Fw: IMPORTANT: FORBES REQUEST FOR COMMENT

Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>
Tue 5/19/2020 12:05 PM
To: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>
City of Santa Clara response to our request for comment...

From: Lenka Wright <LWright@SantaClaraCA.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 11:50 AM
To: Craig Smith
Cc: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>
Subject: RE: IMPORTANT: FORBES REQUEST FOR COMMENT

Dear Craig,

Thank you for your inquiry and the opportunity to respond.

Having an effective and experienced city manager is critical for an organization to successfully navigate a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. The City Manager's total compensation is reflective of the responsibilities that come with being the top administrator for a complex organization in one of the most expensive regions not only in the state, but the country.

The City of Santa Clara is a more complex agency than most other local government agencies of our size. The City has four distinct lines of business: the Santa Clara Stadium Authority, the Santa Clara Convention Center, an electric utility – Silicon Valley Power, and regular municipal services. For many other agencies, they only provide municipal services. For Santa Clara, the City is providing public services in the heart of Silicon Valley that hosts the world's largest tech businesses and where 88% of residents surveyed believe the quality of life here is positive or excellent; the Stadium Authority which has oversight of the publicly-owned Levi's ® Stadium, home to the San Francisco 49ers and host to many large non-NFL events; Silicon Valley Power which provides electricity to many data centers that power Silicon Valley (Santa Clara ranks second in the nation for data center concentration); and the Convention Center which is considered Silicon Valley's premier convention space due to its centralized location and easy access to many top global companies.

Santa Clara has also historically focused on providing competitive compensation over having the most robust health and retirement benefits package. In a competitive labor market like Silicon Valley, executive salaries in the public sector are typically commensurate with a candidate's professional credentials, educational background and proven track record in municipal government.

Let me know if you have an idea of when the article will be published.

Sincerely,
Lenka

Lenka Wright
Director of Communications
1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050
Direct: 408-615-5515 | Cell: 669-243-8467 | SantaClaraCA.gov

From: Craig Smith
Sent: Monday, May 18, 2020 2:29 PM
To: Communications <Communications@SantaClaraCA.gov>
Cc: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>
Subject: IMPORTANT: FORBES REQUEST FOR COMMENT

To whom it may concern,

My name is Craig Smith. I am a researcher working on behalf of Forbes Sr. Policy Contributor Adam Andrzejewski. We are working on a piece regarding the large number of California public employees with six-figure salaries or retirement pensions and their impact on taxpayers. The deadline for comment is Tuesday May 19th at 5:00 PM ET. If you miss our deadline, we will do our best to update the piece when you respond.

In these times of national crisis, please provide us with an on-the-record justification for the salaries of your most highly compensated employees. Here is the relevant paragraph where your organization is mentioned:

- 45,718 small town city and town employees – including 1,420 municipal administrators and employees out-earned the California governor – the highest paid state governor ($202,000). Highly compensated city managers included Deanna Santana (Santa Clara – $396,158); Paul Arevalo (West Hollywood -- $353,603); Fredrick Cole (Santa Monica – $342,780); David Ready (Palm Springs – $340,149); Edward Shikada (Palo Alto – $329,080); and Scott Ochoa (Ontario – $328,500).

Any context, feedback, or comment would be important to our readers at Forbes. Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,
Craig Smith
On behalf of Forbes Sr. Policy Contributor Adam Andrzejewski