



Request for Committee Action from the Office of City Clerk

Date: August 13, 2014

To: Hon. Jacob Frey, Chair, Elections & Rules Committee

Subject: Election Judge Pay

Recommendation: Authorize increase of \$2.45 per hour to pay rates for all election judges effective August 1, 2014.

Previous Directives: 1990: EJ pay rate increased from \$4 to \$4.50 per hour through budget process.
1995: EJ pay rate increased from \$4.50 to \$6 per hour through budget process.
1997: State minimum wage set at \$5.15 per hour.
1999: Charter amendment sets EJ pay at 40 percent greater than state minimum wage unless City Council sets different rate.
2007: Resolution 2007R-311 authorizes staff to recommend EJ pay in budget process. Base rate of \$8.75 per hour set, except for student EJs.
2009: Federal minimum wage increased to \$7.25 per hour, requiring an increase for student EJs.
2012: City supports increasing federal minimum wage in legislative platform.
2013: City supports increasing state minimum wage in legislative platform.
2014: State minimum wage increased to \$8 per hour, effective August 1, 2014.

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Background Information: Pursuant to Minneapolis City Charter, Chapter 2, Section 6, election judge pay “shall be forty (40) percent greater than the prevailing minimum wage as defined by state law unless the City Council sets a different rate.” In 2014, the State Legislature enacted a series of minimum wage increases which were supported by the City of Minneapolis. The first of these changes became effective August 1, 2014, setting the statewide minimum wage at \$8 per hour. Successive increases in statewide minimum wage will become effective in August 2015 (\$9 per hour) and in 2016 (\$9.50 per hour). These changes have the potential to impact election judge pay rates, beginning with the 2014 primary. Staff has identified two policy issues: (1) how to address student election judge pay rates, now below the statewide minimum wage and (2) how to address election judge pay rates uniformly in light of the charter requirement and recent state legislation.

In 2007, staff proposed a new model to calculate election judge pay rates based on job functions. Resolution No. 2007R-311 approved six distinct “positions,” each tied to a specific pay rate, shown on the table below (*see next page*). Staff also was authorized to recommend future pay rates as part of the

annual budget process. Based on recent minimum wage legislation, staff recommends that the new pay rates—effective August 1, 2014—would be as shown in the final column of this table:

Pay Rate Type by Position	Approved 2007 Rates	Proposed 2014 Rates
Base Judge Pay	\$8.75	\$11.20
Asst. Head Judge	\$9.50	\$11.95
Head Judge	\$10.50	\$12.95
Precinct Support Judge	\$15.00	\$17.45
Health Care Judge	\$15.00	\$17.45
Student Judge*	\$7.00	N/A

*NOTE: Increased to \$7.25 in 2009 due to increase in federal minimum wage.

Since 2007, the Elections & Voter Services Division has taken a more aggressive stance with recruiting, training, and deploying student election judges. Accordingly, staff recommends eliminating student judge as a position type and defaulting pay rates for student judges to the base judge pay rate. Paying student election judges the same rate as other team judges supports the goal of shifting polling place staffing to be more representative of community. As reflected in the 2010 Census, the Minneapolis population is roughly 40 percent non-white; by contrast, the population of the Minneapolis Public Schools is 70 percent non-white. Student election judges have also been one of the best sources for language support (interpretation) in polling places in recent years. In recognition of the value they bring to the polls, staff has actively sought to treat student judges the same as other team judges, allowing them to perform all functional roles and responsibilities in the polling place permitted under state law and, for the first time in 2014, having student judges attend the same mandated training sessions as other team judges. The Elections & Voter Services Division believes actively engaging youth as election judges promotes a lifelong commitment to voting and civic engagement.

The City is reliant on qualified, well-trained election judges to serve voters in polling places. Providing a competitive rate of pay enhances the City’s ability to recruit a range of qualified election judges for the variety of positions that must be filled, from leadership positions to front-line team member positions. When the existing charter language regarding election judge pay was adopted, the rationale included both maintaining a competitive compensation level to support recruitment as well as providing a mechanism for ensuring that future wage changes could be addressed administratively without further policy action being required. Despite this, staff believes it is important to reconnect with policymakers on this issue to secure authorization to uniformly raise the pay rates for all election judges.

Financial Impact: The 2014 Adopted Budget did not contemplate a legislative change to the minimum wage. The estimated potential fiscal impact of the proposed pay rate changes could range from \$43,260 for the 2014 Primary to \$93,520 for the General Election, as reflected in the following table.

Position Type (EJ)	Primary	Fiscal Impact	General	Fiscal Impact
Election Judges at polling places (Primary & General)	884	\$36,644.65	1,826	\$83,763.05
Other Judges	80	\$6,254.85	83	\$6,840.40
Student Judges	24	\$360.00	162	\$2,916.00
	TOTAL ESTIMATE	\$43,259.50	TOTAL ESTIMATE	\$93,519.45

The 2014 Adopted Budget for elections is \$1,265,000. Staff will continue to work with the Human Resources and Finance and Property Services departments to monitor the impact of the proposed wage increases to identify any budget deficits that may require contingency funding.

Staff Recommendation: Authorize an increase in base pay rate for all election judges by \$2.45 per hour, reflecting the statewide increase in minimum wage, to be effective August 1, 2014, for the 2014 Primary & Gubernatorial Election.

Attachments:

1. Election Judge Salary Survey (Metro Cities)
2. DRAFT Resolution