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MEMORANDUM

To: Ald. Scott Spiker
From: Gunnar Raasch, Legislative and Fiscal Services Specialist
Date: 10/29/2025
Subject: Median Income and 2026 Raise Data

This memorandum is in response to your inquiry for statistics relating to average wages and how categories of City employees would be affected by the 2026 Proposed Budget and the proposed Omnibus Amendment. It should be stressed that the figures included in this memorandum are estimates, and could be over- or under- estimates due to a number of factors. Table 1 presents the estimated salary figures for each category, and Table 2 shows the potential raises for general City employees depending on residency in dollar-increase form. The remainder of the memo explains the methodology used to estimate these averages.

Table 1. Estimated Average Income by Category and Year/Budget

Category	2025 Estimated Income	2026 Proposed Budget	2026 Proposed Budget with Omnibus
Per Capita Income (Milwaukee County)	\$60,144	N/A	N/A
Median Household Income (Milwaukee County)	\$63,304	N/A	N/A
City Employee Mean	\$71,666	N/A	N/A
Resident City Employee Mean	\$72,203	N/A	N/A
Non-Resident City Employee Mean	\$70,053	N/A	N/A
General City Employee Mean (Excluding Police and Fire)	\$65,562	\$66,873	\$68,021
Resident General City Employee Mean (Excluding Police and Fire)	\$66,053	\$67,374	\$68,695
Non-Resident General City Employee Mean (Excluding Police and Fire)	\$64,069	\$65,350	\$65,991
Elected Officials	\$107,273	*See Table 2	*See Table 2

Table 2. Dollar-Increase Estimates for General City Employees

Category	2025 Estimated Income	2026 Proposed Budget	2026 Proposed Budget with Omnibus
General City Employee Mean (Excluding Police and Fire)	\$65,562	\$1,311	\$2,458
Resident General City Employee Mean (Excluding Police and Fire)	\$66,053	\$1,321	\$2,642
Non-Resident General City Employee Mean (Excluding Police and Fire)	\$64,069	\$1,281	\$1,922
Council Members	\$84,205	\$1,684	\$3,368
Council President	\$94,310	\$1,886	\$3,772
Mayor	\$169,436	\$3,388	\$6,777

Median Wage for Milwaukee Residents

The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED) lists two relevant metrics: estimated median household income for Milwaukee County, and estimated per capita personal income for Milwaukee County. Both figures were last updated in December of 2024.

Per Capita Personal Income in Milwaukee County: \$60,144

Median Household Income for Milwaukee County: \$63,304

Mean Income for City Employees

To calculate an estimated mean, the FTE's and budgeted amounts from every 'Gross Salaries & Wages Total' line item in the 2025 Proposed Budget were compiled in a spreadsheet, summed, and averaged. Gross salaries and positions from the Election Commission were excluded, as over 2,000 employees who work only on election days would severely distort the average.

This method generated an estimated mean for City Employees of \$71,666. Excluding employees from the Police and Fire departments provides an average of \$65,562. Based on the rate of 75% of general City employees being residents, the mean for resident City employees should be 0.75% higher than the general mean, and the mean for non-residents

should be 2.25% lower.

Wage Increases and Omnibus Increases

The Proposed 2026 Budget reportedly provides a 2% raise for general City employees. This raise would not apply to members of the applicable unions for the Police and Fire Departments, or to temporary election or Health Department workers. Amendment 1A (Omnibus) increases the raise for general City employees by 1% (from 2% to 3%) and increases the residency incentive by 1% (from 3% to 4%). Thus, non-resident general City employees would receive a 2% raise without its passage and a 3% raise with its passage. Resident general City employees would receive a 2% raise without its passage and a 4% raise with its passage. With the passage of the omnibus, the mean for general City employees including both residents and non-residents would rise roughly 3.75%.

Exempt and Elected Positions

Requested statistics for civil service-exempt positions are not included in this memorandum, as their calculation would significantly delay its release. There are 398 exempt positions whose salaries would need to be individually logged into a spreadsheet to determine an average. The mean average for elected positions is based on the salaries of the Mayor, 15 Council Members, the Comptroller, the City Attorney, the City Treasurer, and 3 Municipal Judges. According to the Code, Council Members, the Council President, and the Mayor would receive a matching raise up to 3% if general City employee raises are issued. The code does not indicate any similar matching raises for other elected positions. Based on the analyst's reading of the code – the residency incentives also apply to elected positions – however this could not be confirmed with DER before publication.

Please let me know if you need any additional information.

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