

**CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SONORA  
STAFF REPORT**

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**MEETING DATE:** May 20, 2019

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** DOUGLAS L. WHITE, CITY ATTORNEY

**SUBJECT:** An informational report regarding the process of increasing City Council member salaries.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Consider an informational report from City of Sonora ("City") staff and provide direction on increasing the salary of the members of the City Council.

**BACKGROUND:**

The salary amounts the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Sonora ("City Council") receive are less than the amounts authorized under state law. In 2009, the City Council took a voluntary reduction effective July 1, 2009, that cut their compensation in half. The Mayor's salary was reduced from Three Hundred Dollars (\$300) to One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150) and the rest of the City Council's salary was reduced from Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250) to One Hundred Twenty-Five Dollars (\$125). This reduction was later memorialized through the adoption of Resolution No. 05-19-2014-A, adopted on May 19, 2014.

**DISCUSSION:**

The City Council may increase its members' salary up to the maximum amount permitted by state law through the adoption of an ordinance.<sup>1</sup> State law caps the salary amounts based on population. If a city has a population of thirty five thousand (35,000) or less based on the last federal census, state law limits the salary of city council members to no more than (\$300) per month.<sup>2</sup> According to the last federal census, the City's population is four thousand eight hundred twenty four (4,824). Thus, the salaries of City Councilmembers can be no more than (\$300) per month. Additionally, state law also authorizes an increase in City Council salaries in an amount not to exceed 5% for each calendar year from the operative date of the last adjustment.

Under California Government Code section 36516.5, any salary increase would become effective at the beginning of a new term of office for any City Councilmember following the next general municipal election. This means any salary increase can only become effective for all Councilmembers and the Mayor when at least one Councilmember begins a new term of office.

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<sup>1</sup> Cal. Govt. Code § 36516.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact associated with the salary increase depends on the amount of increase authorized in any ordinance the City Council ultimately adopts. The increase would become effective following the next municipal election. City Council salary expenses are paid entirely from the City's General Fund.

## **OPTIONS:**

1. The Council may choose to provide direction on increasing City Council salaries.
2. The Council may choose not to provide any increases to City Council salaries.
3. The Council may continue the item and request additional information and analysis from staff.