



**CITY OF ELK GROVE
CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

AGENDA TITLE: Consideration of Increasing Administrative Support for City Council

MEETING DATE: May 13, 2015

PREPARED BY:

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Laura S. Gill, City Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Review current administrative support provided to City Council members and provide direction to staff.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The City Council held a planning retreat on March 4, 2015. At that retreat, the City Council developed a set of goals and a list of strategic imperatives to achieve those goals. Included in the strategic imperatives is an evaluation of “staffing for Mayor and Council Members, including designated professional support staff, cost, and constituent response benefits.”

Currently, each Council member is allocated approximately \$9,000 annually to hire a part-time assistant.¹ Each part-time assistant represents 0.3 full-time equivalent positions.² The hours and work assignments are arranged between the individual City Council member and his assistant. In addition, each Council member has access to staff in the City Manager’s Office. As stated on page 12 of the Norms and Procedures Manual:

General staff and administrative support to members of the City Council is provided through the City Manager’s Office. Administrative services, including the scheduling of appointments, receipt of telephone messages, and word processing are available as needed.

¹ Assumes 12 hours a week at \$12 per hour for 52 weeks (\$7,488), plus mandated benefits.

² (12 hours per week times 52 weeks)/2080 hours

To this end, the Executive Assistant to the City Manager provides assistance by scheduling appointments, making conference and travel arrangements, and providing other administrative support as requested.

Each Council member is responsible for managing correspondence and retrieving phone messages left in City voice mail. The Norms and Procedures Manual states that “all mail received and specifically addressed to the Mayor or a Council Member shall be placed in their office without first being opened. The envelope of each communication shall be date-stamped.”

Staff compared the City’s current staffing for direct City Council support to that provided in comparable cities. A review of budget documents and position classifications reveal that, of the 12 cities the City determined to be comparable cities for purposes of compensation benchmarking³, only three have positions dedicated to City Council support:

City	Population Jan 1, 2015	Council Members	FTE FY 15	Position(s)	Salary Range
Modesto	209,186	7	1	Executive Assistant to City Council	\$52,680 - \$64,102
Sacramento	480,105	9	22	Mayor’s Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of Staff • Special Assistant • Executive Assistants (2) • Staff Aide (2) City Council (8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Assistant (8) • Special Assistant (8) 	\$73,764 - \$110,640 \$72,396 - \$108,600 \$42,948 - \$64,416 \$25,002 - \$100,006 \$42,948 - \$64,416 \$72,396 - \$108,600
Stockton	306,099	7	1	Executive Assistant to Mayor	\$54,012 - \$69,348

³ Citrus Heights, Davis, Fairfield, Folsom, Modesto, Rancho Cordova, Rocklin, Roseville, Sacramento, Stockton, Vacaville, and West Sacramento

Questions the City Council could consider in evaluating its desired level of administrative support include:

- Is the current level of administrative support provided to City Council members adequate to provide constituent services?
- If not, what additional support is needed? Possible solutions include:
 - Increase the number of hours budgeted to each assistant. Please note that, once a part-time employee works 20 hours a week, the City is obligated to provide enhanced part-time benefits, such as health insurance and retirement.
 - Reclassify each current part-time assistant to a full-time assistant.
 - Add one full-time assistant to supplement the administrative support provided by the City Manager's Office.
 - Add five full-time City Council assistants to supplement the administrative support provided by the part-time assistants, resulting in 1.3 full-time equivalents per City Council member.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The current level of part-time support available for all City Council members is budgeted at approximately \$45,000 annually.

- Each additional hour of work for Council assistants would cost \$65 per hour (\$12 for labor and \$1 for benefits times five assistants), up to seven additional hours per week, for an increase of up to \$23,660.
- The reclassification of a part-time City Council assistant to a full-time City Council assistant (using the Administrative Assistant position as a benchmark) would result in a net increase of \$44,700 per position, or \$223,500 for five positions.
- The addition of an Administrative Assistant position would cost approximately \$53,700 annually.
- The addition of five City Council Assistant positions would cost approximately \$268,500.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.