

July 25, 2024

Mayor & Council
City of Victoria

Re: 2024 Citizens Task Force on Remuneration for City of Victoria Councillors

On behalf of the Task Force, please find attached a copy of our report that follows the specifics of the Terms of Reference that was established by Council on April 4, 2024.

After careful consideration of all available data reviewed, we are unanimous in our findings and believe the recommendations that have been provided will be a reasonable resolution to Council remuneration.

Thank you to the councillors for the time they afforded us to complete the interviews. Also, thank you to Jocelyn Jenkyns, City Manager, Susanne Thompson, Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer, and Kelly Erickson, Manager of Executive Operations for their assistance and information provided to us.

We appreciate the opportunity to do this work and we hope that you will find value in our recommendations.

Yours truly,

M. Lucas

Margaret Lucas
Chair

2024 Citizens Task Force on Remuneration for City of Victoria Councillors

Terms of Reference:

The Terms of Reference to direct our work was in accordance with the motion passed by Council on April 4th, 2024.

That consideration of Bylaw 24-027 be postponed until July 25th, and that the city manager be directed to strike an independent task force comprised of diverse community, non-profit, labour, government, and business leaders, using the UBCM councillor remuneration guide and its terms of reference, a report to be completed by July 1st and the work remunerated with a stipend for task force members, to:

- 1. Review council's decision on pay and benefits in light of the recommendations of the MNP Governance Review and the information in the remuneration consultant's report.*
- 2. Conduct interviews with councillors to determine accurate time commitments for city- related work.*
- 3. Make a recommendation to council on any salary adjustments, benefits adjustments, per diems for committee appointments and conferences, and other compensatory options, and the effective date of any such adjustments.*
- 4. Task force to be overseen and facilitated by a senior member of City staff, as per recommendations of UBCM guidebook.*

Background:

On March 14th, 2024 a motion was passed by City Council to set the base remuneration rate for City Councillors at 50% of the Mayor’s salary plus other benefits (see below).

<p>Mar 14 daytime Council Mar 14 COTW</p>	<p>Review of Council Remuneration</p>	<p>That Council receive the Review of Council Remuneration report for information.</p> <p>Whereas, eight years ago, City Council initiated a governance review process as part of the 2019-2022 strategic plan; and whereas City Council received the MNP LLP Governance Review in July of 2022; and whereas the previous Council chose not to address the Review’s recommendations prior to the end of its mandate, including the hiring of a third-party remuneration consultant, thereby deferring that decision until this Council’s mandate; and whereas this Council has committed to implementing the recommendations of the Governance Review, including the issue of remuneration, which is one of the few remaining items left to address; and whereas the third-party remuneration consultant has now completed their work, and compared the City’s remuneration practices to 19 comparator cities across Canada, and whereas the MNP Review confirms that City Council is a full-time job, therefore, be it resolved:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>That Council direct staff to prepare the necessary bylaws by 11 April 2024 to achieve the following:</p> <p>A. Confirm that City Council is a full-time job;</p> <p>B. Set base remuneration rate for City Councillors at 50% that of the Mayor’s salary so that Councillor remuneration better aligns with: 1) the median percentile for salary in Victoria’s comparator cities, and 2) the remuneration practices of numerous other mid-sized cities across the country;</p> <p>C. Maintain the yearly remuneration cost of living adjustments pegged to the previous year’s inflation rate, as per current practice;</p> <p>2.</p> <p>A. That Council direct staff to provide options on improved Councillor benefits, and report back on those options within three months;</p> <p>3.</p> <p>A. That all of the provisions in 1 (above) become effective on 1 May 2024 or upon final adoption of the bylaw, whichever comes first.</p>
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On April 4th, 2024 (see below) Council passed a motion to proceed with a Citizens Task Force to review that data and make a recommendation.

Apr 4 daytime Council	Amendment Bylaw for Council Remuneration Bylaw	That consideration of Bylaw 24-027 be postponed until July 25th, and that the city manager be directed to strike an independent task force comprised of diverse community, non-profit, labour, government, and business leaders, using the UBCM councillor remuneration guide and its terms of reference, a report to be completed by July 1st and the work remunerated with a stipend for task force members, to: 1. Review council’s decision on pay and benefits in light of the recommendations of the MNP Governance Review and the information in the remuneration consultant’s report; 2. Conduct interviews with councillors to determine accurate time commitments for city-related work; 3. Make a recommendation to council on any salary adjustments, benefits adjustments, per diems for committee appointments and conferences, and other compensatory options, and the effective date of any such adjustments; 4. Task force to be overseen and facilitated by a senior member of City staff, as per recommendations of UBCM guidebook.
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A Task Force was formed in June 2024. This Task Force is comprised of:

- Chair Margaret Lucas - former City Councillor, former City Remuneration advisor and Business Representative.
- Ron Rice - Executive Director, Victoria Native Friendship Centre.
- Stephanie Smith - former President of BCGEU.

Focus of Review:

Review Council’s decision on pay and benefits in light of the recommendations of the MNP Governance Review and the information in the remuneration consultant’s report.

Relevant Data:

- MNP City of Victoria Governance Review report (July 18, 2022)
- Current by-laws outlining councillor remuneration
- Benefit packages
- Drive Organizational Development Ltd., Elected Officials Remuneration Report (February 21, 2024)

Recent Media Articles on Compensation for Mayor/Councillors:

- Tri-cities Dispatch article: Port Coquitlam council vote to give themselves 12.5% pay raise – Jan.9, 2024
- Richmond News article: Richmond’s Mayor earns nearly \$200k, second only to Vancouver, July 5th, 2024
- Delta Optimist article: Here’s what Delta council, top earning employees, made last year, June 26th, 2024

Conduct interviews with councillors to determine accurate time commitments for city-related work.

What We Heard:

- All councillors displayed a clear understanding of their core duties.
- Each councillor provided clarity on the number of hours they believe it requires to provide those core duties.
- From the interviews we could not determine whether councillors believed they work full-time or part-time; however, there was broad agreement that, on average, a minimum of 30 hours a week was spent on core duties of city work as a councillor. These hours did not include any CRD responsibilities or public events.
- All councillors noted the annual breaks in the council meeting schedule allowed them the time to catch up on emails and engage with community. It did not necessarily afford all of them holiday time.
- There was a shared opinion that more administrative support was required and would alleviate some time, but it was uncertain as to how this could be implemented equitably.
- Councillors noted the impact of Victoria as a capital city on the complexity of their role.
- Also noted was the increase of their accessibility to constituents due to electronic communication means, including social media.

Make a recommendation to Council on any salary adjustments, benefits adjustments, per diems for committee appointments and conferences, and other compensatory options, and the effective date of any such adjustments.

After fully reviewing the available data, reports, and after concluding all interviews, the Task Force could not determine if the position on City Council is a full-time position or part time. We could agree that the value of the work being provided by each councillor was not being met by current compensation levels. The challenges and issues faced by Council are impacted by Victoria’s status as a capital city and a gateway to Canada for international trade and tourism.

Also of note is the increasing reality of dealing with issues such as: homelessness, mental health and addictions which deeply impact all aspects of Council’s considerations from shared greenspace, business, public safety and policing in a way that is not experienced by other neighbouring municipalities in Greater Victoria.

Recommendations

To be actioned as soon as practicable:

- That the CPI adjustment forgone in 2021 be added to the Mayor and Councillors' compensation retroactive to January 1, 2024. This would bring current councillor remuneration to \$53,259 and the Mayor's to \$133,147.
- Councillors' annual allowance for travel, education and training be \$5,000.00 and that this amount be per councillor rather than in the global budget.
- The Task Force recommends that staff explore improvements to the current health and wellness benefit levels and suggests that the options not necessarily mirror staff benefits but be comparable in value and benefit.
- Councillors be paid an additional \$1,750.00 while in the role of Acting Mayor (per month) as per examples provided in the Drive Organizational Report. (page 8)
- Continue the yearly remuneration cost of living (CPI) adjustments pegged to the previous year's inflation rate, as per current practice.
- We believe the easiest way to address remuneration moving forward would be to realign the Mayor's salary against Canadian capital cities and to maintain the percentage for councillors. We agree with the MNP report recommendation that the Mayor's base salary be undertaken in the last year of a term, so any changes necessary can be applied to the incoming council.
- We recommend Mayor and Council explore solutions to broaden administrative support for councillors.
- That Mayor and Council adopt the MNP recommendations and Rationale on Updating Council committees and related processes to comply with bylaws, and to support efficient and effective use (pages 43 to 47 in the MNP report).
- Recommend that flat rate per diems be explored for councillors to attend committees and/or conferences.

To be implemented after the next election:

- Recommend that councillors' remuneration be calculated at 45% of the Mayor's salary and maintain the previously adopted recommendations.