

## City of Alexandria, Virginia

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6-25-02

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 21, 2002

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER <sup>PS</sup>

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMITTEE TO REVIEW CITY COUNCIL SALARIES

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**ISSUE:** Establishment of a committee to review City Council salaries.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council establish a committee to review City Council salaries, including a comparison of the salaries of elected officials in other jurisdictions, and to report back to Council no later than October 1, 2002, with any recommendations it may have. Members of the committee would be selected by the Mayor, and would include four to six former members of City Council representing both political parties.

**DISCUSSION:** During its discussion of the FY 2003 budget, Council requested that a committee be established to review Council salaries, including a comparison with the salaries paid to governing body members in other jurisdictions, and that the committee report back to City Council this fall.

Salaries for the Mayor and members of Council were last changed on July 1, 1987, almost 15 years ago, and became effective on July 1, 1988. Salaries were set at the current rate of \$25,000 for the Mayor and \$20,000 for the Council members. Prior to the 1988 change, Council salaries had last been increased from \$10,000 to \$12,500 in May 1982.

Section 3.02 of the City Charter sets Council member salaries at \$4,800, and the Mayor's salary at \$5,400 per year, but permits Council to increase these amounts by ordinance without any limitation or salary cap. The same section of the charter also provides that any ordinance increasing Council salaries may not become effective during the term of the Council that votes to increase salaries. Section 15.2-1414.6 of the Virginia Code, however, provides that any ordinance to increase Council salaries must be enacted at least four months prior to the next Council election.

Section 2-1-4 of the City Code presently sets Council member salaries at \$20,000, and the Mayor's salary at \$25,000 per year. Any ordinance amending this code section must be adopted no later than January 6, 2003, which is four months prior to the next election. In order to meet this deadline, such an ordinance would have to be enacted by the December 14, 2002, public

hearing meeting, which is the last regular Council meeting before January 6, 2003. The effective date of any such ordinance and of the salary increase for which it provides would become effective on July 1, 2003, when the next Council takes office.

Attachment 1 illustrates how the current salaries of the Mayor and Council would have changed if the cost of living increases that have been granted to City employees since 1987 had been applied to the salaries of the Mayor and Council.

Attachment 2 provides a comparison of Mayor and Council member salaries with jurisdictions in the Northern Virginia area as well as other jurisdictions within the Commonwealth. The City of Alexandria Mayor and Council salaries are currently the lowest of the Northern Virginia comparators, and will drop further when planned increases in Arlington County take effect in FY 2003. Fairfax County, Loudoun County, and Arlington County also provide added fringe benefits to their county board members beyond those provided in Alexandria.

Staff will provide this information to the committee, which will be requested to report back to Council in the fall.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** If Council decides to increase compensation rates for the future Mayor and Councils, the fiscal impact will begin in FY 2004.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1. City Council Salaries with COLA

Attachment 2. Salaries of elected of elected officials in the neighboring jurisdictions

**STAFF:**

Michele R. Evans, Assistant City Manager

Gene Swearingen, Director, Office of Management and Budget

Carol Moore, Acting Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget

Paul Doku, Budget/Management Analyst

**Potential Mayor and City Council Member Salaries  
If Adjusted by Approved COLAs**

**Mayor:**

Fiscal Year	Gen. Salary Adjustments	Adjusted Salaries	Amount of Increase	Total Salary
1987	Salary Effective FY 1987			\$25,000
1988	4.0%	\$25,000	\$1,000	\$26,000
1989	4.0%	\$26,000	\$1,040	\$27,040
1990	3.0%	\$27,040	\$811	\$27,851
1991*	3.0%	\$27,851	\$836	\$28,687
1991*	0.5%	\$28,687	\$143	\$28,830
1992	2.0%	\$28,830	\$577	\$29,407
1993	0.0%	\$29,407	\$0	\$29,407
1994	2.5%	\$29,407	\$735	\$30,142
1995	2.0%	\$30,142	\$603	\$30,745
1996	3.0%	\$30,745	\$922	\$31,667
1997	2.0%	\$31,667	\$633	\$32,300
1998**	2.0%	\$32,300	\$646	\$32,946
1998**	3.0%	\$32,946	\$988	\$33,935
1999	0.0%	\$33,935	\$0	\$33,935
2000	2.0%	\$33,935	\$679	\$34,614
2001	2.5%	\$34,614	\$865	\$35,479
2002	3.0%	\$35,479	\$1,064	\$36,543
2003	2.5%	\$36,543	\$914	\$37,457

**Council Member:**

Fiscal Year	Gen. Salary Adjustments	Adjusted Salaries	Amount of Increase	Total Salary
1987	Salary Effective FY 1987			\$20,000
1988	4.0%	\$20,000	\$800	\$20,800
1989	4.0%	\$20,800	\$832	\$21,632
1990	3.0%	\$21,632	\$649	\$22,281
1991*	3.0%	\$22,281	\$668	\$22,949
1991*	0.5%	\$22,949	\$115	\$23,064
1992	2.0%	\$23,064	\$461	\$23,525
1993	0.0%	\$23,525	\$0	\$23,525
1994	2.5%	\$23,525	\$588	\$24,114
1995	2.0%	\$24,114	\$482	\$24,596
1996	3.0%	\$24,596	\$738	\$25,334
1997	2.0%	\$25,334	\$507	\$25,840
1998**	2.0%	\$25,840	\$517	\$26,357
1998**	3.0%	\$26,357	\$791	\$27,148
1999	0.0%	\$27,148	\$0	\$27,148
2000	2.0%	\$27,148	\$543	\$27,691
2001	2.5%	\$27,691	\$692	\$28,383
2002	3.0%	\$28,383	\$851	\$29,235
2003	2.5%	\$29,235	\$731	\$29,966

\* In FY 1991 City Council approved a three percent general salary adjustment (COLA) effective from July 1, 1990 to December 31, 1990, and an additional one-half of one percent general salary adjustment effective on January 1, 1991.

\*\* In FY 1998 City Council approved a two percent general salary adjustment (COLA) effective on July 1, 1997, plus a three percent market rate adjustment effective on January 1, 1998. City Council approved the market rate adjustment based on the results of a consultant survey that documented that some City classifications were below market comparators.

## Salary/Benefits For Top Elected Officials in Surrounding Jurisdictions

June 12, 2002

Jurisdiction	Salary, Top Elected Official <sup>1</sup>	Staff	Salary, Board Member <sup>1</sup>	Staff	Health Ins.	Life Ins.	Disability Ins.	Retirement	Deferred Comp.
Alexandria	\$25,000	1 Full-time	\$20,000	1 Part-time	Yes	No	No	No	No
Arlington County <sup>2</sup>	\$30,427	1 Full-time	\$27,661	Clerk's Office Provides Support	Yes <sup>3</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>4</sup>	Yes
Fairfax County	\$59,000	7 Full-time and Part-time	\$59,000	Varies from 5 to 7 Full-time and Part-time	Yes <sup>3</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>4</sup>	Yes
Loudoun County	\$40,000	1 Full-time	\$22,400	1 Part-time Each	Yes <sup>3</sup>	No	Yes	No	Yes
Prince William Co.	\$41,000	2 Full-time, 2 Part-time	\$36,000	Varies: most have 1 full-time and at least 1 Part-time	Yes	No	No	No	Yes

<sup>1</sup> Salaries Effective FY 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Arlington County Approved Annual Cost of Living Increases for Board Members in 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Employer Pays a Portion of the Health Insurance Premium.

<sup>4</sup> Non-Virginia Retirement System (VRS) Retirement Program.

Chart Prepared by Office of Management and Budget.

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