



Executive Summary

City Council Workshop

AGENDA ITEM: City Council Salaries

PREPARED BY: Jacob Schillander, City Administrator

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Review the proposed compensation and attendance policy options and provide directions to staff.

Summary:

At its June 8, 2026 Workshop, the City Council requested additional information regarding elected official compensation, attendance expectations, and potential policy alternatives.

Staff conducted a review of City Council compensation, including a historical review of compensation adjustments dating back to 1999, a review of actual compensation paid between 2020 and 2025, an analysis of comparable city compensation data, and a review of current responsibilities assigned to elected officials.

Current compensation consists of:

- Mayor: \$400 per month (\$4,800 annually).
- Council members: \$300 per month (\$3,600 annually).
- \$25 compensation for eligible meetings attended.
- Mileage reimbursement at the federal reimbursement rate.
- Workers' Compensation coverage while performing official duties as authorized by law.
- Staff reviewed the annual Council Appointments List and found that the Mayor serves as the City's primary representative on numerous regional organizations, civic organizations, boards, commissions, and intergovernmental initiatives in addition to presiding over City Council and Economic Development Authority meetings. Councilmembers also serve as official City representatives on various boards, commissions, committees, and liaison assignments as designated annually by the City Council.

Historical Compensation Review

Staff reviewed available records and identified the following compensation adjustments.

1999 Compensation Adjustment

- Mayor monthly stipend increased from \$200 to \$300 per month.
- Councilmember monthly stipend increased from \$100 to \$150 per month.

- A \$25 per meeting stipend was established.

2008 Compensation Adjustment

- Mayor's monthly stipend increased from \$300 to \$350 per month.
- Councilmember monthly stipend increased from \$150 to \$250 per month.

2022 Compensation Adjustment

- Mayor monthly stipend increased from \$350 to \$400 per month.
- Councilmember monthly stipend increased from \$250 to \$300 per month.
- Elected officials became eligible for mileage reimbursement at the federal reimbursement rate.

Compensation History

Year	Mayor Monthly Stipend	Council Monthly Stipend	Meeting Pay
Prior to 1999	\$200	\$100	None
1999	\$300	\$150	\$25
2008	\$350	\$250	\$25
2022	\$400	\$300	\$25
Proposed	\$500	\$300	Mayor \$35 / Council \$30

Staff were unable to locate documentation explaining the rationale for the compensation adjustments approved in 1999, 2008, or 2022.

Six-Year Compensation Review

Staff reviewed actual compensation paid to elected officials between 2020 and 2025, including monthly stipends and meeting compensation.

Historical Compensation Paid

Elected Official	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	Six-Year Average
Cahill / Burak	\$5,011.25	\$5,228.75	\$5,200.00	\$3,728.75	\$4,583.75	\$4,868.75	\$4,770.21
DeLuca	\$4,583.75	\$5,035.00	\$5,011.25	\$3,871.25	\$4,417.50	\$4,678.75	\$4,599.58
DeLong / Francis	\$5,296.25	\$5,605.00	\$5,201.25	\$3,226.37	\$4,500.00	\$4,650.00	\$4,746.48
Fay / Arvizo	\$5,127.50	\$6,341.25	\$6,531.25	\$5,343.75	\$6,151.25	\$6,270.00	\$5,960.83
Mayor Maas-Kusske	\$10,640.00	\$10,473.75	\$10,307.50	\$7,980.00	\$9,472.50	\$9,575.00	\$9,741.46

Analysis

The review demonstrates that compensation varies based on meeting attendance, committee assignments, liaison appointments, and other official representation responsibilities. Among current and former Councilmembers, average annual compensation ranged from approximately \$4,600 to \$5,961 per year.

The highest average compensation among Councilmembers was paid to Fay, averaging \$5,960.83 annually. Staff notes this was largely attributable to consistent participation in assigned meetings and active attendance at Orono Rotary Club meetings while serving as an official City representative. The additional compensation reflects greater participation and attendance under the City's existing compensation structure rather than a higher base stipend.

The Mayor's average compensation during the review period was \$9,741.46 annually. This reflects attendance at City Council meetings, Economic Development Authority meetings, regional organizations, civic organizations, meetings with local and state officials, and other official City representation duties. The review demonstrates that the current compensation structure already recognizes differences in participation, attendance, and official assignments.

Comparable Community Analysis (Population 501–2,000)

Staff reviewed the 2023 City Council Wage Survey and focused on communities with populations between 501 and 2,000 residents, which most closely resemble Maple Plain's population of approximately 1,700 residents.

Peer Community Comparison

City	Population	Council Monthly Compensation	Mayor Monthly Compensation
Clear Lake	641	\$1,050.00	\$1,050.00
Loretto	673	\$416.67	\$416.67
Grand Marais	1,300	\$333.33	\$500.00
Maple Plain	1,700	\$300.00	\$400.00
Waverly	1,900	\$100.00	\$200.00
Clearwater	1,922	\$100.00	\$200.00

Source: 2023 City Council Wage Survey.

Peer Group Average

Position	Peer Average	Maple Plain Current	Proposed
Councilmember	\$383.33/month	\$300/month	\$300/month
Mayor	\$461.11/month	\$400/month	\$500/month

Source: 2023 City Council Wage Survey.

Analysis

The survey indicates that Maple Plain's current Councilmember compensation is below the average compensation paid by comparable communities and would remain below the peer-group average under the proposed compensation structure.

The Mayor's current compensation is also below the average compensation paid by comparable communities. Under the proposed adjustment, the Mayor's monthly stipend would increase from \$400 to \$500 per month, placing compensation slightly above the peer-group average of \$461.11 per month.

Staff notes that compensation comparisons should be viewed with caution, as responsibilities, meeting frequency, committee assignments, and organizational structures vary significantly among municipalities. However, the survey demonstrates that Maple Plain's current compensation levels are generally comparable to, and in some cases below, those of similarly sized communities.

Compensation Options

For Council consideration, staff has identified the following potential changes:

- Increase the Mayor's monthly stipend from \$400 to \$500 per month.
- Maintain the Councilmember monthly stipend at \$300 per month.
- Increase the Mayor's meeting compensation from \$25 to \$35 per eligible meeting.

- Increase Councilmember meeting compensation from \$25 to \$30 per eligible meeting.

These adjustments are intended to recognize the Mayor's additional leadership, representation, and meeting responsibilities while maintaining the City's existing compensation structure.

Attendance Expectations

The Council also requested information regarding attendance expectations for elected officials.

Staff recommend that attendance be measured using only meetings that an elected official is required to attend by virtue of their office, annual Council appointments, liaison assignments, approved training activities, or other official City assignments.

Eligible meetings could include:

- Regular and Special City Council Meetings
- Council Workshops
- Economic Development Authority Meetings
- Planning Commission meetings attended by the appointed Council liaison
- Watershed organization meetings attended by the appointed Council representative
- Police Commission meetings attended by appointed representatives
- Regional boards, commissions, civic organizations, and committees identified through the annual Council Appointments List
- Approved training sessions and conferences
- Other meetings attended in an official representative capacity as directed by the City Council.

Attendance shall be calculated only on meetings assigned to the elected official through the annual Council Appointments List, Council liaison assignments, or other official representation duties approved by the City Council.

Canceled meetings shall not be included in attendance calculations.

Excused absences, including medical leave, approved leave of absence, bereavement, jury duty, military service, and other circumstances approved by the City Council, shall not be considered absences for attendance purposes.

Attendance Threshold Options

Option A – No Attendance Requirement

- Maintain the existing compensation structure without an attendance threshold.

Option B – Progressive Stipend Reduction

- Elected officials must attend at least 75% of assigned eligible meetings during each calendar year.
- If an elected official fails to meet the attendance requirement, their monthly stipend shall be reduced by \$100 per month during the following calendar year.
- If the elected official meets the attendance requirement during that following year, the monthly stipend shall be restored by \$100 per month for the next calendar year.
- If the elected official fails to meet the attendance requirement in consecutive years, the monthly stipend shall be reduced by an additional \$100 per month for each year of non-compliance.

Under this approach:

- First year below 75% attendance: stipend reduced by \$100 per month.
- Second consecutive year below 75% attendance: stipend reduced by \$200 per month.
- Third consecutive year below 75% attendance: stipend reduced by \$300 per month.
- For Councilmembers, a third consecutive year of failing to meet the attendance requirement would eliminate the monthly stipend entirely and leave only meeting compensation.

- For the Mayor, a third consecutive year of failing to meet the attendance requirement would reduce the monthly stipend from \$500 to \$200 per month.
- If attendance requirements are met in a subsequent year, stipend reductions would be restored in \$100 increments for the following calendar year until the full stipend amount is restored.

Option C – Progressive Stipend Reduction with Meeting Pay Reduction

- Same attendance requirement and progressive stipend reductions as outlined in Option B.
- If an elected official fails to meet the attendance requirement for a fourth consecutive year, meeting compensation would be reduced by 50%.

Under this approach:

- Councilmember meeting compensation would decrease from \$30 to \$15 per meeting.
- Mayor meeting compensation would decrease from \$35 to \$17.50 per meeting.
- Meeting compensation would return to the full rate upon meeting the attendance requirement during a subsequent calendar year.

Policy Considerations

When considering compensation and attendance requirements, the Council may wish to consider:

- The additional representation and leadership responsibilities assigned to the Mayor.
- The value of encouraging participation and accountability through attendance expectations.
- The expectation that elected service requires active participation in meetings, workshops, committee assignments, and other official City business.
- The importance of establishing clear attendance standards for elected officials entrusted with representing the residents of Maple Plain.
- Whether compensation should primarily reflect the responsibilities of elected service, attendance at meetings, or a combination of both.
- The appropriate balance between flexibility for unavoidable absences and accountability to taxpayers.

Public Service Commitment

Service on the City Council requires a meaningful commitment of time and participation. Elected officials are entrusted with representing residents, attending meetings, reviewing agenda materials, participating in policy discussions, and serving as the City's representatives on boards, commissions, committees, and regional organizations.

The proposed attendance standards are intended to establish a clear expectation that individuals elected to serve will actively participate in the work of municipal government. While attendance requirements may influence future candidates' decisions to seek office, the purpose of the policy is not to encourage or discourage candidacy. Rather, the purpose is to promote accountability and reinforce the expectation that elected officials fulfill the responsibilities associated with the office to which they were elected.

Recommendation

Because the Council requested additional information and policy alternatives at its June 8, 2026 Workshop, staff is seeking Council direction regarding compensation adjustments, attendance expectations, and any desired ordinance amendments before preparing final ordinance language for future consideration.