

The Committee of the Whole met on Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 6pm remotely through the Zoom web application

Members present were Councilor Wayne Matewsky, presiding, Councilors Fred Capone, Richard Dell Isola, Rosa DiFlorio, John Hanlon, Jimmy Le, Stephanie Martins and Michael Mclaughlin.

Members absent were Councilors Gerly Adrien and Michael Marchese.

Communication received from Councilor Marchese that due to a prior commitment he would be unable to attend.

The Committee considered a Resolution offered by Councilor Stephanie Martins: That a representative from Xfinity/Comcast appear at this meeting to explain why Everett is receiving the second lowest internet download speeds in the State and what kind of infrastructure would be necessary to improve our service.

Angela Holm, Director of Government/Regulatory Affairs of Comcast responded to Councilor Martins inquiry on the matter via email to her on January 7<sup>th</sup> and stated that they would welcome any specific customer issues or complaints to better address any individual issues that may have an impact on speed or customer connectivity . Councilor Martins informed the Committee that she was currently seeking residents that are experiencing these problems so it can be documented and addressed by Comcast. Councilor Martins recommended that the matter be referred to the Government Operations Committee instead of the Committee of Whole.

The Committee voted: To report back to the City Council with a recommendation to refer to the Government Operations Committee to work on further.

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Burley  
Clerk of Committees

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Members absent were Councilors Gerly Adrien and Michael Marchese.

Communication received from Councilor Marchese that due to a prior commitment he would be unable to attend.

The Committee considered an Order offered by Councilors DiPierro, Mclaughlin, DiFlorio, Martins; That the Everett City Council hereby amends the City of Everett Home Rule Charter amending subsections of Charter Section 4, in regards to the School Committee Composition.

Mayor Carlo DeMaria, Mayor's Chief of Staff Erin Deveny, Assistant City Solicitor Matt Lattanzi, School Superintendent Priya Tahlilani, School Committee members Frank Parker, Tom Abruzzese, Millie Cardello, Samantha Lambert and Cynthia Sarnie were also present.

Councilor DiPierro informed the Committee that as a result of Governor Charlie Baker approving the Home Rule Charter amendment to allow the Mayor to become a voting member of the School Committee in would result in an even number of votes for that body and Massachusetts General Laws requires an uneven number. Councilor Mclaughlin concurred and noted that the School Committee and Chairman Parker had also mentioned at a previous School Committee meeting that another member should be added to provide an uneven voting number. Councilor DiFlorio asked Mr. Lattanzi what his interpretation was of MGL Chapter 43B Section 20c. Mr. Lattanzi confirmed that the Chapter and Section referenced would require an odd seat. Councilor Hanlon remarked that it did make sense but asked when it could take effect and Mr. Lattanzi responded that the City Charter addresses vacancies for the School Committee. Ms. Lambert reminded the members that the Mayor was still just an ex-officio who has voting rights but does not count towards a quorum and does not count as an elected School Committee member. She stated that based on this the City Council could be creating an even number on the School Committee if a new member is added which would conflict with MGL. Mr. Lattanzi agreed to look into. Mr. Parker echoed the comments offered by Ms. Lambert but noted that he did mention adding a 11<sup>th</sup> member because they had been kept in the dark through the whole process of the language being proposed to make the Mayor a voting member. He told the members that before they look at MGL 43B Section 20c they should be looking at Section 20a first which would confirm the Mayor is not an elected School Committee member so they are already at an odd number. Councilor Capone stated that if what the School Committee members are saying is correct then no action is necessary and acknowledged that the Committee shouldn't be doing anything until it received a clear opinion from City Solicitor. Ms. Deveny concurred that the City Solicitor would need to render an opinion on this matter. Councilors DiFlorio and DiPierro suggested that the matter be referred out of Committee with no recommendation pending an opinion from the City Solicitor.

The Committee voted 7-1 with Councilor Capone opposed and Councilor Le not voting: To report back to the City Council with no recommendation pending an opinion from the City Solicitor.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Members absent were Councilors Gerly Adrien and Michael Marchese.

Communication received from Councilor Marchese that due to a prior commitment he would be unable to attend.

The Committee considered an Ordinance offered by Councilors Martin and DiPierro: An Ordinance amending the Salary of the Everett School Committee.

Mayor Carlo DeMaria, Mayor's Chief of Staff Erin Deveny, Assistant City Solicitor Matt Lattanzi, School Superintendent Priya Tahiliani, School Committee members Frank Parker, Tom Abruzzese, Millie Cardello, Samantha Lambert and Cynthia Sarnie were also present.

Councilor Martins informed the Committee that she was looking to increase the School Committee compensation from \$11,500 to \$15,000 with a 2% COLA to take effect in the new organization of the School Committee in 2022 since the School Committee had not seen any adjustments in compensation since 2015. Councilor DiPierro stated that the School Committee should be fairly compensated and noted that they have been more active since the Superintendent change and especially during this pandemic. However, Councilor DiPierro wanted it known that even though the Mayor is now a voting member he cannot be paid for this position. Councilor Dell Isola concurred with Councilor DiPierro. Councilor Mclaughlin inquired to where the Sponsors came up with the figure of \$15,000 and Councilor Martins responded that they did some research and had discussions with colleagues on the subject matter. Councilor Mclaughlin remarked that he felt the figure was fair but that it was a tough time to be giving raises while residents are living in a pandemic. Mr. Parker reviewed the prior history of the School Committee compensation. Councilor DiFlorio informed the Committee that if the intent was to increase the compensation to commence next January 2022 then it would need to be done prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021. Councilor Hanlon inquired if the School Committee voted to ask for this increase and Mr. Parker stated that they did not that pursuant to City Charter only the City Council could vote on compensation for the School Committee. Ms. Lambert said an increase in compensation for the School Committee would reflect the work that is now being done as well as attract more candidates for the position. Ms. Cardello told the members that she wouldn't be upset if it doesn't pass because she does her job for the love of the students, but suggested if they're looking to do so that they should research what other communities are compensating their School Committee. Councilor DiFlorio suggested that the matter be referred into the Legislative Affairs Committee so that Committee could do further research on the matter. Ms. Sarnie agreed that more research was needed. Mr. Parker suggested that the research and surveys of other communities be based on enrollments and budgets.

The Committee voted: To report back to the City Council with a recommendation to refer to the Committee on Legislative Affairs for further research and to invite the School Committee chairperson to this meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Burley  
Clerk of Committees