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Elected Officials Remuneration Research (Draft)

Township of Esquimalt

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For questions about this report, please contact:

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

We are pleased to present the research findings for remuneration at select BC cities from a survey conducted on behalf of the Township of Esquimalt. Based on the direction provided by the township, we conducted a custom survey of remuneration at select BC cities.

FINDINGS- 2026 ANNUAL BASE SALARY

Annual base salary data from 13 local governments are summarized in Table 1. Table 2 compares the Township of Esquimalt remuneration to the median results of the comparator group summary.

Most organizations target the median level of their defined market – they do not wish to be the highest, nor the lowest so they target the middle level of the comparator group. When compared to the median level, the Township of Esquimalt appears low for the mayor position (83 per cent of the median) and in line with what other local governments are paying councillor positions (95 per cent of median).

The 2024 population measures and annual expenses are sourced from the BC government website and the most recent data available is from 2024 (www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/facts-framework).

Specific definitions to assist with understanding the data are found in Attachment 1.

Table 3 summarizes the responses to the other questions included in the survey.

Table 1 – Data Summary of Comparator Municipalities

Local Government	2024 Annual Expenses ($ millions)	2024 BC Population Estimates (thousands)	Mayor – Current Annual Base Salary ($)	Councillor – Current Annual Base Salary ($)	Councillor salary as percent of mayor salary
Esquimalt	**46.4**	**19.7**	**70,445**	**29,968**	**43%**
Colwood	34.2	21.9	60,659	30,330	50%
Cranbrook	60.4	22.7	79,950	29,151	36%
Dawson Creek	52.9	13.6	84,776	28,829	34%
Langford	92.4	53.0	91,646	33,113	36%
Langley (city)	65.1	31.9	166,144	74,765	45%
Oak Bay	56.3	19.7	64,905	27,590	43%
Pitt Meadows	49.8	21.1	120,534	48,219	40%
Port Alberni	54.3	20.3	70,688	31,457	45%
Powell River	45.4	14.6	60,600	31,800	52%
Prince Rupert	53.8	13.5	101,001	25,250	25%
Sidney	28.1	13.0	47,314	18,899	40%
Squamish	79.2	24.7	106,193	44,813	42%
White Rock	55.7	22.4	119,853	47,943	40%
Summary – not including Esquimalt					
P25	49.8	14.6	64,905	28,829	
Median (P50)	**54.3**	**21.1**	**84,776**	**31,457**	**37%**
P75	60.4	22.7	106,193	44,813	
Average	56.0	22.5	90,328	36,320	40%

Table 2 – Esquimalt vs Median Data Results

Position	Esquimalt Base Salary ($)	Median Base Salary Result ($)	Esquimalt as % of Median Result
Mayor	70,445	84,776	83%
Councillor	29,968	31,457	95%

Findings – Other Practices

Table 3 summarizes the data we collected from the responding local governments. At the time of this draft report, we continue to follow-up to get clarification on some responses and will update this report when we have more information. Not all local governments completed the additional questions (some only responded by providing base salary data due to staff or time constraints).

Table 3 – Summary of Allowances, Mileage, Adjustments, Benefits and Other Practices

Question	Esquimalt Practice	Practices of the Responding Local Governments
Does your organization have a formally defined compensation philosophy or policy or bylaw for elected officials? If yes, please describe.	Yes, the Township of Esquimalt's policies ADMIN-58 and ADMIN-62 state the Township will: "Review the current remuneration paid to the Township of Esquimalt mayor and members of council and present options for an appropriate remuneration structure,	All local governments indicated they have a bylaw for remuneration for elected officials.

Question	Esquimalt Practice	Practices of the Responding Local Governments
	for implementation in the month of the inaugural meeting of the newly elected council following a local government election.”	
What other factors (i.e., other than your comparative group) are considered when reviewing compensation for elected officials? (e.g., staff adjustments, CPI, adjustments at other municipalities, etc.)	CPI	Most local governments indicate they do regular reviews where they compare themselves to other local governments in BC. Most also consider CPI and a few consider adjustments received by staff (e.g., CUPE, IAFF, exempt). Some only set the mayor salary and then take a pre-determined percentage of the mayor salary to calculate the councillor salary. One local government indicated that **after** 2026 (for the incoming council), remuneration will be a formula that considers the city’s median income x 70 per cent x CPI. This approach was proposed by a citizen committee and ultimately approved by council for the incoming council.
Does your organization have a formal and scheduled process for reviewing the policy for elected official compensation? If yes, please describe (i.e., who is involved, frequency, public input, communication process to citizens).	Yes	Most described a regular process every four years. One local government indicated that **after** 2026 (for the incoming council), remuneration will be a formula that considers the city’s median income x 70 per cent x CPI. This approach was proposed by a citizen committee and ultimately approved by council for the incoming council.

Question	Esquimalt Practice	Practices of the Responding Local Governments
Have you made any changes to the remuneration package of your elected officials during the last three years?	No	One local government indicated they now limit the CPI adjustment: the minimum is set at 2.0 per cent and the maximum is set at 4.0 per cent. One local government reduced the 2026 remuneration by 10.0 per cent. No others indicated any changes made.
Are you considering any changes to the remuneration or benefits (monetary or non-monetary) to reduce barriers to running for elected office OR to create more diversity amongst candidates running for elected office? (e.g., child minding, recreation passes, matching RRSP contributions). If yes, what are you considering?	Maybe – depends on results of this review.	One local government indicated that **after** 2026 (for the incoming council), remuneration will be a formula that considers the city's median income x 70 per cent x CPI. This approach was proposed by a citizen committee and ultimately approved by council for the incoming council. One other local government indicated they are also conducting a review of council remuneration and may make changes depending on the results of their review.
Other		
Is position considered full time or part time?	*Unknown*	**Mayor**: About half the local governments indicated their mayor is full time and most of the other half indicated their mayor is part time; however, a couple of local governments chose not to answer. **Councillor**: Nearly all local governments indicated their councillors are part time; however, a couple of local governments chose not to answer.

Question	Esquimalt Practice	Practices of the Responding Local Governments
Acting mayor/chair allowance, please describe.	Councillors receive 5.0 per cent acting pay.	Most local governments do not have an acting mayor/chair allowance. Two local governments indicated the following: • The councillor receives 60 per cent of the mayor salary when acting for the mayor • Council receives $12,053 annually to act as mayor
Committee remuneration, if any.	None	One local government indicated it pays elected officials to attend emergency planning meetings.
Other remuneration.	None	One local government indicated it pays an annual $375 vehicle allowance, and another local government indicated it offers free parking.
Annual Adjustments		
What was your adjustment for 2026 as a per cent (%) or benchmark (e.g., CPI)	2.0 per cent	Since most local governments consider CPI when making annual adjustments, the 2026 adjustments ranged between 2.0 and 2.3 per cent. They used either Victoria CPI or BC CPI. Some used at a certain time of year (e.g., end of October) or year over year.
If you haven't adjusted for 2026 yet, when did you last adjust base salaries? And what was the value of the adjustment (%)?	n/a	One local government has not made an adjustment in 2026 but will apply CPI later this year. One local government indicated it reduced salaries by 10.0 per cent in 2026.
What is the basis of your annual adjustment for elected officials? (e.g.,	CPI	Most local governments consider CPI when making annual adjustments.

Question	Esquimalt Practice	Practices of the Responding Local Governments
mirror staff adjustments, CPI)		One local government indicated it takes the average of the CUPE, IAFF, and CPI adjustment and applies the result of the that calculation to adjust elected officials' remuneration. One local government indicated that **after** 2026 (for the incoming council), remuneration will be a formula that considers the city's median income x 70 per cent x CPI. This approach was proposed by a citizen committee and ultimately approved by council for the incoming council.

Summary

Most local governments have formal bylaws or policies that guide remuneration and reimbursement for expenses for elected officials including timing and frequency of remuneration reviews. The Township of Esquimalt has a council policy that outlines how remuneration is determined.

The province of British Columbia on its website, provides the following, albeit limited, information on remuneration for elected officials: *"Remuneration for mayors and councillors vary by municipality. Being a council member in a large municipality may require more of a time commitment than in a smaller municipality and salaries often reflect this. In some municipalities being a council member is a full-time job, whereas in other municipalities council members are able to effectively fulfil their duties on a part-time basis. A municipality may choose remuneration amounts that it feels are appropriate."*

The province does not provide guidance on how to set remuneration for elected officials, leaving local governments with a great deal of autonomy to make remuneration decisions based on their individual communities.

In 2019, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities wrote a Council & Board Remuneration Guide which is available for free on its website (https://www.ubcm.ca/policy-areas/council-board-remuneration-guide). The guide, which was updated in 2023, is a comprehensive document organized into six sections:

> Section 1 – Explores why remuneration for elected officials is important and why local governments need to review remuneration levels periodically.
>
> Sections 2, 3, 4 – Focus on the options for conducting remuneration reviews including who should conduct them, when they should be conducted/implemented, and how to conduct them.

Section 5 – Addresses the importance of communication methods and audiences.

Section 6 – Summarizes the best practices for local governments to consider in addressing remuneration.

The UBCM guide among many recommendations, recommends regular surveys of the compensation paid in similar communities, annual adjustments between surveys, setting compensation at the median level of the market, and establishing pay for the councillors as percentages of pay for mayors. We concur with these compensation principles.

As a final thought, we would note, like we do with many of our compensation reviews, that just because no one else is offering a certain benefit that could be a clever attraction tool at your organization, does not mean you could not offer it. Someone always needs to be first. We are aware of BC local governments who have or do offer parental leave, make RRSP contributions, provide clothing allowances, and provide severance allowances to elected officials to name just a few benefits. Benefits are often not a one-size-fits-all: that is, what works in one organization does necessarily work in another organization.

Attachment 1 – Data Definitions

The data in this report have been rounded, aggregated, and summarized using tables. Some definitions to assist with understanding the data follow:

- The number of observations (# obs) indicates the number of organizations that provided data.
- It is important to note that a minimum number of observations is required to report data and still maintain confidentiality. A minimum of three observations is required to report the average, four to report the median, and five to report the quartiles (i.e., P25 and P75) and the P60 and P65.
- An average (mean) is the sum of all data divided by the number of observations included.
- A median value (50^{th} percentile or P50) is the number that falls within the middle of a series of observations (e.g., if there are seven data observations and they are ranked in order of highest to lowest, the number or observation that is in the fourth position is the middle value and represents the median value). It is the most common percentile statistic included in survey data. It is the point at which half of the data fall below and half of the data fall above.
- The 25^{th} and 75^{th} percentiles (P25 and P75), also referred to as the first and third quartiles, offer an indication as to the "spread" or range of the data. At the 75^{th} percentile, 75 percent of the observations are at this level or below. Similarly, at the 25^{th} percentile, 25 percent of the observations are at this level or below.

ATTACHMENT 2 – CONSULTANT PROFILES

Julie M. Case

Julie Case has over 20 years in the compensation field. During her career, Julie has worked with a variety of private and public sector clients to develop compensation structures, implement job evaluation plans, conduct custom compensation market surveys, advise on general salary administration, conduct market pricing, and develop compensation philosophies.

Julie's work involves developing and implementing compensation strategies for a broad, cross section of employee groups including executive, management, and professional, technical, and unionized staff.

Over the course of her career, Julie has gained considerable compensation expertise in the public and private sectors. She specializes in defining strategic compensation philosophies that align to the business goals of the organization. Julie handles compensation projects from the strategic planning stage through to the collection and analysis of compensation data and finally to the recommendations and implementation stages. Julie has designed job evaluation plans for use in exempt and union environments. She has facilitated many job evaluation committees in their goal of creating and recommending new or revised job worth hierarchies.

Julie has considerable experience working with municipalities in British Columbia. She has worked with the largest cities in the province. Once upon a time, Julie worked for a municipal government: she spent four years working in the chief administrative officer's office at the city of Maple Ridge, BC. This role included facilitating business planning sessions, defining corporate performance measures, and leading performance improvement reviews.

Julie holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Simon Fraser University with a major in economics and a minor in biology. She also holds a Master of Arts degree in leadership and training from Royal Roads University. She is currently a member of WorldatWork.

Julie worked for Watson Wyatt Worldwide in Vancouver as a compensation consultant where she was hired by senior consultant Tim Dillon. Tim opened his own firm in 2006, and Julie worked as an associate of Case Dillon & Associates (formerly Tim Dillon & Associates) from 2006 until the end of 2017 when Tim Dillon passed away. Julie continued to work with all her same clients and associates as an independent consultant. In 2021, Julie incorporated her consulting business with her partner John Leeburn and formed Drive Organizational Development.

When not working, Julie enjoys travelling, gardening, and lounging on the couch with her Golden Retrievers Louie and Molly. Julie's passion for pet therapy began 20 years ago when she began volunteering with BC Pets and Friends. Since 2017, Julie has served on the board of directors as vice president and currently as president. Pets and Friends is a registered charity that provides and promotes the healing comfort and companionship of animals through pet therapy visitations. Louie is a registered therapy pet. And when Molly reaches one year old, she will apply to be registered as a therapy pet too.

John Leeburn

John established his consulting practice in the summer of 2018 after 31 years in municipal government. In 2021, John incorporated his consulting business with his partner Julie Case and formed Drive Organizational Development.

John is a proud member of the small, but mighty group of municipal chief administrative officers whose background and training was in human resources. His passion is in helping individuals, teams, and organizations to grow and improve.

John's professional career started in a Winnipeg slaughterhouse as a human resources generalist. His working conditions improved greatly when he joined the city of New Westminster where he began his years in municipal service.

John left the city of New Westminster to become the director human resources the city of Maple Ridge where he enjoyed 17 productive years. The last eight of those years were in the role of deputy chief administrative officer. In September 2012 John joined the city of Port Coquitlam as its chief administrative officer. He retired from Port Coquitlam in July 2018.

John has a BCOM from UBC, specializing in industrial relations, and an MBA from SFU where he wrote his provocatively titled thesis "Does Size Matter: An Analysis of the Rationale for Municipal Amalgamation in Canada." He is a contributing author to the book, The Role of Canadian City Managers in Their Own Words (University of Toronto Press 2023).

John is often seen walking the parks and trails of North Vancouver attempting to get his two Golden Retrievers, Louie and Molly, to walk nicely on their leashes.