

Date: January 28, 2025
To: Members of the Somerville City Council
From: Anne Gill, HR Director and Michael Mastrobuoni, Budget Director
Subject: Review of Elected Officials Compensation Relative to Workload and Peers

Dear Members of the Somerville City Council,

I am writing to provide an analysis of the current Somerville elected officials' compensation. This assessment seeks to determine if the existing compensation adequately reflects the responsibilities and time commitment required of the positions of City Councilor, School Committee Member, and Mayor. All positions surveyed are benefits-eligible within the City of Somerville, allowing elected officials to join City health insurance and other benefit plans extended to regular part-time and full-time employees, which is considered part of compensation. However, this memo analyzes compensation level exclusive of City benefits value.

Section 1 – City Council

Average Hours Worked

Council members in Somerville dedicate an estimated 90-155 hours per year to City Council and Committee meetings based on Legistar data. In addition to meetings, Councilor responsibilities encompass:

- Engaging with constituents in an official capacity (15 hrs/month)
- Participating in community events & public meetings in an official capacity (5 hrs/month)
- Collaborating with city staff and stakeholders (5 hrs/month)

Given these estimates, the role of City Councilor is expected to require approximately 450 hours per year. A conservative buffer of an additional 33% of hours increases this estimate to 600 hours.

600 hours per year / \$40,000 compensation = \$67/hour.

While the role demands significant commitment, it aligns with the expectations of a part-time public service position as defined by the city's charter.

Compensation Comparison with Comparable Communities

A review of compensation rates in similar municipalities within the region reveals the following:

Table 1: City Council Compensation Comparison – Mayor/Council Govts

City	Council Compensation
Somerville	\$40,000
Quincy	\$29,700
Medford	\$29,359
Springfield	\$28,000
Lynn	\$25,182
Everett	\$25,000
Revere	\$25,000

Waltham	\$23,135
Brockton	\$21,464
Malden	\$17,500
Newton	\$15,500
Framingham	\$5,000
Melrose	\$4,000

- **Well Above Median and Average:** Somerville's City Council compensation is significantly higher than both the median (\$25,000) and average (\$22,776) among comparable communities.
- **Highest Compensation:** At \$40,000, Somerville's City Council is the highest paid in this group, substantially outpacing other cities, even those of similar size and governance structures.

The review demonstrates that the current compensation for Somerville City Council members is:

- Commensurate with the average hours worked,
- Reflective of the responsibilities and expectations of the role,
- Competitive within the region.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, it is recommended that the current compensation levels be maintained. Current stipends adequately compensate council members for their time and service while aligning with regional comparisons.

Section 2 – School Committee

A review of compensation rates in similar municipalities within the region reveals the following:

Table 2: School Committee Members Compensation Comparison

City	SC Compensation
Quincy	\$20,000
Springfield	\$18,000
Somerville	\$16,500
Brockton	\$15,000
Waltham	\$13,525
Everett	\$12,500
Medford	\$12,000
Malden	\$12,000
Revere	\$10,000
Lynn	\$9,600
Newton	\$7,750
Framingham	\$5,000
Melrose	\$-

- **Above Median and Average:** Somerville's School Committee compensation is higher than both the median (\$12,000) and average (\$11,683) across these comparable communities.
- **Competitive Standing:** At \$16,500, Somerville offers the third-highest compensation in this group, behind only Quincy and Springfield.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, it is recommended that the current compensation levels be maintained. Current stipends adequately compensate school committee members for their time and service while aligning with regional comparisons.

Section 3 – Mayor

A review of compensation rates in similar municipalities within the region reveals the following:

Table 3: Mayor Compensation Comparison – Mayor/Council Govts

City	Mayor Compensation
Everett	\$225,000
Quincy	\$218,000
Brockton	\$188,590
Somerville	\$180,000
Springfield	\$175,000
Revere	\$167,500
Framingham	\$165,000
Waltham	\$160,533
Newton	\$155,000
Malden	\$150,000
Lynn	\$145,000
Medford	\$140,035
Melrose	\$125,000

- **Above median and average:** The median mayoral salary in the listed communities is \$165,000. The average mayoral salary is approximately \$168,820.
- **Somerville's Ranking:** At \$180,000, Somerville's mayoral salary ranks fourth highest in this group, surpassed by Everett, Quincy, and Brockton.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, it is recommended that the current compensation levels be maintained. Current stipends adequately compensate the position of Mayor for their time and service while aligning with regional comparisons.