

LOCAL OFFICERS COMPENSATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FROM JUNE 7, 2011

The Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Gary Brown at 5:35 p.m.

Chairperson Gary Brown called the roll with the following members present: Frances Denny, James Graham, Joshua Hill, Betty Lee Ongley, Norm Terry and Gary Brown. Mike Stoddard was absent. Also in attendance was Deputy City Clerk Adam Herringa.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Approval of the June 2, 2009 Meeting Minutes: Motion by Graham, seconded by Ongley, to approve the June 2, 2009 Meeting Minutes as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS

There were no statements offered by citizens.

NEW BUSINESS – REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL AND MAYOR SALARIES

Chairperson Brown inquired if there were any thoughts and comments related to the 2009 Report of the Local Officers Compensation Commission. There being none, Mr. Brown then reviewed the ordinance governing the Local Officers Compensation Commission (LOCC) and highlighted the fact that it is up to the LOCC to make a determination of City Council salary and not a recommendation. Ms. Ongley concurred.

Ms. Denny disclosed that she is Executive Director for Catholic Family Services and that Councilmember Randall is on the Board of Directors for that organization. Mr. Brown inquired if, as a consequence, she felt uncomfortable with making a determination on City Council salaries. Ms. Denny indicated that she does not feel as though there is a conflict, but wanted to make sure that she disclosed the information.

Mr. Brown then referenced the May 2011 City Council and Mayor Salary Comparison that was provided and asked if anyone had any comments. Ms. Ongley stated that it would appear that the salary for the Mayor of Portage was on the low end when compared to others and that the salary for City Council was more in the middle. Mr. Brown commented that, when compared to the City of Jackson, their population is less than Portage while their salaries are higher. He also pointed out that there are situations wherein the opposite is true, as in the case of Novi.

Chairperson Brown moved on to the discussion of the salaries for Mayor and City Council. Ms. Ongley pointed out that whatever salary is determined would be in place for the next two years. Mr. Graham stated that he did a quick tabulation based on the responses he received from Councilmembers to an inquiry he made as to their feelings about their compensation. He provided a handout to the group and stated that, among the respondents, one was in favor of a 100% reduction in salary, one favored a 20% reduction and others wanted to keep it the same. Mr. Graham then referenced his handout and indicated that, if an average is taken, there should be a 17% reduction in the salary of Mayor and Council. He then stated that some members of the LOCC found the information he obtained from City Council to be helpful and that others did not. Mr. Hill inquired if the group was considering the responses of Council as part of the official material. Mr. Brown responded that this was a source of contention and continued by stating that it is the role of the LOCC to determine City Council salary; furthermore, individual members of

the City Council may donate or contribute their salary if they desire. He then pointed out that the income is taxed but it is not the role of the LOCC to figure out how it would work if a Councilmember chose to donate his or her salary.

Ms. Ongley stated that the LOCC is composed of citizens and that she took exception to City Council being asked for their thoughts on their compensation.

Mr. Terry stated that the inquiry simply asked for Council's feeling on the matter – for their opinion. Mr. Hill concurred and inquired as to how City Council reviews the LOCC report. Mr. Brown responded and discussion followed.

Mr. Brown then asked each member of the LOCC to give their opinion on whether the salaries of City Council and the Mayor should be increased, decreased or kept the same. Mr. Terry responded by stating that he was in favor of keeping things as they are and felt, when compared with other cities, Portage is where it should be. He emphasized that any increase would be inappropriate.

Mr. Hill opined that the role of City Council is service to the community and that a public service mentality should be encouraged. He stated that sometimes he wished there was no compensation but agreed that keeping Council salary at current levels is justified.

Ms. Ongley indicated that serving on City Council requires a major time commitment, effort and energy and that she would not like to see a reduction. She also stated that, given the economy, she would not support an increase.

Ms. Denny agreed with Ms. Ongley that the City Council works very hard and spoke in support of maintaining the current compensation level and that the salary may help a Councilmember get a babysitter, if needed, or pick up a little dinner in advance of a meeting. There were no other comments.

Motion by Ongley, seconded by Graham, to approve the proposed LOCC Report and determination that there be no change to the salaries of members of the City Council and the Mayor and submit the report to the Portage City Council for review. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0. Discussion followed and, after some minor technical revisions, the final version of the report was approved by consensus.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Graham, seconded by Terry, to adjourn the meeting. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0 and Chairperson Brown adjourned the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk