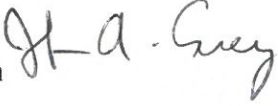


**City of Albuquerque**  
P.O. BOX 1293, ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87103

## Interoffice Memorandum

February 9, 2017

**TO:** Natalie Y. Howard, City Clerk

**FROM:** John A. Carey, Chairman, Citizens' Independent Salary Commission 

**SUBJECT:** Salaries for the Mayor and City Councilors

City of Albuquerque voters approved the Citizens' Independent Salary Commission (Commission) as an amendment to the City Charter (Article XVIII) in the election of October 6, 2009. The Commission is authorized to establish the salary structures of the Mayor and City Councilors. The Commission evaluates the annual salaries in accordance with salary and benefit data and determines if an increase or decrease to salaries is warranted.

Current and prior Commission review processes include, studying the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor and City Councilors, collecting and analyzing salary and benefit data of like-sized municipalities, collecting input on an interactive website and survey, and consideration of past salary increases. Information from all of the processes above contributed to the Commission's decision.

The decision of the Commission is the salary and benefits of the Mayor and City Councilors is to remain the same through the 2019 municipal election. The salary structure for the Mayor and City Councilors is as follows:

Mayor salary - \$125,000.00  
City Councilors salary - \$30,000.00  
Council President salary - \$32,000.00

The Commission thanks the Mayor and City Councilors for their dedicated service to the City of Albuquerque and its citizens.

The complete report is available at [www.cabq.gov/audit/citizens-independent-salary-commission](http://www.cabq.gov/audit/citizens-independent-salary-commission). If you have additional questions contact: John Carey, Chairman, 505 338-0905; [john@nmscpa.org](mailto:john@nmscpa.org)

**Citizens' Independent Salary Commission**  
**Report and Recommendations**  
**February 9, 2017**

**Executive Summary and Recommendation**

As a result of the Regular Municipal Election on October 6, 2009, the voters of Albuquerque established the Citizens' Independent Salary Commission (Commission). The Commission is charged with studying and setting the salaries of the Mayor and City Councilors. One year prior to each regular municipal election, the Commission reviews the salaries paid by the City of Albuquerque to the Mayor and City Councilors, and determines if the salaries should be increased, decreased, or remain unchanged. This is the fourth review conducted by the Commission.

Based on the Commission's independent research and analysis, the salaries of the Mayor and City Councilors will remain the same through the 2019 municipal election. The salaries are as follows:

Mayor salary - \$125,000.00  
City Councilors salary - \$30,000.00  
Council President salary - \$32,000.00

The major factors contributing to this recommendation are as follows:

- Current salary and benefit structures for the Albuquerque Mayor and City Councilors are comparable to same-size cities in which elected officials have similar responsibilities.
- The increase in salaries authorized in the 2015 Review Process established salary and benefit structures at competitive levels of compensation.
- Current salary and benefit structures provide an equitable compensation commensurate with responsibilities of the positions.
- The Commission is mindful of the economic conditions existing in the private and public sectors of New Mexico. A decision to maintain current salaries through the 2019 municipal election for the Mayor and City Councilors reflects that economic reality.

**Methodology**

In its research and deliberations for this report, the Commission directed the Office of Internal Audit (OIA) staff to update the survey information previously received from regional and comparably sized cities by:

- Researching their websites and contacting them,
- Compiling the updated information,
- Summarizing the compiled information,
- Analyzing the information, and
- Identifying variances between 2015 and 2017.

OIA staff also compiled a post historic script detail summary of the activities performed by the Commission from October 6, 2009 through the present. The detail summary identified that the Commission:

- Identified comparably sized cities,
- Researched, analyzed and deliberated about information provided by surveys from the comparably sized cities, such as:
  - Population, number of employees, budget, hours worked by and salaries earned by each elected official,
- Studied the roles of the Mayor and City Councilors,
- Sought input from the public on an interactive website,
- Listened to and received input regarding work hours from the Mayor and members of the City Council,
- Discussed frequently, as a group, the results of information received,
- Communicated its results to the public, and
- Held three public, town hall meetings to seek public input.

Through this process, the Commission established a firm research base and equitable process for future Commissioners to use for identifying future salary increases/decreases for the City's Mayor and City Councilors.

It is important to note the Commission remained steadfast in its mission to look at the positions and not the individuals who currently hold them.

The Commission also considered the following facts presented in the 2015 Salary Commission Report.

- *The Mayor's salary, currently \$109,325\* has not been meaningfully increased in decades. The Mayor works full time and the hours worked and scope of the job are demanding. The Mayor is the Chief Executive Officer of a governmental body that serves a population of 560,000 with a budget of \$900,000,000 and more than 6,000 employees. The job entails duties occurring all times of the day and evening. The salary increase granted will make the Mayor's salary more competitive with other cities in the southwest.*
  - *\*The current Mayor opted to take a five percent (5%) salary decrease in 2010; therefore, he is paid \$103,854 annually.*
- *Albuquerque City Councilors had not received a meaningful salary increase in decades until this Commission raised Councilor salaries to \$17,500 in 2010. Following exhaustive interviews with the Councilors, the Commission learned that their scope of work is very broad; that most work almost full time hours; and the job entails duties occurring all times of the day and evening. In its research of comparably sized cities, the Commission learned that salaries of Albuquerque's Councilors fall at the lower end of the spectrum. In fact, the salary increases granted now bring Albuquerque's Councilors to a level equal to Councilor salaries in the smaller New Mexico cities of Las Cruces and Santa Fe.*

- *The Commission carefully reviews the salary of the Mayor and Council every two years, so it has the ability to react to changing economic conditions and realities, and elects to do so at this time. No adjustments have been made for Councilors since 2010 and no adjustments have been made to the Mayoral salary since the creation of the Commission.*

### **Current Salary Information**

Mayor salary - \$125,000.00  
City Councilors salary - \$30,000.00  
Council President salary - \$32,000.00

### **Duties of Office**

The Commission studied the requirements of both the Mayor and City Councilors' positions during its initial deliberations dating back to 2010. That work included interviews with the City Councilors to seek information regarding typical daily and weekly functions, the amount of time devoted, and motivation for seeking office. The amount of time devoted varies among City Councilors; however, on average it seems to require 30 or more hours per week. The Mayor's position is more than a regular 40-hour week. Since the original charter of 1974, the Commission is convinced that the duties of office have evolved and significantly increased over time.

The current decision to maintain the salaries of the Mayor and City Councilors reflect past salary increase decisions, current analysis of same-size city administrations, current scope of responsibilities of the Mayor and City Councilors, compensatory factors regarding the positions, and the economic climate of New Mexico.

### **Charter Amendment**

Through the charter amendment, the Commission was given the authority to evaluate the annual salaries and determine whether they should be increased or decreased. The Commission has authority to consider all factors relevant to the salaries. Parameters given to the Commission are as follows:

- (a) The Commission shall consist of five members selected by the Accountability in Government Committee. All members shall be residents of the City of Albuquerque and shall not be an officer, official or employee of the city or an immediate family member of the same. The term of each member shall be for four years, unless a member is selected to fill a vacancy, and no member shall be appointed to more than two terms. The initial terms of members of the newly established Commission shall be staggered; the initial term for two members shall be two years and the initial term of three members shall be four years.

- (b) At least one year prior to each regular municipal election, the Commission shall review the salaries paid by the city to the Mayor and Councilors. If after such review the Commission determines that the salary should be increased or decreased, the Commission shall file a written salary schedule with the City Clerk indicating the proposed salary.
- (c) Changes to the salaries shall not be effective for the incumbent Mayor and Councilors, but shall be effective at the beginning of the next term.
- (d) Any change to salaries recommended by the Commission shall be subject to the referendum procedures as provided for in Article III, Section 2 of the Charter.
- (e) All meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public and subject to the Open Meetings Act, Sections 10-15-1 et seq. NMSA 1978.

### **Commission Members**

The Accountability in Government Oversight Committee appointed the following people to serve on the Commission:

| <u>Name</u>                | <u>Term End Date</u> |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| John A. Carey, Chairperson | 2018                 |
| Joe Conte                  | 2018                 |
| Randolph M. Sanchez        | 2018                 |
| Charles Milazzo            | 2020                 |
| Alan Schwartz              | 2020                 |

As specified in its charter, the Commission was selected through a process established by the Accountability in Government Oversight Committee. Commissioners have no ties or conflicts with the City of Albuquerque, the Mayor or City Council. The Commission carefully approached its work with thoughtful consideration to research, and the utmost transparency.

The five members of the Commission produced this report and recommendations with the assistance of exceptional staff support from the City's Office of Internal Audit.

### **Summary**

The citizens of Albuquerque elected to establish the Citizens' Independent Salary Commission. In compliance with meeting the objectives of the Commission, the decision-making process includes the research, analysis, discussion, and application of a wide range of factors concerning the salary structure of the Mayor and City Councilors. This is an exhaustive process in which rigorous standards and documentation are maintained. Review of data and documents can be obtained by contacting Chairperson, John A. Carey.