

AGENDA
Salary Commission Special Meeting
Thursday, September 17, 2026 – 10:00 a.m.
Executive Conference Room

This meeting may also be accessed online at
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7118479102?pwd=RHZqZlVyWDdwZGlQSHFmbVVIbm1Zz09>
or by calling (253) 215-8782 and entering passcode 711 847 9102

- I. Call to Order/Roll Call**
- II. Approval of Minutes – April 27, 2026**
- III. Public Comment**
- IV. Review of Mayor and Councilmember Salaries**
- V. Adjourn**



City of Gig Harbor
3510 Grandview Street
Gig Harbor, WA 98335
gigharborwa.gov
(253) 851-8136

To: Gig Harbor Salary Commission
From: Elizabeth Palacios and Tiffany Aliment, City Staff
Subject: Compensation Analysis of Mayor and Council Salaries
Date: 28 August 2026

Purpose and Background

The purpose of this memo is to summarize the findings of an analysis comparing mayor and councilmember compensation across Washington cities to Gig Harbor. It also incorporates feedback from councilmembers regarding responsibilities and time commitments to provide broader context for understanding the scope of work associated with the role. This information is intended to support the Salary Commission's evaluation of whether current compensation aligns with both comparable jurisdictions and the demands of serving in Gig Harbor.

Methodology

Compensation data used in this analysis comes from the 2025 Association of Washington Cities (AWC) Salary Study, a statewide survey collecting salary information for municipal elected officials, including both mayors and council members. From this information, 12 peer cities were selected based on their comparable population size to Gig Harbor's 13,000 residents, with the range spanning from 10,000 to 20,000. These cities are also located in King, Kitsap, Pierce, or Thurston County. When combined with Gig Harbor, the comparison group consists of 13 cities.

An additional layer of analysis for mayoral compensation focused specifically on cities with a strong-mayor form of government. Because the role and responsibilities of the mayor vary by form of government, this distinction provides a more comparable basis for evaluating mayor compensation. Of the 12 peer cities, five operate under a strong-mayor form of government, resulting in a comparison group of six jurisdictions when Gig Harbor is included.

To supplement the compensation data, the City conducted an anonymous survey of Gig Harbor City Councilmembers to gather information about time commitments and core responsibilities, to which five of the seven council members responded.

Key Findings

- Councilmember compensation in Gig Harbor is generally aligned with the peer group. At \$800 per month, compensation is \$19 below the peer average and \$18 below the median.
- Mayor compensation in Gig Harbor falls below both the average and median among the full 13-city comparison group.
- When narrowed to cities with a strong-mayor form of government, Gig Harbor's compensation falls even further below both the average and median, ranking 5th out of six jurisdictions with comparable mayoral responsibilities.
- Survey responses from councilmembers indicate substantial monthly hours spent on duties outside regular meetings and study sessions, highlighting responsibilities and time commitments that may not be fully captured through population-based comparisons alone.

Council-Member Compensation Comparison

Gig Harbor pays its councilmembers \$800 per month (**Table 1**), which is slightly below the peer average of \$819 and the median of \$818. The small difference between Gig Harbor's compensation and these measures indicate that councilmember compensation is generally consistent with the peer group, further demonstrated in Exhibit A.

With compensation among comparison cities ranging from \$325 to \$1,398 per month, Gig Harbor's ranking 8th out of 13 reflects its placement around the middle of the distribution.

Table 1	
City	Council Member Salaries Per Month
Gig Harbor	\$800
DuPont	\$600
Sumner	\$1,397.50
Yelm	\$818
Fife	\$1,060.90
Poulsbo	\$1,000
Enumclaw	\$325
Lake Forest Park	\$800
Newcastle	\$500
Woodinville	\$1,000
Edgewood	\$850
Snoqualmie	\$500
Port Orchard	\$1,000

Mayor Compensation Comparison

Gig Harbor's mayor receives \$2,300 per month (**Table 2**), compared with an average of \$4,116 and a median of \$2,500 among the 13 comparison cities. Unlike the councilmember comparison, the average is considerably higher than the median due to several cities reporting mayoral compensation of \$8,000 per month or more, as shown in Exhibit B. This indicates that the median may better represent typical compensation within the group. Mayor compensation varies significantly across the comparison cities, ranging from \$600 to \$11,518 per month—an almost \$11,000 spread. Within this wide range, Gig Harbor's ranking of 8th out of 13 illustrates that its mayoral compensation sits in the lower half of the distribution and falls below both the average and median.

Table 2		
City	Mayor/Chair Salaries Per Month	Form of Government
Gig Harbor	\$2,300	Mayor – Council
DuPont	\$2,100	Council – Manager
Sumner	\$3,195.83	Mayor – Council
Yelm	\$2,500	Mayor – Council
Fife	\$1,432.22	Council – Manager
Poulsbo	\$11,518	Mayor – Council
Enumclaw	\$1,000	Mayor – Council
Lake Forest Park	\$3,000	Council – Manager
Newcastle	\$6,000	Council – Manager
Woodinville	\$1,200	Council – Manager
Edgewood	\$8,400	Mayor – Council
Snoqualmie	\$5,538.16	Council – Manager
Port Orchard	\$10,718.34	Council – Manager

As previously noted, the responsibilities of a mayor vary considerably depending on a city's form of government. For this reason, a more focused comparison was conducted using only cities operating under a strong-mayor form of government. Among the six strong-mayor cities, average monthly compensation increases to \$4,819, and the median increases to \$2,848. Compensation continues to vary considerably, with a range of approximately \$10,500.

Within this more directly comparable group, Gig Harbor ranks 5th out of six cities. At \$2,300 per month, Gig Harbor's mayoral compensation remains below both average and median and ranks near the bottom of the strong-mayor comparison group. This

focused comparison shows that Gig Harbor's compensation difference becomes more pronounced, as illustrated in Exhibit C.

Local taxing Districts

To provide additional context for evaluating elected-official compensation, information from three local taxing districts was also reviewed. PenMet Parks offers capped annual compensation at \$15,456 to its commissioners. The Peninsula School District does not provide compensation to its board members and instead offers reimbursements only. Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One provides commissioners with annual compensation capped at \$9,984. While these districts differ from municipal governments in both structure and responsibilities, their compensation models further illustrate the wide variation in how local jurisdictions approach elected-official or board-member remuneration. This context supports the broader analysis by showing that Gig Harbor's mayor and councilmember compensation fits within a landscape where compensation practices vary considerably depending on governance roles and organizational demands.

Councilmember's Time Commitment and Responsibilities

Councilmember estimates of monthly time commitments varied significantly. Reported hours spent on duties outside of regular council meetings and study sessions ranged from 20–29 hours to 60–69 hours per month, with three of the five respondents indicating 50 or more hours per month.

All respondents reported regularly participating in community events, constituent communications, and preparation for and attendance at council meetings and study sessions, including reviewing agenda materials and background information. Four indicate additional ongoing responsibilities such as serving on regional boards or commissions and attending training or conferences. Written comments also identified other routine tasks, including researching prior city decisions, following up with staff, and reviewing policy. One councilmember noted that time commitments increase during the budget development cycle and preparation for the legislative session.

Council members emphasized that many responsibilities are not fully reflected in population-based comparisons. They cited Gig Harbor's regional service role, tourism and daytime population, maritime and shoreline issues, environmental and growth management obligations, increased public outreach, regional coordination needs, and the challenge of balancing council service with other employment. These insights provide important qualitative context for the Salary Commission when evaluating whether current compensation reflects both the time commitment and the breadth of responsibilities associated with the role.

Appendix

Exhibit A



Exhibit B

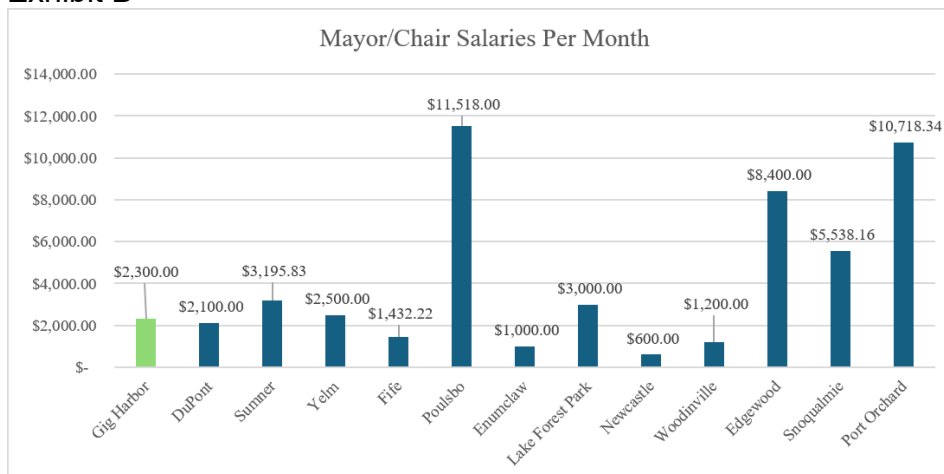


Exhibit C

