

COMMENTS ON WAGES AND SALARIES FROM THE CITY MANAGER TO COUNCIL

A number of residents have inquired about salary levels of staff in Takoma Park when commenting on the Proposed FY20 Budget.

As seen from the results of a recent Compensation and Classification Survey, Takoma Park City staff salaries are close to the midpoint of the municipalities with which we compare ourselves: Bowie, College Park, Gaithersburg, Greenbelt, Hyattsville, Rockville, Laurel and Annapolis. There were several positions where Takoma Park position wage ranges were lower than they should be, and those will be adjusted. There are also several positions where the City of Takoma Park pays above the going wage because we have no full-time positions that pay less than \$40,000, per Council direction.

All of the department head positions in Takoma Park are within the wage ranges of our comparable municipalities. Most of our Senior Leadership Team salaries are in the \$120,000 - \$129,000 range. The Police Chief's salary is \$152,445 and the Deputy City Manager's salary is \$144,967.

We also look at wage scales in Montgomery County, Prince George's County and the District of Columbia governments for information on the level of competition within the labor market. There are not, for example, librarians employed by municipal governments in Maryland, as all other public libraries are associated with county governments and the City of Baltimore. And, the City of Takoma Park often competes with county governments for department head candidates even though we are a much smaller organization. Nevertheless, we are not able to compete with county salaries for most positions. For example, most department head positions in Montgomery County pay over \$200,000.

While wages for positions covered by the two collective bargaining units in Takoma Park are subject to negotiation, the City Manager sets wages for staff that are not covered by the collective bargaining units. Wage negotiations with the two unions are likely to begin in May 2019. After negotiations are completed and the City Council approves the outcome, any budget adjustments will be made.

The City Council sets the City Manager's salary. As part of that process, they consider comparable wage information as well. Chief Administrative Officer positions in the DC area range from about \$160,000 to \$295,000. Most city managers in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, DC receive a base salary and a car allowance (ranging from \$4,800 to \$7,200 annually). Some also receive other non-salary payments.

There is no car allowance or other non-salary payment for the Takoma Park City Manager. Here are some base salaries that have been identified within the last year or two:

- \$160,000 – Greenbelt
- \$170,700 – College Park
- \$194,200 – Bowie (previous longtime manager was making \$209,963 in 2014)
- \$195,800 – Takoma Park
- \$197,300 – Gaithersburg
- \$231,600 – Rockville
- \$280,000 – Montgomery County

Attracting and retaining skilled employees is essential for Takoma Park to be able to carry out the Council's Goals and day to day operations of the City in a professional manner. It is recognized, however, that it is a challenge for a small municipality to do so in a region with high housing prices and a strong employment market. For the last three years the City has been doing a good job with its balanced approach to wages.