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AGENDA
City of Modesto
CITIZENS' SALARY SETTING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING

Conference Room 2001, Second Floor
Tenth Street Place, 1010 10th Street
Modesto, California 95354

Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at 3:15 p.m.

Call to Order

Roll Call – Commissioners: Julie Saugstad, Seth Simas, Steven Zagaris, Colleen Preston,
Vice Chair, Roldon (Sandy) Sutton, Chair

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
Three-minute time limit per speaker

Only interested persons in the audience may present these matters. Under State law, Commission Members may respond to matters being presented under this item only as follows:

- a. Briefly respond to statements made or questions raised.
- b. Ask a question for clarification.
- c. Provide a reference to staff or other resources for factual information.
- d. Request staff to report back at a subsequent meeting.
- e. Finally, a Commission Member or the Commission itself may take action to direct staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda.

Any and all of the following agenda items are subject to action by the Citizens Salary Setting Commission. This Agenda is on file at the City Clerk's Office, Sixth Floor, 10th Street Place, and is available on the City's Web site at www.modestogov.com.

Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the Commission after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the Clerk's office during normal business hours. Such documents are also available online, subject to staff's ability to post the documents before the meeting, at the following website <https://modestogov.com/1144/Citizens-Salary-Setting-Commission>

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS
SUBMITTING COMMENTS BY E-MAIL**

Written comments may be submitted via email to: cityclerk@modestogov.com (include Agenda Item Number in the subject line). All comments will be shared with the Commission Members and placed in the record but will not be read aloud during the meeting. Written comments must be received two hours before the meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Approve Salary Recommendations for the City of Modesto Mayor and Councilmembers for submission at the April 28, 2026 City Council meeting. (*Salary Setting Commission*)

MATTERS TOO LATE FOR THE AGENDA

These may be presented by members of the Citizens Salary Setting Commission and staff upon determination by a majority vote that an emergency exists, as defined by State law, or by a 2/3 vote that (1) there is a need to take immediate action, and (2) that the need for action came to the Commission’s attention after the agenda was posted.

ADJOURNMENT

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) of 1990, the Fair employment & Housing Act (“FEHA”), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended), Government Code section 11135 and other applicable codes, the City of Modesto (“City”) will not discriminate against individuals on the basis of disability in the City’s services, programs, or activities. For more information, please visit the City of Modesto website at <https://www.modestogov.com/865/Americans-with-Disabilities-Act-ADA>.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk (209) 577-5396. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

Posted pursuant to Government Code Section 54956 on the bulletin board at Tenth Street Place on

_____ at _____ by _____
date time signature

**City of Modesto Citizens Salary Setting Commission
2026-2028 Initial Recommendation**

Background / Context

The City Charter establishes the limits of compensation for City Council Members and Mayor. The Citizens Salary Setting Commission, composed of five (5) members, was appointed to determine the extent the salaries should be increased, if any. This commission, as required by the City of Modesto Charter Section 703(b), met “between March 1 and April 30th of every even numbered year.” Through Measure M, the five members shall be qualified electors residing within the City and appointed by the City Council, serving without compensation. Qualifications of the current commission include:

- A member from a bona fide local nonpartisan political organization with tax exempt status
- A former member of the Civil Grand Jury
- A member of a bona fide local taxpayer’s association with tax exempt status
- Two members who have demonstrated civic involvement and a capacity to serve in an honest, independent, and impartial fashion

In 2024, the Commission made the following recommendations:

- Increase the Mayor’s salary from \$43,200 / year to \$54,000 / year.
- The Mayor received a 25% salary adjustment increase based on CPI from 2008 to 2024.
- Increase the Council Member’s salary from 24,000 / year to \$30,000 / year.
- The Council received a 25% salary adjustment increase based on CPI from 2008 to 2024.
- [The 2024 Citizens’ Salary Setting Commission Recommendations can be found here.](#)

The Citizens Salary Setting Commission makes recommendations using these parameters set forth by the City Charter:

- The recommendation is not an evaluation of the current officeholders, but rather to determine fair compensation for the responsibilities of the office itself.
- The compensation limit for a **City Council Member** is half (**50%**) of the median family income (currently at **\$79,891**) for the Modesto Metropolitan statistical area as reported by the United States Census Bureau.
- Council Member current salary: **\$30,000** per year.
- The compensation limit for the **City Mayor** is half (**50%**) of a Stanislaus Superior Court District Judge (currently at **\$248,368**).
- Mayor current salary: **\$54,000** per year.
- Salaries are paid out of the General Fund of the City Expenses.

Table 1: Current Salary Compared to Charter Maximum

Position	Current Salary	Charter Maximum
Mayor	\$54,000	\$124,184
Council Member	\$30,000	\$39,945

Guiding Principles Considered

Several principles guided this Commission and their recommendation:

- **Public Responsibility:** Compensation should remain modest and respectful of taxpayer resources.
- **Workload Reality:** Although these positions are described as part-time, actual responsibilities often include:
 - Council meetings
 - Preparation and review of agenda materials
 - Committee Assignments
 - Regional board participation
 - Constituent meetings
 - Community events

Analysis

The current Commission met a total of five (5) times since the initial orientation meeting on February 27, 2026, to discuss and analyze data requested from and provided by City of Modesto staff. The methodology included the following:

- Current Salary of the Stanislaus Superior Court Judge, median household, and Modesto full-time wage earner
- Current Population of Modesto, Modesto Expenses, and updated Comparable Tables
 - San Joaquin Valley Cities
 - Charter Cities
 - Expenses and Population
- CPI increase from 2024 to present
- Role of Mayor as full-time and part-time
- Other official duties including committee assignments
- Both the Mayor and City Council Members have fringe benefits that are limited in scope.
- Both the Mayor and City Council Members may participate in the City’s health plan at their own expense.

Findings

Table 2: Indicators comparing 2024 to 2026

Indicators	2024	2026
Population	218,989	219,786
City Expenses	\$525,973,774	\$588,042,068
Median Household Income	\$73,375	\$79,891
Individual Full Time Income	\$32,044	\$32,706
CPI	--	5.4%

Note: Modesto’s population has been flat, median household income is up approximately 9%, personal median income is flat. CPI has risen by 5.4% since 2024.

Table 3: Comparable by Population and Expenses and Mayor Description

Cities	Salary	Population ¹	Expenses ²	Full/Part time
Glendale	\$26,276.00	183,761	\$948,298,145	PT
Huntington Beach	\$22,805.00	190,515	\$464,376,984	PT
Santa Rosa	\$26,640.00	177,300	\$553,829,678	PT
Modesto	\$54,000.00	221,529	\$588,042,068	PT
Burbank	\$23,949.00	101,793	\$632,433,340	PT
Sunnyvale	\$48,041.00	157,557	\$659,294,710	PT
San Bernardino	\$50,000.00	226,103	\$387,341,916	FT
Berkeley	\$143,800.00	120,514	\$603,357,325	FT
Bakersfield	\$83,440.00	423,592	\$725,671,879	FT
Fresno	\$133,900.00	553,800	\$1,474,265,521	FT
Sacramento	\$184,464.00	540,907	\$1,622,100,000	FT
Stockton	\$97,107.00	326,977	\$782,821,042	FT

Note: A Salary review of Comparable Cities by Population, Expenses, and Mayor position of Full or Part Time found higher salaries for Full Time Mayors, lower salaries for Part-time Mayors. The salary for Full Time ranges from San Bernardino at \$50,000 to Sacramento at \$184,654. The salary for Part-Time Mayors ranged from Huntington Beach at \$22,805 to Modesto at \$54,000. Within the comparable cities the Modesto Mayor is paid more than San Bernardino Full Time Mayor and is the Highest paid Part-Time Mayor. Salaries are only paid out of the General Fund for the City of Modesto, which for 2026 is projected to be \$206,449,484.

Table 4: Stanislaus County Cities for Mayor

Cities	Salary	Population	Expenses	Full/Part-time
Modesto	\$54,000.00	221,529	\$588,042,068	PT
Ceres	\$8,400.00	49,032	\$80,179,376	PT
Hughson	\$3,600.00	8,107	\$12,986,939	PT
Newman	\$3,000.00	12,242	\$24,146,656	PT
Oakdale	\$4,445.00	23,209	\$44,429,843	PT
Patterson	\$7,920.00	26,329	\$117,898,654	PT
Riverbank	\$10,800.00	25,959	\$31,416,956	PT
Waterford	\$3,600.00	9,338	\$11,022,115	PT
Turlock	\$6,000.00	72,948	\$149,283,449	PT

Note: Mayors within Stanislaus County are all part-time Mayors. The Modesto Mayor is the highest paid at \$54,000.00, Riverbank Mayor is in second place at \$10,800.00.

¹ World Population Review <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/california>

² California Cities Financial Data/State Controller <https://bythenumbers.sco.ca.gov/>

Table 5: Comparable by Population and Expenses for Council Members

Cities	Salary	Population	Expenses	Full/Part-time
Glendale	\$17,160.00	183,761	\$948,298,145	PT
Huntington Beach	\$22,147.00	190,515	\$464,376,984	PT
Sunnyvale	\$38,307.00	157,557	\$659,294,710	PT
Santa Rosa	\$17,760.00	177,300	\$553,829,678	PT
Burbank	\$23,949.00	101,793	\$632,433,340	PT
Modesto	\$30,000.00	221,529	\$588,042,068	PT
Berkeley	\$90,594.00	120,514	\$603,357,325	FT
Bakersfield	\$20,062.00	432,592	\$725,671,879	FT
Fresno	\$72,351.00	553,800	\$1,474,265,521	FT
Sacramento	\$111,324.00	540,907	\$1,622,100,000	FT
San Bernardino	\$40,728.00	226,103	\$387,341,916	FT

Note: On review of Comparable Cities by Population, Expenses and Mayor position, the Commission found that Cities with Full-Time Mayor structure had higher salaries for the Council Members. Berkeley at \$90,954 and San Bernardino at \$40,728. Cities with Part Time Mayors had lower salaries; Sunnyvale the highest at \$38,307 and Modesto Council Member’s salary at \$30,000. The salaries are only paid out of the General Fund for the City of Modesto, which for 2026 is projected to be \$206,449,484.

Table 6: Stanislaus County Cities for Council Members

Cities	Salary	Population	Expenses	Full/Part-time
Modesto	\$30,000.00	221,529	\$588,042,068	PT
Ceres	\$6,000.00	49,032	\$80,179,376	PT
Hughson	\$3,000.00	8,107	\$12,986,939	PT
Newman	\$1,200.00	12,242	\$24,146,656	PT
Oakdale	\$4,445.00	23,209	\$44,429,843	PT
Patterson	\$4,752.00	26,329	\$117,898,654	PT
Riverbank	\$10,800.00	25,959	\$31,416,956	PT
Waterford	\$3,600.00	9,338	\$11,022,115	PT
Turlock	\$6,000.00	72,948	\$149,283,449	PT

Note: All cities within Stanislaus County have a part-time Mayoral Structure, Modesto Council Members are paid the highest at **\$30,000.00**.

Recommendations

The 2026 Citizens Salary Setting Commission makes the following recommendation:

Table 7: Current Salary vs Recommended Salary for Fiscal Years 2027 and 2028

Position	Current Salary	Recommended Salary (6.2% increase)
Mayor	\$54,000.00	\$57,348.00
Council Members	\$30,000.00	\$31,860.00

The rationale for this recommendation:

The office of Mayor and Council Members choose to run for the office because they desire to serve and improve our community by making a positive impact. Through their service they become the voice of their constituents.

After our review of the data from several data points, our recommendation is to increase the respective salaries by 6.2% after considering CPI (5.4%) and Median Household (9%).

APPENDIX

Glossary of Terms

CPI: CPI stands for Consumer Price Index, a measure of inflation. It tracks inflation by the average change in prices paid by consumers for goods and services. CPI gauges the cost of living and purchasing power of money.

Charter City: Modesto is a Charter City, it operates under its own charter, which is our local constitution. Charter Cities can establish their own laws and regulations, particularly in areas like taxation and land use. A Charter or changes to a Charter requires the local vote by residents. There are 125 cities in California that have adopted Charters.

General Law City: Operates under the general laws of California, rather than a city charter. It is governed by the California Government Code, which outlines its powers and responsibilities. General Law Cities have limited flexibility compared to Charter Cities.

City Manager: Serves as the chief executive officer of the city, overseeing daily operations of all the departments within the city. They are responsible for implementing city policies and managing municipal departments. The city manager develops and proposes budgets, and financial updates. Engages with residents to address concerns and gather feedback. Leads emergency response efforts and public safety initiatives.

Full Time Mayor: Typically found in large cities, they are full time, they dedicate their entire time to overseeing city operations, leading initiatives, and managing staff. Their role is involved in daily governance and budgetary oversight.

Part Time Mayor: Typically balances their duties with other employment. The City Manager oversees the day-to-day operations of the city. The Mayor is the ceremonial lead for all political and representative purposes, and by the Governor for military purposes. The Mayor makes recommendations to the City Manager on policy, programs; and can request budgetary information. They do not hire or evaluate staff.

Household: A household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit (such as a house or apartment) as their usual place of residence. A household can consist of family members, roommates, or unrelated individuals. A household is often responsible for shared expenses like rent, utilities, and groceries.

Median Household Income: This income level represents the middle-income of a household in an area. Half of the households earn more than the median, and half earn less. It is often used to gauge economic health and living standards of a city.

Per Capita Income: Per capita income measures the average income earned per person in a specific area. It is calculated by dividing the total income of a region by its population. This metric helps assess the economic health and standard of living in a city.