

ORDINANCE NO. 1207

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF COACHELLA, CALIFORNIA,
AMENDING COACHELLA MUNICIPAL CODE
SECTIONS 2.04.010 AND 2.04.020 REGARDING
CITY COUNCIL COMPENSATION**

WHEREAS, in June 2023, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill 329 (“SB 329”), which amends California Government Code Section 36516 to update city council compensation schedules to account for inflation. The previous compensation schedules, which are based on population, had not been adjusted since 1984; and

WHEREAS, the legislative intent of SB 329 is to help city councils become more diverse because increased compensation can help individuals from across different income levels receive sufficient income from their service to help ensure that they can continue to serve the public and support their families; and

WHEREAS, California Government Code Section 36516 provides a method by which salaries for members of a city council are established based on city population; and

WHEREAS, according to the last preceding federal census in 2020 and the California Department of Finance, the City of Coachella has an estimated population of 42,462; and

WHEREAS, under SB 329, city council salaries in cities with populations between 35,000 and 50,000 can be up to and including \$1,275 per month; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Ordinance No. 1127 adopted in 2018, Coachella City Councilmembers currently receive \$711.05 per month in salary; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Coachella makes the following findings in support of raising City Council salaries to \$1,275, as allowed by SB 329:

- i. Higher pay can help remove financial barriers that may prevent individuals from running for office. This can make council positions more accessible to a wider range of people, including those from lower-income backgrounds, promoting greater socioeconomic diversity among elected representatives.
- ii. Offering higher pay can attract more qualified individuals to run for city council positions. This can potentially increase the talent pool and diversity of candidates, leading to better decision-making governance.
- iii. A higher salary can incentivize councilmembers to dedicate more time and effort to their roles. This can enable them to devote additional hours to

understanding complex issues, researching policies, and engaging with constituents, thereby enhancing the quality of their work.

- iv. A higher salary can help retain experienced councilmembers who might otherwise leave for higher-paying opportunities elsewhere. Continuity and intuitional knowledge can benefit the city by enabling councilmembers to build expertise, establish relationships, and effectively address long-term challenges.
- v. Increasing compensation recognizes and compensates city councilmembers for their substantial workload. Serving on the city council requires significant time and effort. Councilmembers are responsible for attending meetings, conducting research, engaging with constituents, and making important decisions that directly impact the community.
- vi. The City Council's last compensation increase went into effect at the end of 2018, so it would be appropriate to again increase compensation to account for cost-of-living increases and inflation over the last five years; and
- vii. Increasing the City Council salary would make salaries more commensurate with salaries in other Coachella Valley cities (general law and charter) and other general law cities with similar population sizes.

WHEREAS, California Government Code Section 36516.5 provides that a change in salary for each city council member does not take effect until one or more members of the city council begins a new term of office; and

WHEREAS, the new salary for each City Council member would go into effect beginning on the date on which a City Council member is sworn into office after the general municipal election held in November 2024.

**THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COACHELLA, CALIFORNIA,
DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

SECTION 1. Incorporation of Recitals. The Recitals set forth above are true and correct and are incorporated into this Ordinance.

SECTION 2. Amendment to Municipal Code. Section 2.04.010 *Compensation of city council members* of Chapter 2.04 *City Council* of the Coachella Municipal Code is amended to read as follows:

“2.04.010 - Compensation of city council members.

A. California Government Code Section 36516 provides for compensation for each member of the city council based upon the population of the city. The city has an

estimated population of forty-two thousand four hundred sixty two (42,462) as of January 2023, according to the California Department of Finance.

B. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 36516, each member of the city council shall receive an increase in his or her monthly salary, beginning on the starting date of the term of office for which candidates or city council members are elected in the November 2024 election. Beginning on the date on which a council member is sworn into a new term of office, the new monthly salary of each council member shall be one thousand two hundred seventy five (\$1,275).”

SECTION 3. Amendment to Municipal Code. Section 2.04.020 *Increase or decrease in council member’s salary* of Chapter 2.04 *City Council* of the Coachella Municipal Code is amended to read as follows:

“2.04.020 - Increase or decrease in council member’s salary.

Following any new and later estimates of population made by the California Department of Finance placing the city in a population group other than that set forth in Section 2.04.010, the salary is payable to each member of the council shall be increased or decreased accordingly to equal the sum prescribed for that population group in Section 36516 of the Government Code. The increase or decrease becomes payable only on and after the date when one or more council members become eligible beginning a new term of office following the next succeeding general municipal election held in the city. Council member salaries may also be increased beyond the amount provided in Section 2.04.010 pursuant to Government Code Section 36516, as amended, to account for cost-of-living adjustment and inflation.”

SECTION 4. Operative Date. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 36516.5, this Ordinance shall become operative only on and after the date upon which one or more members of the City Council of the City of Coachella become eligible for the salary prescribed herein by virtue of beginning a new term of office following the November 2024 general municipal election. Until said operative date, the City Council salary set forth in Ordinance No. 1127 of \$711.05 per month shall be and remain in effect. On the operative date, the salary set forth in Ordinance No. 1127, is hereby, replaced by the salary set forth in this Ordinance.

SECTION 5. Reimbursement. The salaries prescribed by this Ordinance are exclusive of any other amount payable to a city councilmember as reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred by him or her in the performance of his or her official duties.

SECTION 6. Severability. If any section, subsection, subdivision, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this Ordinance for any reason is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by the decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have adopted this Ordinance, and each section, subsection,

subdivision, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, subdivisions, sentences, clauses, phrases, or portions thereof be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 7. Publication. The Mayor shall sign this Ordinance and the City Clerk shall cause the same to be published within fifteen (15) days after its passage at least once, in a newspaper of general circulation, published and circulated in the City of Coachella, California.

SECTION 8. Effective date. This Ordinance takes effect 30 days from and after the date of its passage.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this ____ of _____, 2023 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Steven Hernandez, Mayor
City of Coachella

ATTEST:

Angela M. Zepeda, City Clerk
City of Coachella

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Carlos Campos, Best Best & Krieger LLP
City Attorney