

City of Portland Independent Salary Commission



Final Report September 2023

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OVERVIEW

- The Salary Commission was **created with the passage of Measure 26-228 in November 2022.**
- Its purpose is to **remove the real or perceived conflicts of interest** of elected officials setting their own salaries during annual budgets.
- The Salary Commission has **independent authority** and decisions are not subject to City Council approval
- The Salary Commission is tasked with **setting salaries for Portland's future mayor, auditor, and 12 councilors.**
- The Salary Commission is composed of 5 commissioners and 2 alternates, who are all **HR professionals with compensation expertise**, selected through a citywide application process and appointed by the Mayor and City Council.
- **The Salary Commission members are volunteers**, who are either unpaid or who have received a one-time stipend to offset the costs of volunteering, like childcare during meetings or travel costs.
- Salaries set by the Salary Commission will **take effect in January 2025**, when the newly elected officials take office, and **do not change pay for current elected officials.** The Salary Commission took steps to limit influence from current elected officials.
- Moving forward, a **new Salary Commission is appointed every two years after initial implementation in 2025** to evaluate and make amendments to salaries. The next Salary Commission will be appointed by the new City Administrator and will be seated by January 1, 2027.

PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The Salary Commission is an independent public body required to follow public meetings law. Salary Commissioners are considered voluntary public officials required to follow transparency and disclosure laws. In addition, commissioners received training in public ethics and responsibilities, anti-harassment and discrimination, and shared equity language.

The following is a brief description of the meetings and public engagement held by the Salary Commission. See **Appendix** for a detailed description of each meeting, including meeting notes, presentations, research materials, and engagement materials.

Meetings Summary

- The Salary Commission met 11 times from March 2023 to August 2023.
- Ten meetings were hybrid with in-person options.
- Five meetings provided opportunity for public comments.
- Ten meetings included Spanish and American Sign Language interpretation

<i>Timeline</i>	
Date	Focus
March	Build Foundation and Determine Methodology to Set Salaries
Tue., March 28, 6-8pm	Commission meeting #1
April	Build Foundation and Determine Methodology to Set Salaries
Tue., April 11, 6-8pm	Commission meeting #2
Thu., April 27, 6-8pm	Commission meeting #3 (Public Comment)
May	Research, Analysis, Initial Recommendations
Tue., May 9, 6-8pm	Commission meeting #4 (Public comment)
Tue., May 23, 6-8pm	Commission meeting #5 (Public comment)
Tue., May 30, 6-8pm	Commission meeting #6 (Extended public comment)
June	Release draft Salary Proposal
Tue., June 13, 6-8pm	Commission meeting #7 (Public comment)
Thu., June 15	Draft proposal released, public engagement <u>begins</u>
Tue., June 27, 6-8pm	Commission meeting #8 (Listening Session)
July	Revise and Vote
Sun., July 16	Public engagement on draft proposal <u>ends</u>
Thu., July 20, 6-8pm	Commission meeting #9 (Review Feedback))
Tue., July 24, 6-8pm	Commission Meeting #10 (Vote)
August	Evaluation
Tue., August 22, 6-8pm	Commission meeting #11

Public Engagement Summary

The Salary Commission created and implemented a community engagement plan to invite feedback on their draft salary proposal.

- The Salary Commission released a survey to get feedback about the draft proposal. This survey was provided in multiple languages, was available in digital and paper copy form, and was linked in multiple social media posts.
- The public could provide comments in many other ways including:
 - Call 3-1-1 and share comments verbally and in any language,
 - Fill out an online transition comment form,
 - Send an email to: transition@portlandoregon.gov.
 - Mail comments to the Office of Management and Finance, Independent Salary Commission, 1120 SW 5th Ave., Room 901, Portland, OR 97204
- The Salary Commission hosted a public hearing on the draft proposal on Tuesday, June 27.
- Salary Commission materials were present at the public hearings held by the Independent District Commission on July 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, and 16.
- In total, the Salary Commission heard from 704 people.
 - 35 emails
 - 47 online comment forms
 - 8 public testifiers
 - 10 contacts at IDC hearings
 - 604 survey responses
- After the public comment period closed, the Salary Commission held two additional meetings to review feedback and amend the proposal before taking a final vote.

CONSTRAINTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the meetings, data, invited testimony, and public feedback, the Salary Commission identified the following constraints and conclusions that helped inform their final decision:

1. To attract a variety of qualified candidates, salaries should reflect the personal, opportunity, and financial costs involved in serving our community. For very practical reasons, **salaries should not be a barrier to attracting a diverse slate of candidates** with the talents, skills, and experiences Portlanders would find most valuable.
2. City Charter **explicitly prevents elected officials from working additional jobs or receiving outside income**. Pay could be a large deterrent to candidates who are:
 - not independently wealthy,
 - who don't have alternate income from sources like property (directly impacting communities who have been historically excluded from homeownership through policies like redlining), or
 - who don't have partners or family members to support them if the salaries are not adequate.
3. **All roles are full-time**. This is not the case for elected officials in every city but was an explicit intention of the Charter Commission and the historical and current reality of our elected officials.
4. The **approved salaries for the current elected officials** are:
 - Mayor – \$149,261*
 - Auditor – \$125,694
 - Commissioners – \$125,694

*Mayor Wheeler declined to accept a COLA increase in 2019. His actual salary is \$143,665.60.

5. Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) are increases in salaries to help employees maintain the value of their compensation against the cost of inflation. These increases are **not merit increases, but merely maintain the status quo**. None of the current elected officials have received COLAs since 2019, despite high inflation and cost of living increases, except the Mayor who has not received a COLA since 2018.
6. If current elected officials had received **COLAs through 2023/24** their salaries would be:
 - Mayor - \$159,245

- Auditor - \$134,098
 - Commissioners - \$134,098
7. Prior to 2020, elected officials had been approving their own COLAs, a conflict of interest the Salary Commission was created to remove. Future Salary Commissions will determine future COLAs.
 8. Elected officials **receive generous City of Portland benefits**, including healthcare, retirement, and other benefits.
 9. The City of Portland currently offers a **pay differential of \$1/hour for bilingual employees**, acknowledging the additional labor and increased access these employees provide because of their language skills.
 10. Salaries are **typically not decreased when adding additional positions**, such as expanding the number of councilors from 4 to 12, as approved by the Charter Reforms.
 11. While the councilors will no longer be managing bureaus, their roles are not intended to become less important, valuable, or time intensive. Instead, they **shift in focus to serving Portlanders more directly**. Without the need to manage bureaus, elected officials will be able to spend more time in the community, working on policies that affect their constituents directly.
 12. The city charter defines the roles and responsibilities for elected officers in the City of Portland. The needed talents, skills, and experience to perform those roles are **identified by the public through their votes**.
 13. Pay is typically tied to performance, and the **people provide elected officials with a job performance review** at every election by voting for the candidate that best reflects what Portland needs.
 14. There is a tension in all compensation decisions between budget constraints and objectives. The Salary Commission seeks to **find a balance** between fiscal responsibility by not underfunding roles to the detriment of the public and supporting the elected officials themselves.
 15. The City's budget is outside of the authority given to the Salary Commission by city charter. The City Budget Office will review the entire funding allocation that council offices receive to **determine what funding can be reallocated** based on anticipated staffing sizes and duties for the respective offices.

16. Pay decisions should **consider a range of data and be both quantitative**, considering information like market data, **as well as qualitative**, such as information from subject matter experts from the community around the dynamics of what prevents a wider range of people from running or staying in elected office.
17. While **market data is a consideration**, since it can be inherently, if unintentionally, inequitable, it is instructive and not conclusive. Market data mostly informed Salary Commission decision-making where current salaries lagged the market.
18. The Salary Commission considered salaries that would attract a broad range of candidates and **allow an elected person to office to cover their needs, have disposable income, and plan for their future** without additional sources of income or existing wealth. As a proxy for these considerations, the Salary Commission utilized MIT's thriving wage calculator for a single parent household (\$142,404), as offset by the City of Portland healthcare benefits (\$133,207.00).
19. **Centering those with the most financial barriers**, like single parents, **enables the most Portlanders to run for public office**. Using an average household wage, as opposed to a thriving wage, wouldn't allow for people who face the most barriers to run for office.
20. The Mayor and Auditor salaries are over the base wage the Salary Commission identified as a threshold for enabling the most Portlanders to hold public office. **They reflect market data and information** (but not recommendations) from the Offices of the Mayor and the Auditor. In particular, the commissioners considered the need for professional certification to be eligible for the Auditor position.
21. Portland and the country as a whole is experiencing compensation stagnation. As HR practitioners, **the Salary Commission chose to adhere to best practices** that prioritizes compensation for the true value of the labor expected regardless of the current economic trends.

FINAL DECISION

Based on these considerations and public input, on July 24, 2023, the Salary Commission voted on the following base pay rates for these elected office positions:

Mayor: \$175,463.00

Auditor: \$168,758.00

Council: \$133,207.00

All these positions will be eligible for the City of Portland's existing Language Pay Differential Policy.

Future Salary Commissions will determine Cost of Living Adjustments, and/or other salary adjustments.

These salaries represent 0.4% of the current City's General Fund Budget*.

*Based on the FY 2023-24 general fund (\$751m) and does not account for the language pay differential.

LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Future proposals for community engagement should focus on the quantitative data used to arrive at its recommendations. While considerations related to compensation that provides opportunities for the city to include greater representation from historically unrepresented communities is essential, it may not always yield the most thoughtful and constructive feedback.
2. For public engagement surveys, the Salary Commission would recommend including a field that helps identify if people are from the Portland metro area, such as a zip code, to help differentiate between voter input and input from those outside of Portland.
3. The Salary Commission recommends exploring further the idea of a multi-cultural differential program. A model was designed and is in use at the Oregon Food Bank. This idea required more discussion and research than time allowed. The idea behind such a differential is to honor diversity of experience and ideas for those who are pursuing an elected position, which is in line with both the Charter's and the City of Portland's goal of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
4. Considering feedback from the public and the City of Portland, the initial Salary Commission adopted the City's \$1/hour multilingual differential for elected officials. It is recommended to revisit this approach to determine if the original amount is sufficient, or if this should be adjusted to another per hour amount, or a percentage. The City conducted a thorough analysis in creating their program and may be able to provide data and background if requested through the Bureau of Human Resources as part of the Commission process.
5. The initial Salary Commission adopted a COLA for elected officials' salaries that was already approved by the City of Portland. They also removed the original proposal of adopting the current and subsequent COLAs, acknowledging a possible conflict of interest in approval of the COLA by the elected officials. The Salary Commission recommends consideration of COLA as part of the review for the next Salary Commission.
6. The Salary Commission recommends that as part of its foundational documents subsequent Salary Commissions clearly outline the scope of their responsibilities to maintain focus during its deliberations and provide transparency to the community. For example, discussions related to staffing for elected officials or

performance management is outside the Salary Commission's area of responsibility and not necessary to their development of a compensation strategy.

7. The Salary Commission strongly recommends an intentional application, recruitment, and selection process that prioritizes racial and ethnic representation and diversity of lived experiences.

APPENDIX

Meeting Details and Materials

The following table is a complete timeline of all events held or attended by the Salary Commission during their terms of service including all meeting materials.

Build the Foundation & Determine Methodology to Set Salaries		
<p>Meeting 1 March 28, 2023 6pm-8pm Zoom only</p>	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intros by Tracy Warren, BHR Deputy Director and Shoshanah Oppenheim, Project Manager for the Charter Transition Team. • Former Charter Commissioners Robin Ye and Gloria Cruz to discuss the Charter Commission’s intended vision, values, and purpose of the SC. • Brief overview of foundational documents • Presentation on the background research for setting a methodology and philosophy to set salaries including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Roles & responsibilities of elected officials ○ City of Portland’s pay philosophy ○ Methods of other commissions ○ City of Portland class comp structures <p>Watch the meeting: https://youtu.be/Mwu-SyRQmk</p>	<p>Meeting Materials:</p> <p>Meeting 1 Presentation</p> <p>Summary of Roles and Responsibilities of Elected</p> <p>March 28 Meeting Minutes</p>
<p>Meeting 2 April 11, 2023 6pm-9pm</p>	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adopt March 28 meeting minutes 	<p>Meeting Materials:</p> <p>Meeting Presentation 2</p>

<p>Hybrid</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reflect on public comment report • Training on public meetings law by City Attorney Maja Haium • BHR presentation & discussion on research and analysis • Commissioner’s roles & responsibilities <p>Watch the meeting:</p> <p>https://youtu.be/uLcA287oqJs</p>	<p>ISC April 11 Meeting Minutes</p> <p>ISC Draft Working Agreements</p> <p>ISC Draft Values</p> <p>ISC Draft Bylaws</p> <p>BHR-Research Requests from 3/28/23 Meeting</p> <p>ISC public comment report 4/6/23</p> <p>ISC March 28 Meeting Minutes</p>
<p>Meeting 3</p> <p>April 27, 2023</p> <p>6pm-8pm</p> <p>Hybrid</p>	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adopt April 11 meeting minutes ○ Review public comment report • Foundation documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bylaws ○ Values ○ Community engagement framework • BHR research discussion • Methodology structure • Public Comment <p>Watch the meeting:</p> <p>https://youtu.be/7A0MZeeMM9I</p>	<p>Meeting Materials:</p> <p>ISC Presentation 4.11.23</p> <p>ISC public comment report 4.27.23</p> <p>ISC Draft Values-Revised</p> <p>ISC Draft Bylaws-Revised</p> <p>BHR-Research Requests from 4.11.23</p> <p>Living Wage vs Thriving Wage</p> <p>Anti-Oppressive Pay</p> <p>ISC April 27 Meeting Minutes</p>
<p>Research, Analysis, Initial Recommendations</p>		
<p>Meeting 4</p> <p>May 9, 2023</p>	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adopt April 27 meeting minutes ○ Public comment report 	<p>Meeting Materials:</p> <p>ISC Presentation 5.9.23</p>

<p>6pm-8pm Hybrid</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invited guests and discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Metro Councilor Duncan Hwang ○ Former State Rep Teresa Alonso Leon • BHR research and methodology discussion • Public Comment <p>Watch the meeting: https://youtu.be/4TwD_CPfJWY</p>	<p>Research Requests from 4.27.23 Meeting</p> <p>Market Data Results Final</p> <p>ISC May 9 Meeting Minutes</p>
<p>Meeting 5 May 23, 2023 6pm-8pm Hybrid</p>	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adopt May 9 meeting minutes ○ Public comment report • Public comment • BHR research and methodology discussion • Differential Pay discussion & Guest Speaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commission Martinez-Alicea ○ Latricia Tillman, Northwest Racial Equity Leaders <p>Watch the meeting: https://youtu.be/SpSfXIGwO0A</p>	<p>Meeting Materials:</p> <p>ISC Presentation 5.23.23</p> <p>ISC May 23 Meeting Minutes</p> <p>Research Requests from 5.9.23 Meeting</p> <p>ISC Public Comment Report 5.23.23</p> <p>BHR- Household Structure Data</p> <p>2020 OFB Compensation Philosophy</p> <p>OFB Compensation SOP</p> <p>OFB Salary Schedule</p> <p>OFB Slide Show</p>
<p>Meeting 6 May 30, 2023 6pm-8pm Hybrid</p>	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adopt May 23 meeting minutes ○ Public comment report ○ Draft invitation letter • Guest speakers and discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Andres Oswill, Opportunity to Serve Oregon Coalition ○ Jennifer Parrish Taylor • Community engagement discussion 	<p>Meeting Materials:</p> <p>ISC Presentation 5.30.23</p> <p>ISC Meeting Minutes 5.30.23</p> <p>BHR- Research Requests from 5.23.23</p> <p>DRAFT Letter to City Electeds</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHR research and methodology discussion • Public comment <p>Watch the meeting: https://youtu.be/E1qrAddQn8A</p>	
Meeting 7 June 13, 2023 6pm-9pm Hybrid	Agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Adopt May 30 meeting minutes ◦ Public comment report • Public Comment • Differential Pay discussion with City Attorney, Heidi Brown • Salary Proposal Options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Draft Report ◦ Draft Survey ◦ One pager, table posters, flyers • Review and edit comms materials • Engagement plan <p>Watch the meeting: https://youtu.be/5sG45Gn-u0A</p>	Meeting Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISC Presentation 6.13.23 ISC meeting minutes 6.13.23 ISC Public Comment Report 6.13.23 BHR- Salary Range and Pay Differential DRAFT- Salary Commission Report DRAFT Survey ISC Event Flyer ISC Poster Boards ISC Fact Sheet
Public Engagement		
Meeting 8 June 27, 2023 6pm-7:30pm Hybrid	Agenda: <p>Public Hearing on Draft Salary Proposal</p> <p>Watch the hearing: https://youtu.be/SVI1RWju8A</p>	Meeting Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISC Public Hearing Presentation ISC meeting minutes 6.27.23
Revise & Final Vote		
Meeting 9 July 20, 2023	Agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion about public feedback • Discussion about amendments • Temp check 	Meeting Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISC Presentation 7.20.23

<p>6pm-8pm</p> <p>Hybrid</p>	<p>Watch the meeting:</p> <p>https://youtu.be/ipr7tWQ-PcU</p>	<p>ISC meeting minutes 7.20.23</p> <p>ISC Public Comment Report 7.17.23</p> <p>Survey Results 7.16.23</p> <p>Survey Comments Coded 7.16.23</p> <p>Salary Survey Analysis- Disaggregated by Demo</p> <p>BHR-thriving wage amended for medical costs</p>
<p>Meeting 10</p> <p>July 24, 2023</p> <p>6pm-8pm</p> <p>Hybrid</p>	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion about amendments and final research • Vote <p>Watch the meeting:</p> <p>https://youtu.be/iyUjgPlfBis</p>	<p>Meeting Materials:</p> <p>ISC Presentation 7.24.23</p> <p>ISC meeting minutes 7.24.23</p> <p>BHR- Research Requests from 7.21.23</p> <p>Letter about Language Differential from Tatiana Elejalde</p>
Evaluation		
<p>Meeting 11</p> <p>August 22, 2023</p> <p>6pm-7pm</p> <p>Virtual only</p>	<p>Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Adopt meeting minutes from June 13, June 27, July 20, and July 24 • Review draft report • Reflections <p>Watch the meeting:</p> <p>https://youtu.be/Od9leHhon0A</p>	<p>Meeting Materials:</p> <p>ISC Presentation 8.22.23</p> <p>ISC Final Report- DRAFT</p>