

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 22, 2021

TO: MARK JINKS, CITY MANAGER

CC: DEBRA COLLINS, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
JEN JENKINS, ACTING CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

FROM: GENERAL SCHEDULE EMPLOYEE WORKGROUP (GSEWG)

SUBJECT: MID-YEAR COMPENSATION INITIATIVES

On behalf of the City's General Schedule Employees, we, the members of the General Schedule Employee Work Group (GSEWG) would like to thank you for your recent proposal to City Council to provide the following compensation initiatives which are applicable to General Schedule Employees:

- 1) Approve a 1.5% increase in the rate of pay to all FY 2022 City pay scales as originally proposed in the FY2021 operating budget.
- 2) Approve a one-time \$1,000 bonus for all eligible full time City and State-paid employees and a one-time prorated bonus for City and State-paid part-time employees in recognition of the value of work undertaken by employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3) Indicate that compensation will be a priority for funding consideration as part of planning for the upcoming FY2023 proposed City operating budget.

We appreciate the City's recognition of the level and quality of work performed by all City employees during a difficult period when many had to pivot quickly and face uncertainty while maintaining excellent levels of service for the city and its residents. While these initial compensation efforts will help all employees absorb a portion of the increased cost of living in the region, we, the General Schedule Employees, remain woefully behind many of the average pay levels of our peer jurisdictions for comparable positions. This financial discrepancy creates challenges in employee attraction and retention and ensuring staff feel valued by the city.

In the coming months, we look forward to collaborating with your Office to ensure that General Schedule Employee compensation remains a priority as part of the FY2023 budget process. In addition, we look forward to reviewing the results of the ongoing Employee Compensation Study which will provide greater detail on General Schedule Employee compensation, relative to peer-jurisdictions.

In advance of reviewing the Employee Compensation Study, we the GSEWG, strongly advocate the need to benchmark our range of city positions and allow for more frequent and efficient benchmarking of our positions and salaries to the region. Historically, staff has been told our range of city positions is too

complex to allow for frequent benchmarking, requiring long periods of time before external experts can be hired to perform a comprehensive benchmarking exercise. During these periods between reviews, the salaries of city staff continue to lag behind the market, creating a situation where compounding financial discrepancies can impact staff's lifetime earning potential.

As critical discussions and considerations regarding employee compensation will be undertaken in the coming months, we would like to restate our interest in participating in these discussions on behalf of the General Schedule Employees. We would like to encourage increased communication and transparency between the Department of Human Resources and the GSEWG to ensure decisions are effectively communicated and shared with staff.

Members of the GSEWG fully appreciate the City's efforts to begin to address employee compensation and work towards addressing the ongoing pay discrepancy to our peer-jurisdictions. We thank you for the opportunity to provide these recommendations on behalf of the General Schedule Employees and appreciate your consideration. We look forward to participating in future discussions on this topic, as well as others.

Sincerely,

Members of General Schedule Employee Work Group