



Compensation Review Commission

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Maura Dunnigan
Rashida George
Ginnie Gick
Ellen Flynn Giles
Scott Houghton
Kia Payne
Pravin Ponnuri

Questionnaire for County Council Members

Stated as a weekly average, how much time do you devote to your duties as a Council Member?

- Councilmember Walsh (D1):
 - “10 hours a week while on vacation but up to 60 hours, average 30, there is no down time”
- Councilmember Jones (D2):
 - “10-40 hours (factored meeting times and multiplied that to include equal prep time for the meeting, follow up/fact finding meetings and calls and the addition of events/appearances)”
- Councilmember Rigby (D3):
 - “On a weekly average, I typically spend between 45 and 55 hours per week devoted to my duties as a Council Member.”
- Councilmember Jung (D4):
 - “48-65 hours.”
- Councilmember Yungmann (D5):
 - “I spend 20-25 hours/week. The additional hours during budget are offset by the light schedules in August and December”

How much time do you think Council Members should be committing for their duties?

- Councilmember Walsh (D1):
 - N/A
- Councilmember Jones (D2):
 - “The estimated commitment of 10–20 hours per week is designed to support an effective balance between professional responsibilities and personal. While certain periods, such as budget season, may require additional time and attention, these peak demands should be anticipated and managed effectively. With proactive planning, clear communication, and a structured annual calendar, the overall workload can remain balanced. During recess or lower-activity periods,



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meeting frequency and external commitments should be intentionally reduced to allow council members adequate work/life balance.”

- Councilmember Rigby (D3):
 - N/A
- Councilmember Jung (D4):
 - “This job requires anywhere from 48 to 65 hours per week. Twelve-hour days are not unusual. Personally, I cannot imagine doing this job part-time. It is a time-consuming role if you give it the attention it deserves. A part-time job becomes a distraction from fulfilling the responsibilities that taxpayers expect of council members. We serve a sophisticated constituency with the same needs and expectations as any other jurisdiction. Howard County is more than ready for full-time council members.”
- Councilmember Yungmann (D5):
 - “On average 20-25 hours. Different CMs approach the job differently though. Over the past 20 years (11 CMs), I’ve seen some that do not get involved in constituent issues, do not attend public events and rarely create/sponsor legislation. Others are the complete opposite making it more time consuming than even the average full-time job. Most of us are somewhere between those two extremes..

Some will argue that our legislative workload has increased over the years, but the data doesn’t support that. I compared the first 6 years of our Council/CE to the last 8 years of the previous Council/CEs. The average volume of bills coming from the CE is down slightly, while the number originating from Councilmembers is 37% higher.”

What proportion of that time is devoted to (a) legislative matters (b) constituent services (c) attending meetings (d) managing employees and (e) other tasks (please describe)? Which of those are most important?

- Councilmember Walsh (D1):
 - “(b) staff mostly handles, maybe 3-4 hours; (c) 20 hours (d) 2 hours (e) social media, Council Chair preparation and participation; general prep time, reading & studying ; legislative and Chair work most important”



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- Councilmember Jones (D2):
 - “The following is a proposed allocation of time, although it varies depending on the time of year:
30% – Legislative Matters
20% – Constituent Services
 - 0% – Meetings and Events
10% – Employee Management

Legislative matters represent the most critical function, as they have the most direct impact on constituents. While attendance at meetings and events is important for visibility and collaboration, these engagements could be structured and conducted more efficiently to reduce the overall time commitment. Effective communication, a clearly defined vision, and a strong, well-supported staff team should minimize the time required for employee management.”
- Councilmember Rigby (D3):
 - “Legislative Matters: I would estimate that I spend roughly 20 hours a week on legislative matters. This includes all Council meetings & sessions, legislation drafting meetings with staff, meetings with Councilmembers & County Departments, and meetings with stakeholders.
 - Attending Meetings: I estimate that I spend roughly 10-12 hours a week attending meetings that are not related to legislation, which includes constituent services and constituent meetings.
 - Managing Employees: I estimate that I spend roughly 5 hours a week managing employees.
 - Other Tasks: I estimate that I spend 10-12 hours a week performing other tasks. This includes various events and community meetings that I attend in my capacity as Councilmember.
 - In the past this has also included monthly (and sometimes weekly) meetings participating in Howard County’s Complete Streets Implementation Team, Bicycle Advisory group, Land Use and Transportation Regulation Advisory Group, as a voting member. There are also more irregular conferences, training sessions, and other educational programs that I participate in on a monthly basis, which add to this total.
 - Zoning Board: Since taking office, the Council has also spent over 160 hours in Zoning Board Sessions, which comes out to roughly 1-2 hours per week on



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average. I also spend 1-2 hours on average preparing for each Zoning Board Session. However, since the 2022 election, we have not been called to sit as the zoning board.”

- Councilmember Jung (D4):
 - “(a)15 hours. (b) 18 hours. (c) 20 hours (meetings and events). (d) 8 hours. (e) 4 hours putting out fires. They are all important.”
- Councilmember Yungmann (D5):
 - “Legislative 60%
Constituent service 30%
Community events/other: 10%
Meetings are embedded in the above categories because they typically fall into those three primary responsibilities”

What skills and abilities must a person have as a Council Member and which of those are most important?

- Councilmember Walsh (D1):
 - “having legal background helpful to doing research and understanding legislation and government; trying not be reactive; staying focused on own agenda”
- Councilmember Jones (D2):
 - “The ability to understand long-term community needs, anticipate challenges, and develop realistic, forward-looking plans as it relates to strategic thinking. Able to articulate a clear vision and direction for the community, aligning policies with shared goals. Making informed, balanced decisions that consider both immediate and long-term impacts. A person who maintains honesty, transparency, and accountability; models ethical behavior in all dealings - council related and out in the community.”
- Councilmember Rigby (D3):
 - “Empathy, curiosity, and the ability to understand other people’s experiences as extremely important skills that a person should have as a Council Member. Having a basic understanding of the authority and abilities of the County Council is important to have as a Council Member, as well as being an analytical thinker. Council Members also need fortitude, patience, and resilience to be successful in this job over the long-term.



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Perhaps the most important attribute is having a desire, willingness, and interest in learning more about complex processes and decisions that the Council has to make (including the County's budgeting process and financial considerations)."

- Councilmember Jung (D4):
 - "It helps to have a legislative or legal background, good writing skills, and a natural curiosity about a variety of subject matters. Patience, diplomacy and a keen interest in other people are useful."
- Councilmember Yungmann (D5):
 - "Understand the county's legislative process
Know how to read legislation
Familiarity with the Code and budget
Financial background – budget is the most important thing we do
Business or non-profit experience
Ability to tell your friends and supporters NO
Independent thinker; not easily manipulated by activists"

What do you think the total compensation package should be for the next Council?

- Councilmember Walsh (D1):
 - "not part time, obligations during the day and well into the evening; job is all-consuming, couldn't imagine having other work because cannot control schedule as council member. Should be paid as a full-time job or some of the obligations should be removed."
- Councilmember Jones (D2):
 - "There should be about a 5-7% pay raise from the last term, along with usual COLAs."
- Councilmember Rigby (D3):
 - "Council Members should earn at least 90% of Howard County's Area-Median Income for a 4-person household. It's important to tie the compensation for Council Members to the local cost of living in Howard County, especially as costs continue to rise rapidly in our county. This should also include full-time County benefits (existing benefits are appropriate).



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Until we are closer to the Area Median Income (AMI) we will only have elected leaders who can afford to serve.”

- Councilmember Jung (D4):
 - “I believe the compensation package should reflect the complexity of the issues we address on a daily basis, the responsibility we have for being fully prepared to make difficult decisions, and the expectations of our constituents to respond quickly and effectively to their requests and concerns. Given the complexity of the work and number of hours required, a salary range of \$100K-\$120K would be appropriate compensation for council members.”
- Councilmember Yungmann (D5):
 - “The same is it is now”

What else would you like to tell the Commission?

- Councilmember Walsh (D1):
 - “Council Members have no control over agencies of County government; not alerted to upcoming Administrative legislative proposals”
- Councilmember Jones (D2):
 - “In short, this role should continue to be part-time, paid for part-time work, and expectations of a Council Member should be just that, part-time. Again, budget season is a different story because there’s so much to do, but then we go into recess for the entire month of August, so it more than makes up for it. Additionally, staffers are full-time, along with the administrative staff being full-time.”
- Councilmember Rigby (D3):
 - “I love serving in this role, and I truly appreciate the opportunity to work with my community and represent us on the County Council, but it has not been without challenges due to the wages that Council Members are paid.

I have hired childcare from my part-time salary while needing to work in a more than full-time capacity. This job is not 9-5; there are constant time and work demands on Council Members, including during evenings, weekends, recess months, and on vacations.



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If Howard County wants quality candidates to run for positions on the Council, we should be paying them wages where they can live in Howard County and wages that are commensurate with the work and responsibilities of Council Members. I think it's important for the Commission to consider what the purpose and role of a Council Member should be, especially when considering whether to make this position full-time."

- Councilmember Jung (D4):
 - "This job has been underpaid for a long time. The current salary creates a disincentive to serve for those who don't have a second income. Baltimore County recently designated council members as a full-time position. Please recommend an appropriate level of compensation for council members. We are among the lowest-paid employees in the Council office."
- Councilmember Yungmann (D5):
 - N/A