



KIRKLAND SALARY COMMISSION

Lauren Hall-Stigerts, Chair • Greta Climer • Bryan Olay

AGENDA
KIRKLAND SALARY COMMISSION MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER AND VIRTUAL – ZOOM
Monday, September 14, 2026
5:00 p.m.

Zoom Link: <https://kirklandwa-gov.zoom.us/j/89452429742>

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES
 - a. October 30, 2025
4. PUBLIC COMMENT
5. COMMISSION BUSINESS
 - a. Briefing on Municipal Code Updates Related to the Salary Commission
 - b. Discussion of and Potential Final Action on City Council Compensation and Benefits, including Review of 2026 Report on Comparable Cities' Council Compensation and Benefits
 - c. General Updates from Staff Liaison
6. ADJOURNMENT



KIRKLAND SALARY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
October 30, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lauren Hall-Stigerts called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present: Commissioner Bryan Olay, Vice Chair Greta Climer, and Chair Lauren Hall-Stigerts.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a. September 10, 2025

Motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Moved by Vice Chair Climer, seconded by Commissioner Olay.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously 3-0.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

5. BUSINESS

a. Final Action to Ratify the 2026 Rate of Salaries and Benefits Paid to the Mayor

Motion to ratify the decision to maintain the current Council salary and benefits for 2026, providing no increase or decrease to Council's salaries and benefits.

Moved by Commissioner Bryan Olay, seconded by Vice Chair Greta Climer.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously 3-0.

6. STAFF REPORTS AND/OR COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chair Lauren Hall-Stigerts discussed the possibility of establishing a voluntary, formalized process for gathering feedback from the Council. The intent is to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of salary adjustments in advancing the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) program and promoting equity.

She also noted that the City of Bothell is exploring equitable compensation models, referencing the 45% Area Median Income (AMI) for single-person households in the Everett–Seattle area. She expressed interest in connecting with a member involved in that effort.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Salary Commission Meeting of October 30, 2025, adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Lauren Hall-Stigerts, Salary Commission Chair



CITY OF KIRKLAND
123 5th Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033
www.kirklandwa.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Salary Commission

From: Darcey Eilers, City Attorney
Lauren Knox, Labor and Employee Relations Manager

Date: September 8, 2026

Subject: Municipal Code Updates Related to the Salary Commission

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Salary Commission reviews a staff update on code amendments adopted by Council related to the Salary Commission.

BACKGROUND:

In 2023, the Salary Commission adopted Resolution No. 23-002,¹ which recommended that the City Council modify the number of Salary Commission members by increasing it from three to five members. This recommendation was made with the expectation that a larger body would enhance the Commission's diverse perspectives and deliberative decision-making process between the members without creating potential Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) violations.

In 2024, the Salary Commission adopted Resolution No. 24-002,² which recommended that the City Council modify the frequency of the Salary Commission meetings from annually to once every even-numbered year and, relatedly, further modify the term length for commissioners from three to four years. This recommendation was made because it is expected that the modified meeting frequency would align well with the City's biannual budget adoption and would allow gathering and reviewing of meaningful data and feedback related to the time and extent of work councilmembers spend on City work, including newly elected councilmembers, which positions are all elected in odd-numbered years.

¹ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-attorneys-office/salary-commission/resolutions/resolution-23-002.pdf>

² <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-attorneys-office/salary-commission/resolutions/resolution-24-002.pdf>

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

In April 2026, Council considered the recommendations of the Salary Commission. Council then adopted Ordinance O-4933³ increasing the number of Salary Commission members from three to five, decreasing frequency of the Commission's meetings from every year to once every even-numbered year, and modifying the commissioners' term lengths from three to four years.

In June, at the City's 2026 boards and commissions recruitment cycle, Council interviewed candidates to fill the two additional seats on the Salary Commission. However, as a result of candidate withdrawals during the process, there were no qualified candidates. The Council then directed staff to recruit for the two vacant positions during the 2027 recruitment cycle. As a result, for 2026, the two vacant positions on the Salary Commission will remain unfilled and the Commission will continue to conduct business as a three-member commission throughout 2026.

With the transition to biennial Council salary reviews, the Commission will meet in 2026, then will not meet in 2027, and will reconvene again in 2028.

NEXT STEPS:

Once the 2027 recruitment cycle has completed, staff will provide the Commission with an update on the currently vacant positions.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

³ <https://docs.kirklandwa.gov/CMWebDrawer/RecordHtml/623472>



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MEMORANDUM

To: Salary Commission

From: Darcey Eilers, City Attorney
Lauren Knox, Labor and Employee Relations Manager

Date: September 8, 2026

Subject: City Council Compensation and Benefits Discussion

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Salary Commission reviews the 2026 survey of comparison cities' council compensation and benefits and other relevant information.

BACKGROUND:

The Kirkland Salary Commission is entrusted with reviewing the salaries of the City's mayor and councilmembers. After reviewing salaries, the Salary Commission may determine that those salaries should be increased or decreased, which decision then takes effect automatically without any City Council action.

In 2023, the Salary Commission approved Resolution No. 23-001, which significantly increased the salaries paid to the mayor and councilmembers and enhanced other benefits provided to Council. These changes were intended to provide more equitable compensation for elected officials' significant part-time commitments and enable a more diverse range of community members to serve on the City Council. Through the same resolution, as part of the Salary Commission's efforts, the benefits, allowances, and stipends available to councilmembers were also increased. These include medical, dental, and vision benefits; a monthly transportation allowance (\$282/month); a monthly cell phone stipend (\$45/month); and a monthly childcare stipend for eligible children (\$1,000/month).

The Salary Commission's most recent modification to councilmember salaries was made in 2024 through Resolution No. 24-001, which established a salary of \$4,000 per month for the mayor and \$3,200 per month for the councilmembers. The Salary Commission maintained these salaries and benefit in 2025 and 2026.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The Human Resources Department has completed its 2026 annual report of comparative mayor and councilmember compensation and benefits, which is provided as Attachment A.

This year, ten cities were surveyed. All of them have historically been utilized as comparators for the City of Kirkland.

The compensation survey reveals an average monthly compensation of \$2,469 for city councilmembers and \$4,341 for mayors. Notably, there are only two comparators (Bellevue and Bothell) with a mayoral position equivalent to Kirkland. The remaining comparators have a full-time, highly compensated mayor because those cities are organized under the mayor-council form of government. By contrast, Kirkland, Bellevue, and Bothell are organized under the council-manager form of government.

The survey data reveals that Kirkland's monthly compensation for councilmembers is above the average by more than \$700 per month, placing Kirkland's councilmember salary at 30% above market average. For the mayor, Kirkland's salary is slightly below the average by \$341 per month, which is 8% below the market average of the other two comparable cities. This change in market position occurred because Bothell's Salary Commission recently made significant changes to mayor and councilmember salaries, based on similar efforts to those made by Kirkland's Salary Commission in 2023. Notably, however, when considering other cash benefits, Kirkland's compensation and cash benefits remain above all comparison cities, placing Kirkland's councilmember salary at 45% above market average and Kirkland's mayor salary at approximately 5% above market.

Position	Kirkland Monthly Comp.	Average Monthly Comp.	Comp Percentage Comparison	Kirkland Monthly Comp. + Benefits	Average Monthly Comp. + Benefits	Comp + Benefits Percentage Comparison
Councilmember	\$3,200	\$2,469	~30% above market average	\$4,128	\$2,838	~45% above market average
Mayor	\$4,000	\$4,341	~8% below market average	\$4,928	\$4,572.50	~5% above market average

The benefits survey is provided in Attachment B. The benefits survey presents additional details about all non-salary specific benefits received by those serving on council, including information about availability of medical, dental, and vision insurance; life insurance; access to deferred compensation, MEBT, and/or flexible spending accounts; transportation benefits; and other types of non-salary benefits. These benefits factor into the total compensation comparison.

Another important consideration in the salary review process is the impact of changes in the cost of living and inflation. To provide context for these economic factors, Attachment C presents historical Consumer Price Index (CPI) data for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue region, illustrating the cumulative changes in the cost of living over time.

In 2026, most City of Kirkland employees received a 2.7 percent cost of living adjustment to their wages. The City's settled collective bargaining agreements reflect a 3.8 percent cost of living adjustment for 2027. A 3.8% adjustment to the mayor's salary would be \$4,152 and the same adjustment to councilmembers' salaries would be \$3,322.

As noted in a separate memorandum, this is the first year of the Salary Commission's new biennial review cycles. To facilitate that transition, staff surveyed comparable cities to evaluate

whether those cities' salary commissions account for any salary changes during the off-cycle year. Attachment D provides a comparative analysis of peer cities that conduct biennial Council salary reviews.

As the analysis shows, three cities (Everett, Federal Way, and Redmond) conduct biennial reviews and establish compensation for the intervening year based on a defined minimum and maximum cost-of-living adjustment. The City of Bothell's commission meets ad hoc but now, with recent changes, adjusts Council salaries annually based on changes in area median income without additional Salary Commission action. Edmonds' Salary Commission has previously provided a pre-determined increase in the off-cycle year. However, due to budget constraints, no increases were provided in 2026 or 2027. Bellevue (meets ad hoc) and Renton (meets every four years) do not provide for any salary increases during any non-review years.

To the extent it helps the Commission review the 2026 survey data, if the City Manager were reviewing the same data and information on comparables for a Management and Confidential (MAC) position, no change would be made to compensation or benefits at this time.

Additionally, the Salary Commission may want to consider that the City is in the process of preparing the 2027-2028 biennial budget. The message that the Council and staff has been given is that the City is looking at a potentially significant funding gap to continue funding all 2025-2026 one-time positions, programs, and proposed service packages. No reductions are anticipated at this time; however, the priority is to maintain current service levels where possible. Council will be engaging in budget discussions over the next several months.

NEXT STEPS:

In the event the Salary Commission provides direction to modify councilmember salaries or associate benefits in 2027 or 2028, staff can prepare a proposed resolution for the Commission's consideration. Note that the Commission is not required to take any action (such as adopting a resolution) if it does not desire to increase or decrease Council's salaries and benefits.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A – 2026 Comparator Cities Compensation Survey
- Attachment B – 2026 Comparator Cities Benefits Survey
- Attachment C – Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Consumer Price Index Data (2018-2026)
- Attachment D – 2026 Comparator Cities Salary Frequency Review

Attachment A
2026 Mayor/Councilmember Compensation Survey

City	Population	Mayor Monthly Comp	Council-member Monthly Compensation	Mayor / Council President & Councilmember Difference (%)	Change from 2025	Other Monthly Cash Benefits	2026 Councilmember Monthly Comp + Cash Benefits	Other Cash Benefits Details	Notes
Auburn	90,350	N/A	\$ 1,900	N/A	\$ 100	\$ 300	\$ 2,200	\$300/month regional meeting attendance.	Deputy Mayor: \$2,533/month
Bellevue	158,300	\$ 3,687	\$ 3,120	18%	\$ -	\$ 464	\$ 3,585	\$399.37/month car allowance & \$65/month cell stipend.	Deputy Mayor: \$3,309.36/month.
Bothell	52,010	\$ 4,994	\$ 4,256	17%	\$ 2,526	\$ -	\$ 4,256		Deputy Mayor: \$4,496/month. In 2025, wages were increased so Councilmembers will make 45% of the area median income for single person household in the Everett, Seattle, and Bellevue area. It will be adjusted annually. Low-income stipend (\$400/month if at or below 80% of KCMI) eliminated in 2025.
Edmonds	43,770	N/A	\$ 1,756	20%	\$ -	\$ 1,107	\$ 2,863	\$1,106.84/month for waiving benefits.	Council President: \$2,107.58/month (set 20% above Councilmember salary). Low income stipend \$500/month if income is less than 80% median income for Snohomish County.
Everett	114,900	N/A	\$ 2,856	30%	\$ 75	\$ 233	\$ 3,089	\$233/month to HRA/VEBA (\$2,400/year in HRA/VEBA if family enrolled in CDHP PPO & \$400 additional if complete annual evaluation)	Council President: \$3,713/month (set 30% above Councilmember salary).
Federal Way	103,000	N/A	\$ 1,692	N/A	\$ 64	\$ 494	\$ 2,186	\$494.19/month to HRA/VEBA.	
Kent	140,400	N/A	\$ 3,108	15%	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,108		Council President: \$3,575/month.
Lynnwood	43,070	N/A	\$ 1,650	12%	\$ -	\$ 750	\$ 2,400	Additional \$750/month if attend 5 regular Council meetings in the month (includes 4 automatic excused absences per year).	Council President: \$1,850/month.
Redmond	83,320	N/A	\$ 2,352	9%	\$ 52	\$ 300	\$ 2,652	Additional \$300/month stipend to be used at Councilmember's discretion.	Council President: \$2,552/month
Renton	109,800	N/A	\$ 2,000	15%	\$ -	\$ 40	\$ 2,040	2% of salary for deferred comp.	City Council President: \$2,300/month.
	Average:	\$4,341	\$ 2,469	17%	\$ 282	\$ 369	\$ 2,838		
Kirkland	98,860	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,200	25%	No change	\$ 928	\$ 4,128	\$282/month transportation allowance, \$45/month cellphone stipend in lieu of City phone & data, \$470/month allowance for waiving benefits, \$100-200/month HRA/VEBA standard contribution if enrolled in HMA & \$25-50/month wellness incentive. Childcare stipend up to \$1000/month. Low-income stipend up to \$1000/month.	Other Monthly Cash Benefits includes average cost per Councilmember of childcare stipend, allowance for waiving benefits, and HRA/VEBA based upon current enrollment. Low income stipend not included.

Note: Cities listed as "N/A" have a full-time, highly-compensated Mayor.

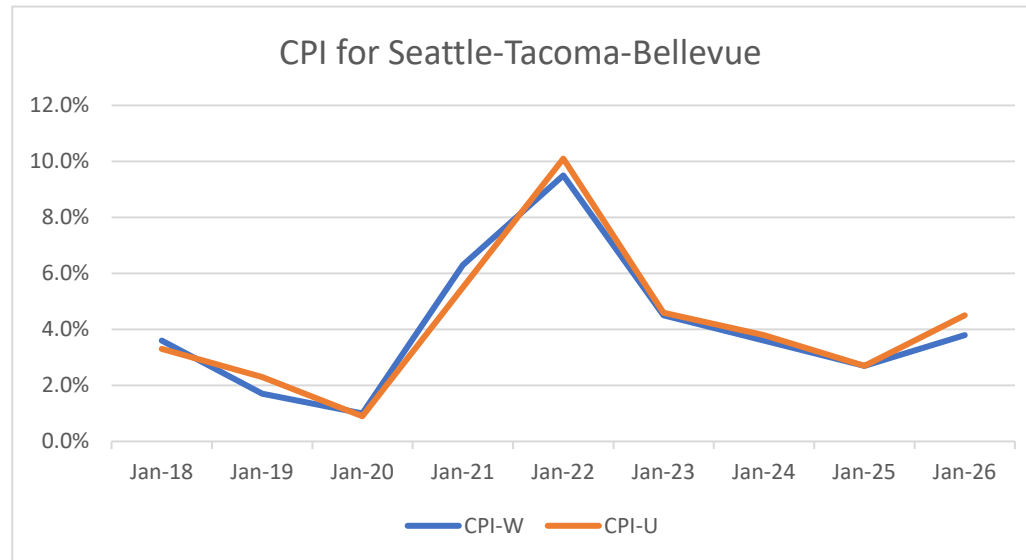
Data Source: Associate of Washington Cities 2026 Salary & Benefit Survey

Attachment B
2026 Councilmember Benefits Survey

City	Medical/Dental/ Vision	M/D/V for Dependents	Life & AD&D	Retirement - Deferred Comp & MEBT	HRA/VEBA	Transportation & Phone/Tech	Other Voluntary Benefits
Auburn	Not offered.	Not offered.					\$75 for attendance at regional meetings up to \$300 per month.
Bellevue	X - City pays 100% premiums.	X - Employee pays 100% of family premiums.	City paid policy of \$50,000	MEBT: City match of up to 6.2%		\$399.37/month car allowance and free ORCA pass (if enrolled in PERS). \$65/month cell phone & data stipend.	FSA
Bothell	X - City pays 50% premiums (same level offered to 50% part-time non-representative staff).	Not offered.	City paid policy of \$100,000	Deferred Comp: 2% City match in 457 deferred comp program.		Will receive Bring Your Own Phone incentive offered to non-rep (not yet launched).	
Edmonds	X - City pays 100% premiums. If opt out, receive \$1,106.84/month for waiving benefits.	X - Employee pays 100% of family premiums.	City paid basic term life with a face value of \$10,000 and \$1,000 on dependents. AD&D benefit of \$6,000.	Deferred Comp: Voluntary participation. 3 deferred comp program options; no employer match or contribution.			FSA, short-term disability through AFLAC; EAP included with M/D/V or Life enrollment.
Everett	X - City pays for 85% & councilmember pays 15% of medical premium for the HMA Classic PPO or Kaiser medical plan, or City pays 95% of premium under HMA CDHP PPO. City pays 100% of premiums for dental/vision.	X - City pays for 85% & councilmember pays 15% of medical premium for the HMA Classic PPO or Kaiser medical plan, or City pays 95% of premium under HMA CDHP PPO. City pays 100% of premiums for dental/vision.	City paid benefit is 2x annual salary rounded up to next \$1,000 (if not already an exact multiple of \$1,000); + \$2,000 up to a maximum of \$150,000. Eligible for City paid long-term disability (LTD) plan.	Deferred Comp: Voluntary participation. MEBS: 6.2% employer match. Includes \$100,000 life insurance policy.	City contributes annually: \$1,200 single; \$2,400 family. Additional annual City HRA/VEBA contribution for completing annual whole health evaluation if enrolled in CDHP: \$200 employee; \$400 employee + spouse.		FSA
Federal Way	Not offered.	Not offered.		Deferred Comp: 6.2% City match in deferred comp plan if Councilmember contributes a minimum of 6.2%; OR may choose to participate in Social Security.	City contribution of \$494.19/month		Eligible for 2 member annual Community Center Pass.
Kent	X - City pays 94% & Employee pays 6% of premiums.	X - Employee pays 100% of family premiums.		Deferred Comp: Voluntary participation.			FSA, EAP
Lynnwood	X - City pays 100% premiums.	X - Employee pays 10% of family premiums.	City paid policy of \$50,000				
Redmond	X - City pays 100% premiums.	X - Employee pays 100% of family premiums.	City paid policy of \$93,600 for Survivor Life	Deferred Comp: Voluntary participation. MEBS: 6.2% match at 80%			FSA, EAP
Renton	X - City pays 100% premiums.	X - Employee pays 100% of family premiums.	City paid policy of \$12,500	Deferred Comp: 2% City contribution, and an additional 1.4% if employee is prohibited from participation in PERS.		Free ORCA card	FSA, EAP
Kirkland (current)	X - City pays 100% premiums. If opt out, receive \$470/month allowance. 3 Councilmembers currently enrolled in health insurance benefits, 4 receive allowance for opting out.	X - Employee pays 28.5% of premium, in line with the premium paid for part-time employees working 26 hours/week (0.65 FTE)	City paid policy is 2x annual salary.	MEBS: 6.2% match <i>Note: State of Washington Department of Retirement Systems Plan coverage (PERS) is optional for all elected officials.</i>	If enrolled in HMA, receive annual standard contribution of \$1,200/employee only and \$2,400/employee & spouse; eligible for wellness incentive contribution of \$600/employee only or if employee & spouse complete incentive or \$300 if only employee or spouse complete incentive. If enrolled in Kaiser, eligible for \$300 or \$600 wellness incentive. 2 Councilmembers currently receive the standard contribution and 1 employee has received wellness contribution at employee only level.	\$282/month car allowance & free ORCA card. \$45/month in lieu of City-issued phone & data	FSA, EAP. Childcare stipend: \$1000/month for Councilmembers with dependent children 10 years old or younger (or dependent children with special needs up to age 18). 2 Councilmembers currently receive this benefit. Low income stipend: \$1000/month for households at or below 30% of King County Median Income; \$700/month for households at or below 50% KCM; \$400/month for households at or below 80% KCM. No Councilmembers currently receive this benefit.

Attachment C
Cost of Living

Consumer Price Index for Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue									
CPI Records	Jun-18	Jun-19	Jun-20	Jun-21	Jun-22	Jun-23	Jun-24	Jun-25	Jun-26
CPI-W	3.6%	1.7%	1.0%	6.3%	9.5%	4.5%	3.6%	2.7%	3.8%
CPI-U	3.3%	2.3%	0.9%	5.5%	10.1%	4.6%	3.8%	2.7%	4.5%



Kirkland's collective bargaining unit contracts that are settled for 2027 have agreed to CPI-W with a minimum of 1% and maximum of 4%.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Attachment D
2026 Comparator Cities Biennial Salary Review Survey

City	Frequency of Salary Commission Review	Frequency of Salary Adjustments
Auburn	Annually	
Bellevue	Ad hoc - convened in 2016 and 2024	Adjusted when convened; not modified in the interim years
Bothell	Ad hoc - convened in 2019, 2022, 2024, and 2025	Newly established to link salary to 45% of Area Median Income for single person household in Everett, Seattle, and Bellevue area, to be adjusted in April annually
Edmonds	Every other year (odd years).	Paused until 2027 due to budget issues. Historical data indicates adjusted salary annually: In 2023, set amount for 2024 and provided for a 2025 increase by the same rate as all other City's non-represented positions.
Everett	Every other year (odd years)	Biennial review, adjusted annually: • 2026: 2.7% (100% CPI-U min 2% max 7.5%) • 2027: 4.5% (100% CPI-U min 2% max 7.5%)
Federal Way	Every other year (even years)	Biennial Reviews, adjusted annually: • 2026: 3.9% • 2027: TBD Similarly in 2024: set 2024 and 2025 wages
Kent	Annually	
Lynnwood	Salary Commission disbanded - City Council sets salaries (for future Councils)	N/A
Redmond	Every other year (even years)	Biennial Reviews: • 2027: 3.8% (100% CPI-W min 2% max 5%) • 2028: 100% CPI-W min 2% max 5%
Renton	Every 4 years	Adjusted when convened; not modified in the interim years. Last set in 2024.
Kirkland	Every other year (even years) as of 2026	TBD