

January 14, 2022

HR Director Harper Donahue,

This letter serves as the official request for review of the results of the Municipal Clerk Series position study dated January 5, 2022. We, the eight incumbents in the series, request further review of the series.

We appreciate the work already done on this reclassification study by Human Resources analysts. However, we believe certain reasons for the reclassification request were overlooked. If these reasons were considered fully, we believe the three positions within this series would be placed in a higher range within compensation group 20.

The reasons within the reclassification request that we believe were overlooked are:

- Required years of experience;
- Specialized knowledge;
- Mental demands of the position; and,
- Compensation compared to relevant labor market.

The reasoning for the request based on each of these details is below.

Required years of experience

Election administration has increased in complexity over the past 10 years. Due to this increased complexity, it has become more important for new hires in the Municipal Clerk I position to have election work experience.

During the most recent recruitment for the Municipal Clerk I position in 2020, the decision was made to hire directly from the existing hourly absentee voting clerk pool. These hourly employees all have 1+ years of election administration experience, including knowledge of basic election law, WisVote experience, extensive public contact with voters, and experience working in a fast-paced, politically-charged environment.

The other positions in CG20/R9 do not require specific experience related to each position. The positions in CG20/R10, however, require some experience relevant to their position. We therefore believe the Municipal Clerk I position should be reclassified into CG20/R10.

Specialized knowledge

The Municipal Clerk series scope of duties is uniquely large, and this was not fully considered when studying the specialized knowledge requirements for Certified Municipal Clerks. While all incumbents are cross-trained, specialized knowledge is expected in one or more service areas

when one attains the Certified Municipal Clerk position. The skill required in these areas is utilized throughout the entire scope of duties and is not merely a reflection of total percentage of work.

Examples of this specialized knowledge include:

- E. Christianson is a legislation software (Legistar) expert who has administrative-user permissions, oversees technical assistance and training for City employees, and meets bi-weekly with a team of internal Legistar stakeholders to discuss updates.
- N. Perez is an election and WisVote specialist who leads election projects, has expert-level knowledge of state statutes relevant to election law, and sits on an advisory board for the Wisconsin Elections Commission to discuss changes and upgrades to the statewide voter registration system, WisVote.
- J. Haar is the records coordinator who oversees large, highly-complex open records requests and is the in-house expert on Wisconsin's Open Records Law.

These examples are not exhaustive. The specialized knowledge, technical skill, and significant leadership required of the Certified Municipal Clerk position is more appropriately comparable to positions in the CG/20 Range 14-16, namely the Ordinance Revision Specialist (CG20/R14), Housing Specialist 3 (CG20/R14), and the Legislative Management System Specialist (CG20/R16).

Mental demands of the position

There has been a gradual and at times radical shift in the climate surrounding elections in the past 10 years. This shift has significantly changed the environment in which work is performed by Municipal Clerks. The environment no longer consists of only potentially hostile customers (which is comparably seen in Mayoral Office Clerk CG20/R10 and Housing Specialist 1-3 positions CG20/R11 through 14). Work is routinely performed under high-stress, fast-paced, and politically-charged conditions.

There has been a significant increase in the presence of media surrounding normal work functions. The Clerk's Office routinely fields media requests and manages media and drone presence in various situations, including daily operations in the Clerk's Office, public tests of election equipment, in-person absentee voting sites, drop box sites, Election Day, and recounts.

There has also been a significant increase in the amount of subpoenas, lawsuits, and open records requests directed to the Clerk's Office. The lawsuits often result in sudden changes in election law that directly impact the way tasks are performed in the Clerk's Office. Not only do Municipal Clerks need to keep abreast of the status of laws making their way through different courts, often fully developed programs must be upheaved and re-worked with little notice.

Violence and security threats against election officials and election infrastructure have also increased. While the decisional impact of the Municipal Clerk duties may be comparable to other positions in similar ranges, such as the Judicial Support Clerk series, the environment in which those decisions are made is more mentally demanding. We do not feel that any positions in CG20 adequately compare; however, the Legislative Management System Specialist position (CG20/R16) comes closest with specific duties related to media inquiries and work with elected officials.

Compensation compared to relevant labor market

Given that the Municipal Clerk Series is unique in scope, it is insufficient to compare this series only to other positions within the City.

The Clerk's Office is nationally-renowned for its voter engagement efforts and work towards equity in elections. For these two reasons, it is important that attention be given to the relevant labor market on a national level in order to maintain nationally-competitive wages and attract qualified applicants.

A list of comparable positions, along with contact information, organizational charts, and position descriptions, was submitted with the original study request, and includes:

- Various Election Services positions with the Milwaukee Elections Commission (Election Services Coordinator \$51,000-\$60,000; Election Services Administrator \$51,000-\$72,000; Election Services Business Systems Coordinator \$58,000-\$81,000)
- Clerk Administrative Specialist position in Grand Rapids, MI (\$57,000-\$76,000)
- Ramsey County, MN Election Administrator Series (Election Administrator 1 \$41,000-\$61,000; Election Administrator 2 \$54,000-\$80,000; Election Administrator 3 \$66,000-\$98,000)

A further review of these positions, or other nationally-comparable positions, is warranted to decide fair compensation for this series.

Based on the four reasons outlined above, we respectfully request further review of the municipal clerk series, and suggest the following reclassifications of the three positions within the series:

- Municipal Clerk I re-classified from CG20/R9 to CG20/R10
- Municipal Clerk II re-classified from GC20/R10 to CG20/12
- Certified Municipal Clerk re-classified from GC20/R11 to CG20/R15.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nikki Perez, WCMC, Certified Municipal Clerk
Eric Christianson, WCMC, Certified Municipal Clerk
Thomas Lund, WCMC, Certified Municipal Clerk
Jennifer Haar, WCMC, Certified Municipal Clerk
Heather Harris, Municipal Clerk II
Maggie McClain, Municipal Clerk II
Shelby Hanewold, Municipal Clerk II
Bonnie Chang, Municipal Clerk II