

Holyoke committee wants to raise city workers' salaries: Propose raising mayor's salary to \$125k; \$90K for city clerk

Updated Mar 24, 2021; Posted Mar 23, 2021

HOLYOKE — The City Council's Ordinance Committee on Tuesday proposed raising the salaries of city workers and elected officials.

The committee continued an ongoing discussion on improving salaries and benefits for nonunion workers, many of whom have gone without raises for years or earn below [state minimum wage](#).

Councilor at Large Rebecca Lisi, who chairs the Ordinance Committee, said the proposal calls for reclassifying job titles and adopting new salary and classification schedules for employees. The changes are based on a [2014 salary study](#) conducted by an outside consultant.

In February, the committee took up the issue of Holyoke Public Library staff who earned below the state's posted minimum wage of \$13.50 per hour, nearly \$2 less.

Outgoing Personnel Director Hector Carrasquillo, who met with an outside labor attorney, recommended eliminating an assistant library cataloguer position. Before, the job paid \$22,630 yearly, or less than minimum wage.

Carrasquillo said the salary study was based on job duties and comparable salaries in Massachusetts. The formula used was still produced an hourly rate below the minimum wage for the assistant cataloguer.

Even with a "bump" in salary, Carrasquillo said Maria Pagan, the library's director, would still have difficulty filling the position, which remains vacant. He worried the focus on the position would cause a "trickle-down effect" on existing salaries at the library.

By [Dennis Hohenberger](#) | [Special to The Republican](#)

"We thought it best to eliminate that position and slide the responsibilities into an existing position within the salary study," Carrasquillo said. Pagan confirmed library staffers are already performing the duties.

Ward 5 Councilor Linda Vacon questioned if the proposed salary increases would improve productivity and lower costs. "That's the bigger perspective that I'm coming from," she said. Ward 2 Councilor Terence Murphy agreed with Vacon.

Tuesday's agenda also recommended a \$125,000 annual salary for the mayor, \$90,000 for the city clerk, \$85,000 for the treasurer, \$12,500 for city councilors and \$1,000 extra for the City Council president.

The city of Holyoke's [website](#) lists the salaries of elected officials and Holyoke Public Schools employees.

Ward 6 Councilor Juan Anderson-Burgos proposed a \$95,000 annual salary for the mayor and \$85,000 for the clerk.

For now, the [treasurer position is vacant](#), and [Mayor Alex B. Morse](#) is slated to resign Friday at 4:30 p.m., exiting to become the town manager of Provincetown. City Council President Todd McGee will assume the role of acting mayor.

The City Council must approve an ordinance that boosts employees' salaries and benefits affected by the proposed changes. The council also wants to remove the residency requirement to fill Carrasquillo's post, opening the search process to more applicants.

[Story source: MassLive.com](#)