



# City of Albuquerque

P.O. BOX 1293, ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87103

## Interoffice Memorandum

March 19, 2019

**TO:** Katy Duhigg, City Clerk

**FROM:** Alan M. Schwartz, Chairman, Citizens' Independent Salary Commission

**SUBJECT:** Salaries for the Mayor and Councilors

City of Albuquerque voters approved the Citizens' Independent Salary Commission (Commission) as an amendment to the City Charter (Article XVIII) in the election of October 6, 2009. The Commission is authorized to establish the salary structures of the Mayor and City Councilors. The Commission evaluates the annual salaries in accordance with salary and benefit data and determines if an increase or decrease to salaries is warranted.

Current and prior Commission review processes include, studying the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor and City Councilors, collecting and analyzing salary and benefit data of like-sized municipalities, collecting input on an interactive website and survey, and consideration of past salary increases. Information from all of the processes above contributed to the Commission's decision.

The decision of the Commission is the salary and the benefits of the Mayor will remain the same and City Councilors will receive a slight increase.

Mayor salary - \$125,000.00  
City Councilors salary from \$30,000.00 to \$30,600.00  
Council President from \$32,000.00 to \$32,600.00

The Commission thanks the Mayor and City Councilors for their dedicated service to the City of Albuquerque and its citizens.

The complete report is available at [www.cabq.gov/audit/citizens-independent-salary-commission](http://www.cabq.gov/audit/citizens-independent-salary-commission). If you have additional questions contact: Alan M. Schwartz, Chairman, (505) 768-3154; [alanschwartzcisc@gmail.com](mailto:alanschwartzcisc@gmail.com).

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**Citizens' Independent Salary Commission  
Report and Recommendations  
March 19, 2019**

**Executive Summary and Recommendation**

As a result of the Regular Municipal Election on October 6, 2009, the voters of Albuquerque established the Citizens' Independent Salary Commission (Commission). The Commission is charged with studying and setting the salaries of the Mayor and City Councilors. One year prior to each regular municipal election, the Commission reviews the salaries paid by the City of Albuquerque to the Mayor and City Councilors, and determines if the salaries should be increased, decreased, or remain unchanged. This is the fifth review conducted by the Commission.

Based on the Commission's independent research and analysis, the salary of the Mayor will remain unchanged and City Councilors' salaries will see a slight increase in the 2019 municipal election. The current salaries are as follows:

Mayor salary - \$125,000.00  
City Councilors salary - \$30,000.00  
Council President salary - \$32,000.00

The major factors contributing to this recommendation are as follows:

- Current salary and benefit structures for the Albuquerque Mayor and City Councilors are comparable to same-size cities in which elected officials have similar responsibilities. Specifically, the commission reviewed the "full time" vs "part time" status of these positions, utilizing the like comparison for "Mayor-Council" forms of government.
- The salaries authorized in the 2017 Review Process established salary and benefit structures at competitive levels of compensation.
- Current salary and benefit structures provide an equitable compensation commensurate with responsibilities of the positions, though this commission recognized a cost of living increase was appropriate at this time.
- The commission reviewed results of surveys presented and considered those responses to determine workload associated with councilor duties.
- The commission considered the additional benefits of medical, dental, and vision, which increased total compensation range from over \$6,000 up to \$12,000 depending on benefit options selected by each councilor.
- The Commission is mindful of the economic conditions existing in the private and public sectors of New Mexico. A decision to give a small cost of living adjustment (COLA) in City Councilor salaries through the 2019 municipal election reflects the sensitivity of public sector salaries, and determined an approximate 2 percent COLA was reasonable in today's economic reality.

## **Methodology**

In its research and deliberations for this report, the Commission directed the Office of Internal Audit (OIA) staff to update the survey information previously received from regional and comparably sized cities by:

- Researching their websites and contacting them,
- Compiling the updated information,
- Summarizing the compiled information,
- Analyzing the information, and
- Identifying variances from 2015 thru 2018 as available.

OIA staff also compiled a post historic script detail summary of the activities performed by the Commission from Oct 2018 through Feb 2019 during its meetings. The detail summary identified that the Commission:

- Identified comparably sized cities,
- Researched, analyzed and deliberated about information provided by surveys from the comparably sized cities, such as:
  - Population, number of employees, budget, hours worked by and salaries earned by each elected official,
- Studied the roles of the Mayor and City Councilors,
- Sought input from City Councilors on their estimate of hours committed to their duties.
- Discussed frequently, as a group, the results of information received, and
- Meetings were held in compliance with open meetings act.

It is important to note the Commission remained steadfast in its mission to look at the positions and not the individuals who currently hold them.

The Commission also considered the facts presented in the 2017 Salary Commission Report and the updates from the previous CISC recommendations.

The commission carefully review the salaries of the Mayor and Council every two years, so it has the ability to react to changing economic conditions and realities, and elects:

- No change to the Mayors salary
- Commission agrees to increase Council and Council President salaries by \$600

## **Salary Information**

Mayor salary - \$125,000.00

City Councilors salary - \$30,600

Council President salary - \$32,600

## **Duties of Office**

The Commission studied the requirements of both the Mayor and City Councilors' positions during its initial deliberations dating back to 2010. That work included surveys from the City Councilors to seek information regarding typical daily and weekly functions, the amount of time devoted, and motivation for seeking office. The amount of time devoted varies among City Councilors; however, on average it seems to require 30 or more hours per week. The Mayor's position is more than a regular 40-hour week. Since the original charter of 1974, the Commission is convinced that the duties of office have evolved and significantly increased over time.

## **Charter Amendment**

Through the charter amendment, the Commission was given the authority to evaluate the annual salaries and determine whether they should be increased or decreased. The Commission has authority to consider all factors relevant to the salaries. Parameters given to the Commission are as follows:

- (a) The Commission shall consist of five members selected by the Accountability in Government Committee. All members shall be residents of the City of Albuquerque and shall not be an officer, official or employee of the city or an immediate family member of the same. The term of each member shall be for four years, unless a member is selected to fill a vacancy, and no member shall be appointed to more than two terms. The initial terms of members of the newly established Commission shall be staggered; the initial term for two members shall be two years and the initial term of three members shall be four years.
- (b) At least one year prior to each regular municipal election, the Commission shall review the salaries paid by the city to the Mayor and Councilors. If after such review the Commission determines that the salary should be increased or decreased, the Commission shall file a written salary schedule with the City Clerk indicating the proposed salary.
- (c) Changes to the salaries shall not be effective for the incumbent Mayor and Councilors, but shall be effective at the beginning of the next term.
- (d) Any change to salaries recommended by the Commission shall be subject to the referendum procedures as provided for in Article III, Section 2 of the Charter.
- (e) All meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public and subject to the Open Meetings Act, Sections 10-15-1 et seq. NMSA 1978.

### **Commission Members**

The Accountability in Government Oversight Committee appointed the following people to serve on the Commission:

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Term End Date</u></b>
Alan Schwartz	2020
Fred Pugh	2022
Jose Ponce	2022
Duane Trythall	2022
Vacant	2020

As specified in its charter, the Commission was selected through a process established by the Accountability in Government Oversight Committee. Commissioners have no ties or conflicts with the City of Albuquerque, the Mayor or City Council. The Commission carefully approached its work with thoughtful consideration to research, and the utmost transparency.

The members of the Commission produced this report and recommendations with the assistance of the exceptional staff support from the City's Office of Internal Audit.

### **Summary**

The citizens of Albuquerque elected to establish the Citizens' Independent Salary Commission. In compliance with meeting the objectives of the Commission, the decision-making process includes the research, analysis, discussion, and application of a wide range of factors concerning the salary structure of the Mayor and City Councilors. This is an exhaustive process in which rigorous standards and documentation are maintained. Review of data and documents can be obtained by contacting Chairperson Alan Schwartz, care of the Office of Internal Audit, 505-768-3154.