

October 14, 2020

To: Mayor Christian Price and Members of the City Council

Re: Elected Official Compensation

Once predominantly rural, the United States is today a highly urbanized country, and more than three-quarters of its citizens now live in cities, small and large or the suburbs. This statistic makes city governments critically important in the overall pattern of American government. To a greater extent than on the federal or state level, the city directly serves the needs of the people, providing everything from police and fire protection to sanitary codes, health regulations, environmental protection, public transportation, housing and more. City government and its elected officials are the lead voice on behalf of their citizens to state and federal electorate.

As French political scientist, Alexis de Tocqueville observed in *Democracy in America* “*Municipal institutions constitute the strength of free nations. Town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science; they bring it within the people’s reach; they teach [individuals] how to use and how to enjoy it.*” Through town halls and other means, cities are where citizens, elected leaders, business and nonprofit organizations can most easily connect and work together to improve their communities.

Today, the business of running America's cities is enormously complex. In fact, Lyndon B. Johnson once said, “***When the burdens of the presidency seem unusually heavy, I always remind myself it could be worse, I could be a mayor***”.

As someone who has worked with hundreds of elected officials over a long career, our elected officials try to do what is best for the City. No one knows better than I the time, the commitment, and the passion that our elected leaders put in to ensure that we have a future for our citizens, even to the point of allowing a future slate of elected officials to get the credit for the work they do today.

The City Council acts as the legislative branch of City government, as well as its policy-making body. The Council also looks to the city’s goals, major projects, and infrastructure improvements ranging from community growth to land use to finances and strategic planning. They are indispensable to me, the City Manager for leadership, legislative authority and accountability to our citizenry.

Today, a major topic of discussion when city manager’s assemble is the elected leadership of our many cities and other local governments. Today, more than ever before, we need highly qualified individuals to manage a diverse range of matters that requires time, study, availability and effort unmatched. As professional managers, we express concerns about the inhibitors that prohibit some of our best citizenry from seeking public office.

Those inhibitors, according to a panel of experts include:

- The office is a lot of work for little to no pay and lots of stress.
- Social media has opened the floodgates for increased public scrutiny and “hyper-intense” negativity aimed at candidates and sitting public officials...information is often unfounded, but believed that can create consequences for the person, their family, or their employment.
- People have to take time out of the lives to fill a public service role, time away from family and often time away from their employment that may affect their ability to provide for their families.

However, as difficult as it might be some days, public service is one of the most rewarding vocations that anyone can choose. When people go into public service for the right reasons and they work hard to do what is best for their constituency, then they feel the scrutiny is worth it. As a professional local government manager, and more importantly as a citizen, I applaud those who make the sacrifice to serve.

So today, I desire to address at least one of those listed inhibitors... that of fair and equitable compensation for our elected officials. While the range of pay is diverse among the various cities within the State of Arizona, it is essential to compare against cities of equivalent growth and development patterns. The basis for my comparisons is as follows:

- Size, population and future growth opportunities. The City of Maricopa has a planning area in excess of 250 square miles with an ultimate buildout population of over 600,000. Ultimately, the City of Maricopa will be larger than the cities of Chandler, Scottsdale, Gilbert, Tempe and others.
- Maricopa is a young city, with fast-paced growth, with unique challenges that will require elected officials to invest time and effort to acquire knowledge in a myriad of topics. Thus making us more comparable to cities like Queen Creek, Flagstaff, and Surprise.
- Maricopa is not a maintenance city, where both staff and elected officials only need to work to maintain a city that is built out. Decision made today, or not, will influence the future of the City of Maricopa.
- Population comparisons alone should not be the common denominator. Cities of growth, with smaller populations, do not have the staff and resources of larger populated cities. The demands on the elected officials is therefore greater.

The City of Maricopa is a dynamic growth city with a growing population ranked 16th fastest in the nation. It is therefore important that elected official enumeration remain in line with other similarly situated cities in order to attract qualified candidates for office. It is my recommendation that the Mayor and City Council consider by requisite vote to establish the following salaries to commence on January 1, 2021 for the Mayor, Vice-Mayor and City Council as follows:

Section 1: Salary	Proposed	Current
Mayor:	\$35,000	\$23,000
Councilmember:	\$23,000	\$18,000

Submitted by,

Ricky A. Horst

Ricky A. Horst
City Manager

Cc: Denis Fitzgibbons, City Attorney
Office of the City Clerk

Comparable

City	Mayor	Council
Surprise	\$45,987	\$26,776
Queen Creek	\$37,741	\$22,392
Flagstaff	\$38,500	\$25,500
Casa Grande	\$16,297	\$ 9,053
Avondale	\$19,009	\$ 9,505