



CITY OF HARRISONBURG CITY MANAGER

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801
OFFICE (540) 432-7701 • FAX (540) 432-7778

TO: City Council
FROM: Chris Brown, City Attorney
DATE: April 26, 2022
RE: Proposed Ordinance Adjusting City Council Salaries

Summary: A proposal that City Council adopt an ordinance increasing the salary of each City Council member to \$18,000 per year and the Mayor to \$20,000.

Background: Currently, members of City Council receive \$12,000 annually, with the exception of the Mayor, who receives \$15,000. Council salaries were last changed as of July 1, 2004. At that time, the City had an estimated population of 43,409. The most recent population estimate for the City is 55,220.

Key Issues: Section 15.2-1414.6 of the Code of Virginia authorizes cities to set salaries for members of City Council, up to a maximum amount that increases with the city's population. Harrisonburg, as a city with a population between 35,000 and 74,999, can set annual salaries of up to \$20,000 for the Mayor and up to \$18,000 for the remaining members of City Council.

According to a 2016 report from the Virginia Commission on Local Government, Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Richmond, Newport News, Hampton, and Portsmouth offer the maximum salary allowed by the state code to members of City Council. Alexandria, through a special provision in its charter, pays salaries above the maximum set in the state code. Since 2016, Charlottesville and Fredericksburg have increase salaries for City Council members to the maximum permitted by the state code.

Changes to City Council salaries must be done by ordinance adopted at least four months prior to the city's next general election. The increase cannot take effect until July 1 following the next general election. Should City Council approve this ordinance, the new salaries would take effect July 1, 2023, the earliest date allowed by Virginia Code.

Staff believe that it would be appropriate, after 19 years and more than 27% population growth at the current salaries, to adjust the Mayor's salary to \$20,000 per year and the remaining members' salaries to \$18,000 per year.

Environmental Impact: N/A

Fiscal Impact: \$29,000 annually



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Prior Actions:

Alternatives:

- (a) Adopt Section 2-4-2 of the City Code as proposed
- (b) Adopt Section 2-4-2 of the City Code with alterations
- (c) Decline to take action

Community Engagement:

Recommendation: Staff recommends alternative (a).

Attachments:

Review:

The initiating Department Director will place in Legistar, in sequence of transmittal, the names of each department that must initial their review in order for this item to be placed on the City Council agenda. The completion of review only addresses the readiness of the issue for Council consideration. This does not address the recommendation for approval or denial of the issue.

