



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT BUDGET ANALYST REPORT

Date Issued: November 10, 2016

IBA Report Number: 16-42

Status Update for Prior Grand Jury Report Recommendations

COMPENSATION OF CITY OF SAN DIEGO ELECTED OFFICIALS

BACKGROUND

On February 3, 2015 the San Diego County Grand Jury filed a report, directed to the San Diego City Council, entitled "COMPENSATION OF CITY OF SAN DIEGO ELECTED OFFICIALS." This Grand Jury report discussed issues related to current City Charter language which requires Council to approve their own salaries as well as the salary of the Mayor.

The Grand Jury Report included two recommendations directed to the City Council, both of which the Council responded that the recommendation required further analysis. These recommendations and corresponding City Council responses are included below.

- Recommendation 15-01:

Place on the June 2016 or November 2016 ballot a proposed amendment to the City Charter which would:

Amend Section 12.1 by linking the salaries of councilmembers to an external benchmark effective July 1, 2017;

Amend Section 24.1 by linking the salary of the mayor to an external benchmark effective July 1, 2017;

Delete Section 41.1 which would then abolish the City of San Diego Salary Setting Commission effective June 30, 2017.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis.

See response to Recommendation 15-02.

- Recommendation 15-02:

Through the newly created Charter Review Committee, fully vet the recommended Salary Setting Amendment proposed here.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis.

The City Council's Charter Review Committee has been established and held its first meeting in January 2015. The Committee discussed the issue of salaries of elected officials at its March 2015 meeting, at which the Grand Jury presented its report, "Compensation of City of San Diego Elected Officials," and the IBA presented proposed responses to that report. The Committee requested input from the Salary Setting Commission prior to the proposed Grand Jury responses being considered by the full City Council.

The Salary Setting Commission subsequently met on June 22, 2015 and discussed a recommendation regarding elected officials' salaries. The recommendation is in line with the Grand Jury's recommendation for Charter amendments, which include tying the Mayor and Councilmembers' salaries to an external benchmark, and abolishing the Salary Setting Commission. The Commission voted to recommend Charter amendments that would tie the Mayor and City Council's salaries to salaries prescribe by State law for California Superior Court judges, as well as abolish the Salary Setting Commission.

Except for the effective date provision, these Charter amendments recommended by the Salary Setting Commission on June 22, 2015 are the same as those contained in a ballot proposal filed with the City Clerk by the Salary Setting Commission President in May of 2014. This ballot proposal was discussed at the June 2014 Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations Committee meeting; however, it has not been heard by the City Council.

The Salary Setting Commission has recognized the difficult situation of Councilmembers having to vote to approve their own salaries. The Council has not increased the Mayor or Councilmembers' salaries for 12 years (including FY 2016). In background material provided as part of the submitted ballot proposal discussed above, the Salary Setting Commission "recommend[ed] that this matter go to the ballot with a clear expression to the public that this is a recommendation of the San Diego Salary Setting Commission, not the City Council. It should be clear the City Council is merely advancing *the Commission's recommendation* to the voters."

Because the proposed ballot measure for Charter amendments did not move forward and subsequent discussions have not produced consensus, further dialogue is warranted. The Charter Review Committee will be further vetting the issue of salaries of elected officials in calendar year 2016 when a number of issues related to elected officials are planned to be addressed.

STATUS UPDATE

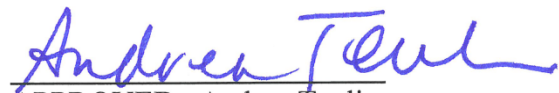
The City Council's responses cited above were delivered to the Presiding Judge of the San Diego Superior Court on August 5, 2015. Per the response to Recommendation 15-02, the Charter Review Committee would further vet the issue of salaries of elected officials in calendar year 2016.

At the March 2, 2016 Charter Review Committee meeting, the Committee Chair presented proposed amendments to the City Charter, which were in line with the Grand Jury's recommendations with respect to salaries of elected officials. The issues were discussed, and a motion was made to finalize the Chair's proposed Charter revisions. The motion failed for lack of a second, and there has been no further action taken. Below are links to the March 2 Charter Review Committee agenda, meeting actions, and meeting video.

- Agenda: http://docs.sandiego.gov/ccagenda_charterrev/cr160302.pdf
- Meeting Actions: http://docs.sandiego.gov/ccaction_charterrev/cr160302_actions.pdf
- Meeting Video:
http://granicus.sandiego.gov/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=25&clip_id=6640

In conclusion, the City Council's response to the Grand Jury recommendations indicated that further analysis was required. Accordingly, the vetting of this issue has taken place, and there is no plan to move forward with the Grand Jury's recommendations at this time. It is anticipated that the upcoming final report of the Charter Review Committee will include this and other issues that have been vetted, providing a frame of reference should the Council wish to consider this issue, or others, in the future.


Lisa Byrne
Fiscal & Policy Analyst


APPROVED: Andrea Tevlin
Independent Budget Analyst