

**From:** [Andrew Smith](#)  
**To:** [\\_CharterReviewCommittee](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comments for April 27th meeting  
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This is the first time I am taking a look at some of these issues on compensation and the direct election of the mayor. A lot of long documents online to review.

One question that has not been looked at is why does Santa Rosa need seven council persons instead of five council persons? When the city made a decision to move to district elections to avoid a lawsuit, I asked some of the city council members why not five council persons. I was told that Santa Rosa used to have five council persons but the city could not change that amount until 2022 due to how the number increased from five to seven council persons. A legal issue. But some of the feedback was five was a better number.

Sonoma County has only five supervisors for a much larger population of close to 500,000 resident versus 180,000 for Santa Rosa.

That would make it easier to increase the salary for council persons. But then Santa Rosa is running a fiscal deficit so how can residents be asked to increase city government costs?

Will a proposed charter change for compensation also lead to each council person having an assistant and if so, how much would that cost?

The direct election of the mayor I would think would be for a four year term as opposed to a rotating two year term that is now found with our city government after being elected by the current city council persons. So what responsibilities does a mayor elected directly have? And would that mean one less city council person or still the current number of seven council persons plus the mayor? The mayor's position should have a cap on how many terms they can serve or serve consecutively?

There is nothing wrong with updating our city government for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. But even if some council person's salary was increased to some of other cities levels in the \$20,000+ range, that is not a lot of

money. Our city council persons are almost like volunteer positions for \$800/month. A combination of civic involvement and a way to grow your political career. Supervisor Susan Gorin was on the city council at one time before being elected County Supervisor.

We don't need a government that is expensive but one responsive to the citizens and a balance based on compensation that Santa Rosa can afford.

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Santa Rosa