



## City of Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission

### Questions for Members of the Civil Service Commission

The Commission has been conducting a thorough review of the existing City Charter and is nearing the conclusion of its examination. One item not yet finalized is the manner of setting salaries of the members of City Council. The Commission wishes the process to be such that it results in levels of compensation that will be fair and provide a satisfactory opportunity for attracting suitable numbers of qualified candidates. Under the current charter, the task of salary setting is placed exclusively on the Council. This is not atypical, but it does carry with it the political reality that council members may find it difficult to raise the issue of, let alone vote for, an increase of their own compensation even when objective analysis might suggest that would be very appropriate or even desirable. Lakewood has a process in which its Civil Service Commission (CSC), in addition to its other responsibilities, must periodically make recommendations for council salary levels. Council has the final say, in that it can accept or reject the recommendations, but if council does nothing within a defined period of time, the recommendations become final and governing. Our Charter Review Commission has preliminarily decided that the Lakewood approach would be a good model to follow in Cleveland Heights, with our CSC becoming involved via analysis and recommendation at four-year intervals. However, before making a final determination on the topic, the Commission wanted to solicit the views of the individual members of the Civil Service Commission. That is the purpose of this inquiry. Materials from Lakewood that show the functioning of its CSC's salary recommendation process either have been or are being sent to you for reference in your consideration.

1. In general, what is your reaction to the notion of involvement by the Cleveland Heights CSC in the setting of Council compensation?
2. Do you see any impediments that would prevent or restrict the CSC from effectively performing the contemplated salary function?
3. The proposal would expand the scope of the CSC's responsibility. Do you believe this would in any way impair the CSC in also continuing to discharge its current responsibilities?
4. Do you have any other comments to make on this topic?

Please return your responses to the Commission Facilitator, Dr. Larry Keller, [lkeller@clvhts.com](mailto:lkeller@clvhts.com) or Susanna O'Neil, [snoneil@clvhts.com](mailto:snoneil@clvhts.com), by Thursday 1 November or not later than Wednesday, 14 November.

Thank you for helping the Commission with its review of the Charter.

Judith Miles: Responses to Questions for Members of Civil Service Commission

1. In general, what is your reaction to the notion of involvement by the Cleveland Heights CSC in the setting of Council compensation?

- *I understand the practical need for council salaries to be set at reasonable levels. At this time, I am open to any legal, ethical, reasonable, practical, and transparent method of achieving that objective. Involving the CSC is not something I would have thought of, as the traditional role of the CSC is pretty far removed from recommending council salaries. However, I am open to reasonable discourse.*
- *My opinion is that while this will always be an uncomfortable issue for an elected official to undertake, it is something that should be dealt with directly with the public...and defended to the public.*

2. Do you see any impediments that would prevent or restrict the CSC from effectively performing the contemplated salary function?

- *Would/could the "salary function" be truly independent?*

3. The proposal would expand the scope of the CSC's responsibility. Do you believe this would in any way impair the CSC in also continuing to discharge its current responsibilities?

- *Is it possible that every four years the review and recommendation of council salaries could overshadow traditional hiring and promotion testing issues paramount to the safety forces the CSC serves?*

4. Do you have any other comments at this time?

- *No other comments other than it might be good to have a CSC meeting on the issue.*