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Santa Clara City Council to Address Compensation Process for Elected Police Chief, City Clerk

Santa Clara, CA (March 19, 2018) – Santa Clara City Council will review staff recommendations and discuss the process for setting compensation for the city's elected Chief of Police and the City Clerk at its Tuesday, March 20 meeting. As the City has been working to strengthen past practices and increase transparency, the need to address salary increases and compensation setting for two elected offices – the Chief of Police, and the City Clerk – became clear.

The issue came to light when the elected Chief of Police communicated to the new City Manager the on-going issue of not having his compensation adjustments addressed. It was necessary to review past practices and the legal requirements regarding compensation increases for elected officials. It became apparent to the City Attorney and the City Manager that the many past practices and procedures for setting the compensation of the Chief of Police and the City Clerk were at variance with state laws and with the practices of other jurisdictions that set elected officials' compensation. It has become clear that certain Human Resource internal controls were not strong and thus compensation adjustments were provided to the Chief despite the City Attorney's direction not to implement without proper Council authorization. The increase was retracted on July 15, 2017. City of Santa Clara is committed to having transparent and public policies and procedures, and remedying this compensation issue through an open and public process is a critical part. Elected officials are not employees of the City Council, and therefore cannot be evaluated by the Council in a closed session like appointed officers, such as the City Manager or City Attorney. Elected officials, including an elected Chief of Police, also cannot be evaluated by the City Manager for the purpose of a "merit" increase, as the appointment is made by the voters, not the City Manager.

To bring the City into alignment with state laws, and increase public visibility into the process, the City Manager and City Attorney recommend to the Council discontinuance of past practices that delegated compensation increases to the City Manager outside the light of public meetings and fiduciary process and has provided policy options for the Council to consider for future salary setting of these two elected professional positions.

Tuesday's meeting will give the Council an opportunity to discuss the issue in a public forum and review the options staff has provided for determining compensation increases moving forward.

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About the City of Santa Clara:

Located at the heart of Silicon Valley about 45 miles south of San Francisco, the City of Santa Clara truly is "The Center of What's Possible." Incorporated in 1852, Santa Clara covers an area of 19.3 square miles with a population of 120,000. Santa Clara is home to an extraordinary array of high-tech companies, including Applied Materials, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, Nvidia, Oracle, and Ericsson. The City of Santa Clara is also home to Santa Clara University, California's Great America Theme Park, and Levi's® Stadium, home of the San Francisco 49ers and Super Bowl 50. For more information, visit www.SantaClaraCA.gov.