

LOVELAND BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

WHERE QUALITY OF LIFE AND PUBLIC POLICY INTERSECT



Pay Increases for Loveland City Council

Policy White Paper

November 2023

Introduction

At the September 19 Loveland City Council meeting, Councilor Patrick McFall brought forward a discussion item in “New Business” regarding pay increases for incoming City Council members. McFall acknowledged that the optics of the issue were less than ideal, considering the ongoing discussion regarding the impacts of a food tax repeal on the city budget, but made his case for why the pay raises were a worthwhile topic for consideration. City Council unanimously approved a motion for city staff to draft an ordinance for the pay raises, along with reimbursement for child care costs and similar expenses. Two weeks later, the pay raise ordinance was approved on first reading. It was approved on second reading in mid-October.



Why did this topic arise in new business, amid many other pressing issues and during a busy campaign season? Was City Council compensation in need of an increase? In this white paper, Loveland Business Roundtable studies the topic of City Council pay and why it matters for the community at large.

Background

Service on City Council was never intended to be a lucrative proposition. But as Loveland has grown - in population, in budget size, and in scope of services - the job of serving on City Council has become more time-consuming and complex.

The September council packet included the ordinances for the 1987, 1993, and 2004 pay increases. Notably, the population of Loveland in 1987 was less than half of what it is today. (1)

From 2004 to the end of 2023, the pay remained at the same level.

	1987	1993	2004
Council Member	300/mo.	400/mo.	600/mo.
Mayor Pro Tem	300/mo.	500/mo.	800/mo.
Mayor	350/mo.	600/mo.	1000/mo.

Why Now?

In 2018, the issue of pay came up in council discussion, and the council added the issue to the “Rule of Four” list, where it remained without action.

During the 2023 campaign season, numerous citizens spoke about the pay issue during the public comment period of the meeting, stating that they had considered running for City Council but couldn’t afford to consider such a time-consuming job for such low pay. Councilor Patrick McFall introduced the issue as new business, saying the timing was right; he had waited until after the deadline for new candidates to enter the race for the 2023 election, and he made clear that only the council members elected or re-elected in 2023 and later years would benefit from the pay increases. Furthermore, he acknowledged that multiple candidates were in their prime income-producing years, and/or had families to support.



Comparing Notes with Other Cities

The City Council packet included research on surrounding municipalities' pay structures for those serving on City Council. Based on comparisons with other towns and cities, it is easy to argue that Loveland's 600-800-1000 model is outdated in 2023.

City Council Pay & Benefits Survey 9.2023

	Monthly Pay	Other Benefits
Arvada		
Mayor	\$1500	Healthcare benefits are offered. CC pays 100%. Can participate in 457 and Retirement Health Savings Plan
Mayor Pro-Tem	\$1250	Healthcare benefits are offered. CC pays 100%. Can participate in 457 and Retirement Health Savings Plan
City Council Member	\$1150	Healthcare benefits are offered. CC pays 100%. Can participate in 457 and Retirement Health Savings Plan
Broomfield		
Mayor	\$1,750	Not eligible
Mayor Pro Tem	\$1,100	Not eligible
Council Member:	\$800.00	Not eligible
Erie		
Mayor	\$700	Free admission to the Erie Community Center. Option to enroll in the Town's employee medical, dental, vision and supplemental benefits at 100% self-pay
Mayor Pro-Tem	\$400	Free admission to the Erie Community Center. Option to enroll in the Town's employee medical, dental, vision and supplemental benefits at 100% self-pay
City Council Member	\$400	Free admission to the Erie Community Center. Option to enroll in the Town's employee medical, dental, vision and supplemental benefits at 100% self-pay
Fort Collins		
Mayor	\$4,982	Eligible for Medical, Dental & Vision. Medical & Dental are paid by the City. Medical \$972 & Dental \$51.00 per month.
Mayor Pro-Tem	\$3,986	Eligible for Medical, Dental & Vision. Medical & Dental are paid by the City. Medical \$972 & Dental \$51.00 per month.
City Council Member	\$3,321	Eligible for Medical, Dental & Vision. Medical & Dental paid by the City. Medical \$972 & Dental \$51.00 per month.
Greeley		
Mayor	\$1,500	Medical Insurance is offered
Mayor Pro-Tem	N/A	
City Council Member	\$1,000	Medical Insurance is offered
Lakewood		
Mayor	\$3,233	Healthcare, travel insurance, EAP and 457 deferred comp with a minimum contribution of 7.5%.
Mayor Pro-Tem	N/A	
City Council Member	\$1,288	Healthcare, travel insurance, EAP and 457 deferred comp with a minimum contribution of 7.5%.
Longmont		
Mayor	\$1,500	Ability to enroll in Medical, Dental and Vision at Retiree rates and they have access to EAP
Mayor Pro-Tem	N/A	N/A
City Council Member	\$1,000	Ability to enroll in Medical, Dental and Vision at retiree rates and they have access to EAP
Thornton		
Mayor	\$2,000	Health, Dental, Life, Wellness, 457, \$200 monthly office/phone stipend, \$825 auto stipend
Mayor Pro-Tem	\$1,750	Health, Dental, Life, Wellness, 457, \$200 monthly office/phone stipend, \$459 auto stipend
City Council Member	\$1,500	Health, Dental, Life, Wellness, 457, \$200 monthly office/phone stipend, \$459 auto stipend
Westminster		
Mayor	\$1,598	Council Pays 100% for medical and Dental Insurance at employee rates. Participation in 457(b) with a minmum contribution rate of 7.5%.Westminster will match up to 12.5%
Mayor Pro-Tem	\$1,370	Council Pays 100% for medical and Dental Insurance at employee rates. Participation in 457(b) with a minmum contribution rate of 7.5%.Westminster will match up to 12.5%
City Council Member	\$1,142	Council Pays 100% for medical and Dental Insurance at employee rates. Participation in 457(b) with a minmum contribution rate of 7.5%.Westminster will match up to 12.5%

*Based on the 2023 Data and Assumptions Report (Page 3) the median home income for Loveland is \$73,907. Report available on lov.gov.org under Economid Development page.[Source: U.S. Census Bureau. ACS (2021).]

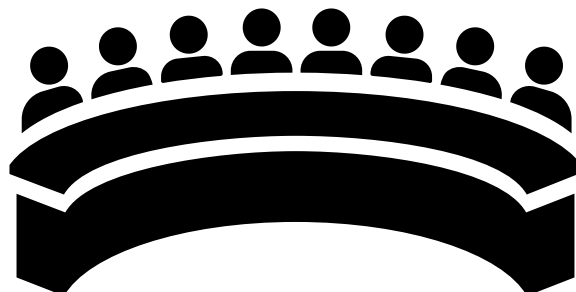
New Council Pay Ordinance

2.08.020 – Council salaries.

That for all new terms of office beginning after the regular Loveland municipal election on November 7, 2023, the salary of the mayor shall be \$3,000.00 per month, the salary of the mayor pro tem shall be \$2,500.00 per month and the salary of all other members of the city council shall be \$2,000.00 per month. The city shall reimburse each member of city council for reasonable expenses incurred by the member to carry out the duties of the position. Reasonable expenses shall include without limitation \$5,000.00 annually for childcare or similar expenses to attend city council functions.

Section 2. That the City Council finds increasing compensation for members of Council is necessary and in the interest of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Loveland.

Section 3. That as provided in City Charter Section 4-9(a)(7), this Ordinance shall be published by title only by the City Clerk after adoption on second reading unless the Ordinance has been amended since first reading in which case the Ordinance shall be published in full or the amendments shall be published in full. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect ten days after its final publication, as provided in City Charter Section 4-8(b).



Conclusion

Loveland Business Roundtable believes that the updated pay scale for Loveland City Council is warranted and long overdue.

City Council is still not intended to be a lucrative position, but the new pay levels reflect the time that goes into preparation and study between meetings, in addition to the committee and commission assignments that often go along with the duties of a City Councilor. The new pay scale also reflects the continually increasing cost of living in Loveland. If we want a variety of age levels, viewpoints, and backgrounds to be represented by City Council, it is important for younger working people to have fewer barriers to candidacy, which includes the level of financial sacrifice involved. Reimbursement for childcare and other relevant expenses is important for the same reason.

