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The Yankton County Observer is published weekly at Yankton, S.D. 57078. Periodicals postage is paid at Yankton under USPS permit 416410. Our editorial mailing address is 308 Douglas, Yankton, SD 57078. Send address changes and corrections to above address or e-mail kathy@ycobserver.com.

EDITORIAL



IN A MINUTES NOTICE

Part five

Yankton city commissioners earn \$5,385 per year

Editor's Note: This is the fifth story in an Observer series titled "In a Minutes Notice." These articles highlight information and news value in meeting minutes and other public notices published in newspapers. Part five ranks compensation for members of the Yankton City Commission with 11 other South Dakota cities over 9,000 population.

Next month's Yankton City Commission election has five people competing for three open seats. They are running for a job that ranks 11th in pay among the 12 biggest cities in South Dakota.

Yankton's eight city commissioners are paid \$448 per month or \$5,385 per year. Mayor Charlie Gross receives more because his job involves additional duties. He is paid \$611 per month or \$7,339 per year.

Mayor Gross' annual compensation is lowest for a mayor among the state's 12 biggest cities. The highest-paid mayor in South Dakota is Mike Huether of Sioux Falls at \$122,387 per year, followed by Rapid City Mayor Steve Allender at \$94,499, and Watertown Mayor Steve Thorson, \$80,437. Huether, Allender, and Thorson are full-time mayors. Most of the others serve their cities in a part-time role.

Yankton is the seventh-biggest city in South Dakota, according to 2015 census estimates. Following is a list of the state's 12 largest cities ranked in order of commissioner pay:

- 1) **Sioux Falls** is the biggest city in South Dakota with 171,544 people. City commissioners earn **\$18,358** per year. The mayor's annual salary is \$122,387.
- 2) **Huron** is the ninth biggest city in S.D. with 13,313 people. City commissioners are paid **\$18,155** per year. The mayor's annual salary is \$28,913.
- 3) **Rapid City** is the second biggest city in the state with 73,569 people. City commissioners are paid **\$13,037** per year. The mayor's annual salary is \$94,499.
- 4) **Pierre** (population 14,002) is the eighth biggest city in S.D. City commissioners are paid **\$11,713** per year. The mayor's annual salary is \$22,492.
- 5) **Spearfish** (pop. 11,283) is the 10th-biggest city in the state. City commissioners are paid **\$11,664** per year. The mayor's annual salary is



The 2016-2017 edition of the Yankton City Commission poses for a group photo. Front row left to right are Commissioner Nathan Johnson, Mayor Charlie Gross, City Manager Amy Nelson, Commissioner Amy Miner, and Deputy City Attorney Lindsay Hovden. Back row left to right are Commissioner Dave Carda, Commissioner Tony Maibaum, Commissioner Craig Sommer, Commissioner Chris Ferdig, Commissioner David Knoff, and Commissioner Jake Hoffner.

\$22,759.

6) **Watertown** (pop. 22,073) is the fifth-biggest city in S.D. City commissioners are paid **\$10,597** per year. The mayor's annual salary is \$80,437.

7) **Mitchell** (pop. 15,669) is the sixth-biggest city in the state. City commissioners are paid **\$9,541** per year. The mayor's annual salary is \$31,756.

8) **Aberdeen** (pop. 28,102) is the third biggest city in S.D. City commissioners are paid **\$8,499** per year. The mayor's annual salary is \$14,999.

9) **Brookings** (pop. 23,657) is the fourth-biggest city in the state. City commissioners are paid **\$7,200** per year. The mayor's annual salary is \$9,600.

10) **Vermillion** (pop. 10,738) is the 11th-biggest city in S.D. City commissioners are paid **\$6,458** per year. The mayor's annual salary is \$11,155.

11) **Yankton** (pop. 14,557) is the seventh-biggest city in the state. City commissioners are paid **\$5,385** per year. The mayor's annual salary is \$7,339.

12) **Brandon** (pop. 9,856) is the 12th-biggest city in S.D. City commissioners are paid **\$4,939** per year. The mayor's annual salary is \$8,012.

Note: The 12 South Dakota city commissions included in this story range in size from five-person boards in Brandon, Huron, and Pierre to the 11-member Rapid City Council.

Sources: January 2017 meeting minutes of the 12 cities included in this article.

- BJH