



*Tim Kabat*  
*Mayor*  
*City of La Crosse*

August 17, 2015

Members of the Common Council  
c/o City Clerk Teri Lehrke  
400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

RE: #15-0683 AN AMENDED ORDINANCE to amend Section 2-58 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse regarding salary for the office of Mayor.

Dear Members of the La Crosse Common Council:

I hereby veto the above referenced amended ordinance. The proposed salary increase included within the amended ordinance is excessive and results in a near 10% increase in total compensation for the mayor's position.

The arguments for the salary increase are the La Crosse mayor is the chief executive officer of city operations and should be paid as such, the mayor's salary is well below the compensation of similar positions such as La Crosse School superintendent, La Crosse County administrator, and the CEO's of area businesses, and of the need to attract candidates for the mayor's office.

The total annual compensation for La Crosse's mayor is \$77,000 plus another \$5,075 for expenses and vehicle allowance. The total package of over \$82,000 is on par with many similar communities and is more than the \$79,272 median compensation for all mayors across the state. Comparisons to the La Crosse School District, La Crosse County and other organizations or businesses are not persuasive because of the differences in their size, scope and purpose.

The attractiveness of the mayor's job is reflected in the interest in the position during each election season. This past election attracted 11 candidates for the February 2013 primary and the election before attracted seven candidates for the February 2009 primary. On the list of reasons why someone decides to run for the office of mayor – public service, making a positive difference, improving the community, fixing problems – salary is far down on the list of motivating factors.

Finally, a near 10 percent increase in compensation far exceeds what most workers in La Crosse and the Coulee Region are receiving. Of all elected officials, the mayor's position is one that is closest to the citizens and should reflect the ups and downs of the local economy and how well our residents are doing. Average wages in La Crosse have witnessed only small increases – about 1.7% from a year ago – and typically lag the state and national

averages. The increase as proposed by the Common Council far exceeds what a majority of our citizens are enjoying.

Consequently, I do not feel it is in the best interest of the City of La Crosse to increase the mayor's pay by the amount in the amended ordinance and therefore veto the legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Kabat". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mayor Tim Kabat