Report from the Compensation Commission - May, 2020

To: Mayor, City Council, and City Clerk

From: Cheryl Wollin (chair), Rebecca Berneck, Omar Brown, Nehanda Loiseau, Rick Marsh

Staff: Tasheik Kerr, Jennifer Lin, Kimberly Richardson

Date: May, 2020

The Evanston City Code requires that a non-aldermanic committee meet every four years to submit a report and recommend compensation for elected officials no later than two hundred and forty (240) days prior to the next regularly scheduled municipal election. In February of 2020, Mayor Hagerty appointed the above members to serve on this year’s compensation commission. The recommendations submitted will apply to those individuals elected in the spring of 2021 through 2024.

With an appreciation of the immense work and responsibilities of Evanston’s elected officials, the committee delved into the assigned task. With the exception of the full-time City Clerk, Evanston elected officials are considered part-time positions of public service to the community and Evanston residents.

This year presents tremendous budget challenges for the City due to the pandemic, and the committee understands this. Sacrifices and belt-tightening will be asked of all City employees, including its leaders and elected officials.

The survey of sixteen (including Evanston) IL northern suburban communities revealed some amazing statistics. Evanston elected officials receive the highest compensation by far, and only two of the sixteen even offer any type of subsidized health insurance, making Evanston an outlier for compensation and health insurance benefits. The committee decided to equalize aldermanic compensation to be more comparable with its neighboring municipalities. The resulting proposal that the committee is recommending still keeps Evanston as the best compensated suburban council in the area.

One of the committee members, Rebecca Berneck, used her professional expertise to create several excel interactive spreadsheets with mathematical analysis of various scenarios. They became the basis for discussion and debate during our six meetings. This enabled the committee to consider the impact that
each scenario would have on the individual as well as the City budget. The committee was unanimous in reaching a solution, and achieving our two goals of equalizing compensation and improving the City’s budget.

Our conclusions and recommendations are the following:

1.) All elected officials’ compensation for years 2021 and 2022 shall not increase (remain the same). Compensation for years 2023 and 2024 will increase at the same percentage rate as approved for non-union employees.

2.) Elected officials will receive health insurance fully paid (100%) by the City for the Employee Only plan chosen by the elected official. Elected officials who wish to extend this coverage to their family may do so at their own expense, and will be responsible for paying the difference between Employee Only and family coverage.

3.) The impact on the city budget of implementing this plan, will save the taxpayers approximately $440,000 over the next four years.

This proposal met our goals of equalizing aldermanic compensation and saving needed dollars for the City. It is fair and equal, and fiscally responsible.

A sample ordinance:

**An Ordinance Setting Compensation for the Members of the Evanston City**

**Following the Report and Recommendations of the Compensation Committee**

**WHEREAS,** pursuant to Section 1-5-9 of the City Code, the compensation of the members of the City Council was reviewed by a non-aldermanic compensation committee, and all municipal officers’ salaries must be fixed by ordinance pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/3. 1-50-5; and

**WHEREAS,** the Compensation Committee submitted a report and recommendations to the City Council which specified no salary increase for years 2021 and 2022; and a modest salary increase for years 2023 and 2024 equal to the same percentage increase approved for non-union employees, and

**WHEREAS,** The City Council accepts the report and recommendations of the Compensation Committee,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, OF THE CITY OF EVANSTON, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS:**
SECTION 1: That section 1-5-9 of the Evanston City Code of 2016, as amended, is stricken and replaced in its entirety, and is to read as follows:

1-5-9: COMPENSATION:

The compensation to be paid to an Alderman elected April 2021 and taking office in May 2021 for his/her services per annum is:

(A) Effective May 2021 – For years 2021 and 2022 Fifteen thousand nine hundred ninety dollars ($15,990).

Effective 2023 and 2024 – salary shall increase equal to the percentage approved for non-union employees.

An alderman may choose to receive medical benefits.

(B) The aldermanic compensation structure must be reviewed by a nonaldermanic committee every four (4) years. That committee must submit a report and recommendation to the City Council no later than two hundred forty (240) days prior to the next regularly scheduled municipal election.

(rest of verbiage is boiler plate)