

City of SeaTac

Council Workshop Minutes Synopsis

April 15, 2011
1:30 PM

City Hall
Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER: The SeaTac City Council Workshop was called to order by Deputy Mayor (DM) Gene Fisher at 1:38 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT: DM Gene Fisher, Councilmembers (CMs) Rick Forschler, Anthony (Tony) Anderson (*arrived at 1:57 p.m.*), Ralph Shape, Pam Fernald (*arrived at 1:52 p.m.*), and Mia Gregerson (*arrived at 2:21 p.m.*). Excused absence: Mayor Terry Anderson.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Todd Cutts, Senior Assistant City Attorney Mark Johnsen, City Clerk Kristina Gregg, and Human Resources (HR) Director Anh Hoang.

PRESENTATION:

•Classification and Compensation

City Manager Cutts briefed Council on the reason for this workshop. There have been some questions from Council regarding classification and compensation and how the City handles the process.

Public Comment: Earl Gipson stated that the City doesn't follow the code in regards to compensation being competitive with public and private employers.

HR Director Hoang reviewed the following information with Council: legal foundation for classification and compensation systems, definitions of terminology frequently used in classification and compensation, and City Council's past policy direction regarding classification and compensation.

CM Fernald arrived at this point in the meeting.

She also explained SeaTac's classification system and methodology.

CM A. Anderson arrived at this point in the meeting.

Ms. Hoang reviewed job audits and reclassifications (purpose, contract provisions and City policy process/procedures), and SeaTac's compensation program and methodology (definition of SeaTac's "comparable market", salary survey, and cost of living adjustments [COLA]).

CM Gregerson arrived at this point in the meeting.

Ms. Hoang summarized by stating that the City's compensation policy and practices are as follows:

Market Place: 50% level of market per Council Ordinance adopted in 1994.

Comparable Market: Public Sector, other cities are used (comparables currently used have been used since at least 2003 American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) negotiations and is an established past practice). In order to change the list of comparables, it would need to be negotiated with AFSCME for the upcoming contract. For non-represented (NR) employees, Council can change it at any time, but in the past and according to Council Ordinance from 1994, NR employees are to be treated similarly to AFSCME employees.

COLA: based on the percentage of Consumer Price Index of Washington (CPI-W).

Job Audit / Reclassification: may change pay range.

She reviewed the conflict in the City's Ordinances:

1993 Ordinance language regarding comparing with "other public and private employers",

1994 Ordinance adopted Ewing's classification and compensation study, its system and methodology, which compares City positions to public employers only, and contained language that states that all pay compensation prior to this will stay in effect except as it is inconsistent herein,

2009 Ordinance restated 1993 Ordinance's reference regarding comparison with "other public and private employers." However, 2009 Ordinance does not say that it will supersede if it conflicts with former Ordinances, namely the 1994 Ordinance adopting public employer comparables.

She asked the Council if they wish to compare compensation with private employers or to keep the current comparison methodology with public sector employers only.

Council discussion ensued regarding the options.

PRESENTATION (Continued):

Classification and Compensation (Continued): City Manager Cutts clarified that through the budget process, Council sets the classification and compensation, but throughout the year, changes are presented. He forwards the proposed changes to Council based on criteria Council set. When administration denies a job classification, that request is never seen by Council.

Some CMs felt that private sector employers should be used, while others felt that only public sector should be used.

Council discussion ensued with some CMs stating their concern that wages are compounded with COLA and merit increases, and that the City needs to know which skills are required for certain positions.

City Manager Cutts stated that this discussion has more to do with the NR because the impetus for this discussion was that staff presented reclassifications to the Administration & Finance (A&F) Committee and A&F requested more information on the process. Some employees have been waiting for their reclassifications for three years.

Public Comment: Earl Gipson commented on the following: (1) SeaTac should be compared to Burien; (2) SeaTac should be compared using revenue instead of assessed value; (3) the private sector should be used; and (4) exempt shouldn't be treated as non-exempt, but judged on merit.

City Manager Cutts stated that staff will come back to Council in a similar setting to discuss issues not resolved.

He clarified that in order to compare private sector, additional resources will be needed.

HR Director Hoang stated that there are private sector salary survey reports that the City can order for approximately \$900 each. Three reports will be needed, plus additional personnel resources will also be required. Some City positions won't be found in the private sector.

ADJOURNED: DM Fisher adjourned the workshop at 3:49 p.m.