



BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION

Report

Thursday, January 31, 2019

Present: Co-Chair Claudia Dumond-Henderson, Co-Chair James Simons, Karen Carroll Bennett, Sharon Chan, Doug Cornelius, Sue Flicop, Timothy Moran, Greg Reibman, Donald Siegel (phone participation), Andrea Steenstrup and Committee Clerk, Danielle Delaney

Absent: John Stewart, Kathy Sun and Carolyn Gabbay

Co-Chair Simons provided a PowerPoint presentation, attached to this report. He explained in detail the Committee work of the Charter on the four sub-committees, subsequently named Purpose, Outreach–Stakeholder, Peer Group and Data Availability/Metrics to focus on areas of research for the Mayor, City Council and School Committee compensation recommendations.

At the January 16, meeting Commission members volunteered for one or more of the following subcommittees:

Blue Ribbon Commission Four Sub-Committee Members

Outreach - Claudia Dumond-Henderson, Greg Reibman and Doug Cornelius

Peer Group Selection - Sue Flicop, Kathy Sun, Sharon Chan and Doug Cornelius

Data Availability/Metrics - Karen Carroll Bennett, Andrea Steenstrup and Jim Simons

Purpose - John Stewart, Don Siegel and Tim Moran

Carolyn Gabbay was not present at that time, to select a sub-committee.

The sub-committees reported to the Commission in detail their Charter including a scope statement, action steps, timelines associated with action items, dependencies/integration points and recommendations. The detailed information is provided in the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Commission members provided suggestions for clarification measures to the sub-committees for consideration.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, February 12, 2019 in City Hall.

The Commission adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Claudia Dumond-Henderson, Co-Chair
James Simons, Co-Chair**

BRC Compensation Subcommittees

Purpose - John Stewart, Don Siegel and Tim Moran

Outreach - Claudia Dumond-Henderson, Greg Reibman and Doug Cornelius

Peer Group Selection - Sue Flicop, Kathy Sun, Sharon Chan and Doug Cornelius

Data Availability/Metrics - Karen Carroll Bennett, Andrea Steenstrup and Jim Simons

Purpose Subcommittee Charter

By compensating the Mayor and members of the Board and Committee the City increases the economic diversity of candidates for those positions and of the composition of those offices/bodies. This benefits the electorate by increasing the range of perspectives and views brought to the governing process.

Mayor. This full time position requires the Mayor to give up outside earned income during his/her term. Without compensation from the City only the most wealthy citizens could afford to serve. The subcommittee views this as unfair and detrimental to local government.

Board and Committee Members. These part time positions require a substantial time commitment most of which is in the evening. While members are not required to relinquish outside employment they do incur costs in meeting the time commitments of these positions. Single parents or parents who work multiple jobs incur babysitting costs. The modest compensation they receive helps pay for these costs. Citizens who work second jobs could find it impossible to serve in these positions without a modest compensation package.

The de facto disqualification of economically challenged citizens from serving on the Board or Committee is bad for both bodies and the City. Modest compensation for service increases the economic diversity of both bodies and enriches their deliberations.

Outreach/Stakeholder Engagement Charter

Determine what kind of insight we want to collect from key audiences. Want process to reach as many Newton residents as possible and provide a degree of transparency to the work and possibilities to provide a diverse array of perspectives.

Action steps

- Define audiences
- Design questionnaires for key these stakeholders
- Determine what public comments would be invited and what each forum would be
- Need communication around why we are doing this
- Anonymous survey of city council and school committee members

Timelines associated with action items

- Public comment opportunities would need to be advertised ASAP
- Anonymous survey design and launch by February 15th
- Follow up in person conversations with any elected interested through March 31st
- Additional Anonymous Survey Audiences: Village 14 Subscribers, Newton Tab Readers,,Facebook Parent's Group
Could create BRC Twitter Group,Neighborhood List-Serves Officials & their Newsletters

Dependencies/Integration points. Ensure invitation for public comment and survey process leads with statements related to the out of the "Purpose" sub-committee

Recommendations

- Use first 15 minutes of every BRC meeting as an invitation to public comment
- Set up two formal meetings designed to allow for invitees to provide public comment – one in late February and one in between draft findings and the issuance of the final recommendations
- We design survey and create link to collect feedback from sources

Peer Subcommittee Charter

Scope of subcommittee & key question(s) we are solving for

Identify a set of communities to compare compensation for elected officials.

Action steps

1. Identify characteristics that allow for meaningful comparison
2. Identify broader group of communities based on those characteristics
3. Narrow the communities to benchmark sets for comparison
4. Draft a narrative on why communities were chosen

Timelines associated with action items

1. Characteristics have been agreed upon by the subcommittee are asking for approval at the 1/31 meeting
2. Identification will be made after the meeting
3. The subcommittee will produce a recommendation for the benchmark sets at the next meeting (if it is at least two weeks)
4. The narrative will be delivered at a later date for inclusion in the report

Peer Subcommittee Charter (cont'd)

Dependencies/Integration points (The comparison set is a dependency for the data gathering sub-committee)

Recommendations

1. Recommended characteristics will be some of the following:
 - Geography
 - Form of municipal government
 - Equivalency of position requirement
 - Median household income
 - Median housing cost
 - Municipal budget per capita
 - School budget per student
 - Population
 - School enrollment
 - Commercial tax assessment percentage
 - Number of municipal employee per resident
 - Municipal bond rating
2. The geographic limit should be eastern Massachusetts
3. There should be three benchmark groups: mayor, city council, school committee
4. The benchmark sets should be eight to ten communities each.

Metrics Subcommittee Charter

Scope. The Metrics Subcommittee will recommend and gather relevant peer community information and summarize findings to aide Blue Ribbon Committee compensation study recommendations.

Action steps

- Recommend and gain agreement on **Core Metrics** to guide peer community selections, namely: budget, population, public school enrollment, form of governing, and overall job function of officials (Jan 31)
- Identify related **Additional Metrics** to research, analyze and summarize (Jan 31)
- Research, analyze and summarize Additional Metrics after peer group selection(allow 4 weeks)
- Present findings to the BRC

Dependencies include a) alignment of peer and metric subcommittees, b) time for peer subcommittee to make selections and c) subject to availability of data

Key findings will be summarized by the subcommittee for presentation and recommendations to the BRC

Metrics Subcommittee Charter

	Core	Additional
Budget	✓	✓
Population	✓	✓
Form of governing	✓	✓
Median House Price		✓
Job description	✓	✓
Salary/Stipend		✓
Mechanism for Annual or Periodic Increases		✓
Part-time or Full-time status		✓
# of Members of Legislative Branch		✓
Mechanism for Annual or Periodic Increases		✓
% of Council or School Committee Salary to Executive		✓
School Budget		✓
Public School Enrollment	✓	✓
# of Schools		✓
Availability of medical, dental, vision insurance		✓
Community subsidy for health insurance (\$)		✓
Inclusion in state or other retirement plan		✓