

Blue Ribbon Committee Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2024

1. Roll Call

Municipal Policy Analyst called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Present were Committee members Marcy Murningham, Linda Scott, Susan Falkoff, Jimmy Mello, Christine Cole, Sarah Baker, and Chair Jack Bartley. Doug Newton was present as staff for the Committee.

2. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes 10.1.24

Jimmy Mello made a motion, seconded by Christine Cole, that the minutes be approved as written. Marcy Murningham made an amendment that the language of her question to Councilor Feltner be changed to “Marcy Murningham asked Councilor Feltner how she learns from interacting frequently with other elected and appointed officials.” The Committee voted seven to zero to approve the minutes with this amendment.

3. Q&A with Mary Flanders Aicardi, Collins Center for Public Management

Mary Flanders Aicardi began by saying that she leads the HR practice for the Collins Center for Public Management at the McCormick School of Government at UMass Boston. She left her job as HR Director for the City of Watertown twenty years ago. She explained that the Collins Center has done a study of City Council salaries across the Commonwealth. She suggested that the Committee consider the impact of different forms of government in their deliberations (Council-manager, Council-mayor, etc.). She said that the data shows that the Council tends to be paid higher in a Council-mayor form of government. She suggested that despite the need for viewing data, the Committee is now in a strong position to “go with their gut” and pick a number that they feel is right. She then took questions from the Committee which included questions about the differential between the Council President’s salary and that of other Councilors, linking the Councilors’ salary to the Council President’s, linking the Council’s salaries to that of city employees, and correlations between various data points (budget size, population size, etc.) and Council salaries.

4. Discussion

A. Structure and layout of report to City Council

Discussion took place as to how the Committee will deliver its eventual report. There was some discussion as to if the Committee will simply issue a recommendation and briefly explain its work or offer any other input to the Council and the public. This discussion was tabled to the next meeting.

B. Proposals & figures for eventual report to City Council

Committee members who had done independent research and made proposals each gave a summary of their work. This included Linda Scott, Sarah Baker, and Jimmy Mello. It was noted by several Committee members that all proposals made up to this point were within a relatively small range. Christine Cole made a motion, seconded by Jimmy Mello, that the Committee recommend a salary of \$15,000 for City

Councilors and \$25,000 for the Council President. After discussion, this motion was withdrawn. Susan Falkoff then made a motion, seconded by Jimmy Mello, that the Committee recommend a salary of \$15,000 for City Councilors. The Committee voted seven to zero to approve this recommendation. Conversation then resumed as to the salary of the Council President, and the Committee agreed to table this discussion to the next meeting.

5. Public Comment

Vinnie Piccirilli, a City Councilor, explained that city employees can only take one salary from the city. This would limit any discussion of a link between Council and School Committee salaries. Elodia Thomas suggested that the Council President's salary as current is roughly 25% of the City Manager's salary.

6. Adjournment

Susan Falkoff made a motion, seconded by Jimmy Mello, that the Committee adjourn the meeting. The Committee voted seven to zero to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 PM.