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Staff Report

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Danny Roberts, City Manager

From: Jeff Smith, Assistant City Manager

Date: March 9, 2026

Subject: Discussion on Raising Compensation for Mayor and Council

RECOMMENDATION: Staff makes no recommendation.

FISCAL IMPLICATION: This would impact budget amounts beginning in FY2028 for the salaries of elected officials plus the corresponding FICA and other associated payroll amounts. This will also impact retirement funding, as the elected officials currently have retirement benefits offered by the city.

Staff would have sufficient time to plan for and place this in the FY2028 budget, if passed.

BACKGROUND: (this is commentary, not legal advice)

The ability to fix the salary and compensation of city elected officials is found in the home rule powers of the city in Title 36, Chapter 35 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. The relevant statute is on the following pages for reference.

It would appear any such increase would not take effect until the council members elected in 2027 have taken office (January 2028).

36-35-4. Compensation and benefits for employees and members of governing authority; conditions and requirements governing increases for elective members of governing authority.

(a) The governing authority of each municipal corporation is authorized to fix the salary, compensation, and expenses of its municipal employees and the members of its municipal governing authority and to provide insurance, retirement, and pension benefits, coverage under federal old-age, survivors and disability programs, hospitalization benefits, and workers' compensation benefits for its employees, their dependents, and their survivors and for members of the municipal governing authority, their dependents, and their survivors, when such benefits are provided to municipal employees. Any previous actions to extend insurance, federal old-age, survivors and disability programs, retirement, hospitalization, and workers' compensation benefits to members of the municipal governing authority are validated. With the exception of the provision of insurance, federal old-age, survivors and disability programs, retirement, hospitalization, and workers' compensation benefits, any action to increase the salary or compensation of the elective members of the municipal governing authority shall be subject to the following conditions and requirements:

(1) Any such increase shall not be effective until after the taking of office of those elected at the next regular municipal election which is held immediately following the date on which the action to increase the compensation was taken;

(2) Such action shall not be taken during the period of time beginning with the date that candidates for election to membership on the municipal governing authority may first qualify as such candidates and ending with the date members of the municipal governing authority take office following their election; and

(3) Such action shall not be taken until notice of intent to take the action has been published in a newspaper of general circulation designated as the legal organ in the county and in the municipal corporation at least once a week for three consecutive weeks immediately preceding the week during which the action is taken.

(b) As used in subsection (a) of this Code section, the phrase "elective members of the municipal governing authority" means, notwithstanding any terminology or designation of a municipal governing authority or governing body contained in any municipal charter, any elective municipal official who exercises any executive or legislative or executive and legislative powers of the municipal corporation, specifically including a mayor, vice-mayor, president or chairman of a municipal council, member of a municipal council, member of a board of aldermen, or member of a board of commissioners. Such phrase shall also include any person who is appointed to fill a vacancy in any such elective office.

(c) As used in subsection (a) of this Code section, the words "salary or compensation," as applied to the elective members of a municipal governing authority, shall include any expense allowance or any form of payment or reimbursement of expenses, except reimbursement for expenses actually and necessarily incurred by members of a municipal governing authority in carrying out their official duties. The governing authority of each municipal corporation shall be authorized to provide by ordinance for the reimbursement of such actual and necessary expenses.

(d) As used in subsection (a) of this Code section, the words "retirement" and "pension" shall mean termination from municipal service with the right to receive a benefit based upon all or part of such municipal service in accordance with the terms of the ordinance or contract pursuant to

which the municipality provides for payment of such benefits. The General Assembly declares and affirms that the Act approved April 17, 1981 (Ga. L. 1981, p. 1741) was intended to assure that prior advertisement of actions to provide insurance, federal old-age, survivors and disability programs, retirement, pension, hospitalization, and workers' compensation benefits to elected members of the municipal governing authority, their dependents, and their survivors is not required.