

ORDINANCE NO. _____ (N.C.S.)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SALINAS MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 2-01.02 TO INCREASE COMPENSATION FOR THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

City Attorney Impartial Analysis

Consistent with Senate Bill 329 (Dodd), this Ordinance amends the Salinas Municipal Code to increase the compensation for the Mayor and City Council members.

WHEREAS, Salinas Charter Section 5.3 authorizes the City Council to be compensated in an amount permitted by State law for general law cities with the same population, with additional compensation for the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, Council members are currently receive a monthly salary of \$600 and the Mayor \$800, with those amounts having been set in 1984; and

WHEREAS, on June 29, 2023, the Governor signed SB 329 into law, allowing for Council member pay increase in general law cities. The State Legislature last adjusted these amounts in 1984. Effective January 1, 2024, Government Code section 36516 authorizes up to \$2,550 per month, based on Salinas's population; and

WHEREAS, under the new law, Council member salaries may be increased beyond \$2,550 per month if the increase does not exceed: (1) an amount equal to 5% for each calendar year from the last adjustment—in this case 1984 (not compounded); or (2) an amount equal to inflation since January 1, 2024, based on the CPI; and

WHEREAS, the City Council agrees with the author of SB 329, Senator Bill Dodd (D-Napa), that:

City Council members have one of the hardest jobs in California government. They deal with a wide range of issues, from street maintenance to emergency response duties. And all to often, they do this job with very little financial compensation. No one runs for City Council in order to make money. But the low levels of pay make it much harder for them to balance their careers and personal obligations with the calling to serve their community. The Legislature has not raised the base pay amounts for City Council members since 1984. It's time those amounts caught up with the present economic reality, especially with the rapid increase in inflation we've seen recently. Raising the pay will also make it easier for members of marginalized communities to serve. City Councils should be reflective of the communities they represent and I believe raising their compensation is an important step to achieving that equitable outcome.

WHEREAS, the City Council agrees with Cal Cities (formerly the League of California Cities), which supported SB 329 for the following reasons:

Lengthy time commitments and limited pay discourage many, especially low-income residents, single parents, people of color, and young people, from running for public office. For many, being a council member is a full-time commitment with part-time pay. Cal Cities is proud to sponsor this important legislation that lessens barriers for those interested in governing at the local level. This overdue reform is another tool communities can choose to use that can help ensure our city councils are reflective of the residents who live, work, and play in their communities.

WHEREAS, the cost of living in Salinas is extremely high.⁶ In August 2022, an editorial in the Monterey County Weekly urged increasing compensation for city elected officials⁷; and

WHEREAS, a first reading of this Ordinance was held on November 14, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF SALINAS as follows:

SECTION 1. The above recitals are true and correct and are hereby incorporated and adopted as findings of the City Council as if fully set forth herein.

SECTION 2. Salinas Municipal Code section 2-01.02 is hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2-01.02. City Councilmember compensation.

- a. The Mayor and Members of the City Council shall each receive as compensation for their services a monthly salary of two thousand five hundred fifty dollars (\$2,550) dollars.
- b. The compensation set forth in subsection (a) of this section is exclusive of any amounts paid by the City for retirement, health, and other benefits, provided that the same benefits are available and paid by the City for its employees.
- c. Compensation for the Mayor and the City Council may be increased beyond the amount provided for in this section by an ordinance or an amendment to this section, provided the total amount of compensation, and the percent of any increase, shall not exceed the compensation and increase as provided for in Government Code Section 36516.
- d. This Ordinance does not and shall not provide for automatic future increases in the compensation.

SECTION 3. All ordinances and parts of ordinances and all resolutions and parts of resolutions in conflict herewith are hereby repealed effective January 1, 2024, or the effective date of this Ordinance, whichever is later.

SECTION 4. Publication. The City Clerk shall cause a summary of this ordinance to be published once in a newspaper published and circulated in Salinas within fifteen (15) days after adoption. (Salinas Charter Section 11.9)

SECTION 5. CEQA Compliance. The City Council's adoption of this ordinance is not a project subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3)).

SECTION 6. Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a decision of any court of any competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The Salinas City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this ordinance, and each and every section, subsection, clause, and phase thereof not declared invalid or unconstitutional without regard to whether any portion of the ordinance would be subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 7. Effective Date. This Ordinance will take effect thirty (30) days from and after its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 5th day of December, 2023, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

APPROVED:

Kimbley Craig, Mayor

ATTEST:

Patricia M. Barajas, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Christopher A. Callihan, City Attorney