

2017 COMPENSATION REVIEW COMMISSION
 Survey questions for members of the County Council

	Ball	Fox	Sigaty	Terrasa	Weinstein
time devoted to duties as a Council Member	<p>I asked my staff to review nine weeks in my last year for weekly proportion of that time I devoted to (a) legislative matters, (b) constituent services, (c) attending meetings, (d) managing employees, and (e) other tasks. I then, averaged them and added where things were not on my calendar. I added nine hours above what my staff recommended, including (a) five hours for managing employees, which they left blank, (b) three hours for constituent services because they are unaware of those grocery store, restaurant, soccer game moments when constituents pull us aside, and (c) one hour for attending meetings that occasionally result from those impromptu constituent services talks. Finally, I came up with the following:</p> <p>(a) legislative matters 16 hours (b) constituent services 12 hours (c) attending meetings 5 hours (d) managing employees 5 hours (e) other tasks I wasn't sure what this meant, but my staff interpreted it as other events I attended that weren't legislative, or meetings, per se 16 hours</p>		<p>Let me start by apologizing for seeming somewhat flip, but this week has been tough. We had a work session on Monday that went from 3 pm to after mid-night, attending several meetings related to legislation, followed by working on amendments for a Thursday filing. I also attended two events and a zoning hearing. And then worked on amendments again. This (5 pm) is the first time that I've had to answer your inquiry. I lost the original email in an inbox filled with testimony on APFO, TIFs, mulch and composting and other items.</p> <p>Stated as a weekly average, how much time do you devote to your duties as a Council Member? Council member, 35-40 hours; Chair of the Board of License Commissioners, 5-10 hours, Zoning Board 1-5 hours</p> <p>What proportion of that time is devoted to</p> <p>(a) legislative matters, 50% (b) constituent services, 20%, my staff does the bulk of the constituent work (c) attending meetings, 50% (d) managing employees, very little, I have a superior special assistant who manages me and our district aide and (e) other tasks-- attending events in my district, representing the Council as needed, Chairing the Board of License Commissioners, Patuxent River Commissioner, (please describe)?</p> <p>Which of those are most important? They are all important and I try to do as many events as possible. It's one of the primary ways to be out in the community.</p>	<p>a. Legislative matters: 15-20 b. Constituent services: 15 or more c. Attending meetings: 10 d. Managing employees: 10 e. Other tasks (please describe)?</p> <p>Which of those are most important? 10-15 – Events, working with other elected (state or fed or school board), conversations with constituents about various issue of concern (for example, in the grocery store, school, or anywhere else I run into people from Howard County)</p>	<p>I averaged 33 hours/week in 2016 and I am currently averaging 29 hours/week in 2017 (thru 9/22/17). The breakdown by categories above is an estimation since legislative matters and constituent services vary widely in any given week.</p> <p>a) 35% b) 49% c) 10% (that are NOT related to meeting I have related to legislative matters or constituent services) d) 1% e) 5% Chairperson activities (since December 2016)</p>

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skills and abilities	<p>A thick skin, patience, understanding, empathy, good communication skills, attention to detail, stamina, responsiveness, and ability to: work well with others, see other perspectives, manage conflict and diffuse volatile situations, see the bigger picture and beyond the intense arguments of any given day. Over the course of four years, all those skills are crucial at various points.</p>		<p>One needs to be able to be able to juggle many things(legislation, community responsibilities, other board responsibilities and a demanding schedule. In addition one needs to be able to read complex materials, remember them, and use them to make decisions. Good communication skills are a must. One-on-one as well as group interactions are some of the main ways that Council members get information, solve problems and serve constituents. One needs stamina to start a day before 7 am and finish the same day after midnight. Being a Council member is hard work!</p>	<p>Patience, empathy, dedication to all of the people of Howard County and especially District 3. Intelligence and critical thinking skills to understand nuances and details of complex issues. Thick skin, assertiveness, communication skills, ability to work with others, curiosity about and interest in the wide variety of things that go on in the county, willingness to change your mind when evidence warrants it, ability to focus on big picture as well as daily details, availability and responsiveness to constituents. Ability to work with people from all different backgrounds, understand different perspectives, and accept that there are many viewpoints on the issues we address. Ability to work with other electeds to get things done. Knowledge and appreciation of the County as a whole, and particular familiarity with the district. Interest in serving the community you will represent. They are all equally important, for different aspects of the job of county council representative, but if I had to pick one it would be the last one.</p>	<p>Leadership, analysis, time management/prioritization, project management, communication (speaking, writing, reading and listening), and networking. A balance of all this is critical, though if forced to choose - leadership and communication.</p>

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compensation for next Council	<p>something high enough to attract people of all ages, from all walks of life who want to serve and serve well in a jurisdiction with one of the highest median incomes and costs of living in the nation.</p> <p>With the ease of mobilizing, organizing, and communicating through technology, this job has become much more intense and takes considerable more time than it did when I began. We have more constituents, who can more easily access us, with greater and more complex needs. If you want dedicated, qualified people who take this job seriously and meet the needs and expectations of the citizens of Howard County, the compensation package needs to reflect that goal.</p>		<p>This position has been viewed as a part time job. I can attest that it is not. It may be cyclical, but on a yearly average it is decidedly full time.</p>	<p>This is absolutely not a part-time job when done well, and to the level that the people of Howard County need, expect, and deserve. In order to attract a widest variety of candidates to run for the council, who possess the skills, abilities, and experience needed to do the job well, the compensation should be in line with professional positions in Howard County. Moreover, increasing the pay will allow for people of different socioeconomic backgrounds to be on the Council. I believe we all benefit from having diversity on council including economic diversity.</p> <p>The compensation should be increased enough for someone to live on and cover expenses associated with this job, including child care beyond typical daytime work hours. Candidly, it has been a struggle for me as a single mom to continue to serve on the Council. My family and I continue to sacrifice, however, because I love what I do and I think I make a difference for the people I serve.</p>	<p>I do not have a specific recommendation on this question, particularly without the information to compare the Howard County Council's compensation to other counties councils' and commissions' with similar sized districts and responsibilities.</p>

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anything else	<p>As someone who is term limited and unable to serve as a Councilmember, it is important to me that it leave it better than I found it in April of 2006. At that time, the compensation was \$33,800. I was lucky to have saved up a little money and have a supportive family. However, even with that, we struggled a lot. We had a toddler and another baby on the way. The compensation was one of the factors that almost made me decide not to run at that time. Please think of people who may not be of great means as potential public servants who we want to attract and help them stay focused on the job.</p>		<p>I find myself working on Council business most days, sometimes even while on vacation. A Council member is always on when not in one's house. Grocery shopping could mean a chat with constituents, getting a haircut can be a time for more conversation, work in the garden usually stops for a question from a neighbor. Don't get me wrong, I love the opportunity to serve and I will miss it.</p> <p>I would be happy to join you some evening to do a better job explaining what I do. Thanks.</p>	<p>a. This is a full-time job. b. Expectations from this job over time have changed significantly with the increase in social media and of other electronic communication such as text and email. (in some ways making this a 24 hour a day job!) c. Increased staffing, better technology, and more training would make our ability to do our jobs much more efficient, allowing us to serve more people and/or work more reasonable hours. d. While this job is exhausting, all subsuming, and at times frustrating, it is a privilege, honor, and joy, and I am lucky to have had the opportunity to serve the community for 3 terms.</p>	<p>I have kept track of my hours by day since January 2016, first using a time keeping application and now in an Excel spreadsheet. I documented 1,692 hours in 2016 (the year of the EC flood) and 1,129 1/1/17 thru 9/22/17 (a year marked thus far by significant legislative activity and public hearings). The weekly average is 33 and 29 hours, respectively. I also work in a business in which I am an owner and worked 25-30 hours/week in the same period. The simple fact is that the time I work on the Council does have a direct impact on the work I can do in my other job. I would imagine that is the same for any Council member who has a job in addition to their Council responsibilities. This is just another data point I believe might be helpful to the commission as they consider future compensation for Council members.</p>