invite people to speak at our meetings and proactively speak with folks
- Suggestion to look at number of days off as a benefit
 - Pattern of employers looking at increasing the number of days off
- City is actively seeking a 7th member for EOCAB and we should know soon if we have an additional member

Adjourn

- Sam Hopper moved to adjourn meeting, John Bidwell seconded
 - John Bidwell: Yes
 - Tara Brewster: Yes
 - Felicia Corbeil: Yes
 - Sam Hopper: Yes
- Meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

Upcoming Meeting

February 6, 2023 @ 5:30 via Zoom