

City of Somerville
Municipal Compensation Advisory Board (MCAB)
November 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Adopted January 16, 2025

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on Zoom.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS
Anne Gill	Director of HR & MCAB Liaison	Present
Rositha Durham	Panelist	Present
Alexandre Galimberti	Panelist	Present
John Long	Panelist	Present
Evelyn Persoff	Panelist	Present
Alessandra Seiter	Panelist	Present

City staff present: Megan Huckenpahler (Budget Analyst) and Ellen Schneider Collins (HR Deputy Director)

This meeting was called to order via Zoom by Anne Gill shortly after 4PM and adjourned at 5PM.

Director Gill started the meeting by introducing the members of the Municipal Compensation Advisory Board (MCAB) and thanking them for their participation.

The focus of the meeting was to go over the new classification proposal for non-union jobs which were last evaluated in 2016 (when the last salary study was completed). Mayor Ballantyne emphasized the need for fair and equitable compensation as there have been changes to the market in the last 8 years, so a full compensation study was undertaken by the Human Resources (HR) Department.

Director Gill then reviewed the last MCAB meeting which occurred in October 2023 – reminding everyone that during this meeting the City’s consultant (Donald Jacobs) went over his process and outline – looking at market data and internal equity.

Before beginning the presentation, Director Gill asked that panelists save questions for after the presentation and reminded the panelists that this meeting is strictly discussing the classifications of non-union positions.

Director Gill began the presentation of the PowerPoint slides discussing the City’s new classification plan that has a focus on equity and clarity. She explained that the new plan was designed to ensure fair compensation for positions with similar duties. The process for creating this new plan involved collecting data from various comparable communities, scoring positions on 13 grading criteria, grouping similar positions/comparing their salaries, and creating salary bands. Director Gill highlighted the importance of looking at positions objectively, based on job descriptions, rather than the individuals holding those positions. Director Gill explained how the goal is to have a clear compensation classification program that is simple for managers to communicate and administer.

Director Gill explained the similarities and differences between the new classification plan and the current system that is in place. She explained that similar to the current plan that has grades 1-14, this new plan would have bands 1-6. Both have a minimum and maximum salary, with the starting salary increasing over time for new hires. She explained that one of the main differences is that the starting salary for the new plan would have all nonunion positions earning at least \$65,000 which is great for recruiting and retention.

Director Gill explained another major difference between the two classification systems, which is the S track. Along with the 1-6 bands, there is the S Track which is for positions that require a specific degree or credential, or a combination of high risk, scope and responsibility.

Director Gill then went over the expected rollout and timeline of implementing this new classification plan. The target implementation is the first payroll of January 2025. Director Gill also explained that if this deadline is not met, the FY25 budget has been funded for salary adjustments retroactive to the first payroll of January 2025.

Director Gill also explained that there would be another meeting with the MCAB to go over the compensation piece of this plan.

Director Gill then asked the panelists if there were any questions.

Panelist Long questioned why there was no S Track listed in the manager band.

- Director Gill responded that roles change when you are managing people and not the processes. She further explained that there is no credential to be able to come in and manage people. In the research it was found that certain positions at band 5 did require credentials but the same was not found for level 4.

Panelist Persoff questioned what needs to happen between now and January 1, 2025.

- Director Gill responded that HR will be presenting to staff and that there will be another meeting held with this board to go over the compensation piece. She further explained that the plan will need to be presented to City Council for budget approval. The goal is to review salaries with City employees prior to January 1.

Panelist Seiter questioned where nonunion positions sit within the City compared to Union positions, to understand who this would affect (and whether this will be reviewed in the next MCAB meeting).

- Director Gill explained that almost all departments have both Union and Nonunion employees. Director Gill further explained that there are also new union classification and compensation plans, but that these vary based on the bargaining unit.

Panelist Seiter requested to see a breakdown of nonunion and union positions within each department during the next meeting.

Panelist Seiter also questioned whether there is a process to change a position's classification.

- Director Gill responded that this is being discussed but that it would follow normal review during budget season. Upgraded and new positions would go through the same process that all current jobs were put through.

Panelist Durham questioned what would happen if an employee did not have the skill set up to their classification.

- Director Gill confirmed that currently the City seeks to compensate each employee for the job that they are in. She explained that if an employee wants a higher position, they can apply. She also confirmed that no one is going to lose money – employees on the low end will be compensated better.
- Director Gill also commented on the City's educational programs and opportunities for employees to gain knowledge, get certifications and have the opportunity to move up.

Panelist Durham suggested that there be an S Track for the manager band.

- Director Gill appreciated the feedback and stated that getting feedback is the reason for these meetings.

Panelist Durham questioned if an employee could move into the S track during the course of a salary review, or if each position will be associated with the S track.

- Director Gill stated that the study strictly looked at the job descriptions and been clear with departments to outline what each aspect of the S track goes into it. She explained that everyone is on the same page about what this means.

Panelist Long questioned when the Committee will see what band each job will be in.

- Director Gill responded that this would occur at the next MCAB meeting.

Panelist Seiter questioned if an employee gets a degree during their employment, will they get compensated for that degree or only if the job requires it.

- Director Gill clarified that we would only compensate for a degree that is required of a position.
- Director Gill explained that they are working with managers to only include the actual requirements. She also explained that the Mayor wants equity and if job requirements are inflated, this takes away opportunities from women and minorities.

Panelist Seiter questioned how much the minimum will increase every year.

- Director Gill explained that it will be dependent on the City's finances.

Panelist Seiter asked for an example of work group supervisor and manager.

- Director Gill will finalize a document to be sent later to outline examples

Panelist Galimberti questioned if there was a system put into place for temporary changes in job responsibilities (for example to cover for a leave or vacancy)

- Director Gill explained that this has not been part of this process but depending on the length of time, the City will do this at times where we compensate for taking on additional duties.

Panelist Galimberti questioned if this board will just be reviewing nonunion positions.

- Director Gill confirmed that this is correct – MCAB only reviews nonunion compensation plan

Panelist Galimberti questioned the authority of this board, wanted to know if board members were just being informed or if there is any authority

- Director Gill responded that she would send ordinance that outlines responsibilities and that we are looking for support and input from this board

Panelist Galimberti questioned if this pay scale will include boards and commissions.

- Director Gill responded that she would confirm this as she believes that they are considered to be nonunion.

Panelist Long questioned if the study will include elected officials and asked for a copy of the MCAB ordinance.

- Director Gill responded yes, and that she would provide a copy of the ordinance.

Panelist Persoff questioned if HR would present a list of salaries at the next meeting.

- Director Gill confirmed that she will be presenting dollars – the bands and the corresponding salaries at the next meeting.

Panelist Persoff questioned who makes decisions on tying it back to the specific jobs.

- Director Gill explained that this is a collective decision that is made by the executive team and City Council who must approve.

Director Gill closed this meeting with a few final remarks. She explained that the plan is to schedule another meeting for the week of December 2. She noted that she would send the ordinance and ask for availability for the next meeting. Additionally, Director Gill noted that she would send out the salary info to review a week prior to the next meeting.

Reference Documents:

Proposed Non-Union Classification Plan