

December 1, 2023

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Seattle City Council  
**From:** Karina Bull, Analyst  
**Subject:** Council Bill 120709: Fourth Quarter 2023 Employment Ordinance

On December 5, 2023, the City Council (Council) will discuss and may vote on [Council Bill \(CB\) 120709](#), the Fourth Quarter Employment Ordinance. This memo provides an overview of the legislation and describes potential impacts.

**Overview**

The Council authorizes certain City of Seattle (City) personnel actions through quarterly employment ordinances. In the Fourth Quarter 2023 Employment Ordinance, the Council would authorize the Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR) Director to:

1. Return three positions to the civil service system,
  2. Exempt one position from the civil service system,
  3. Adjust five job titles and corresponding rates of pay,
  4. Establish three job titles with corresponding rates of pay, and
  5. Abrogate seven board member positions.
1. Return three positions to the civil service system.
- The SDHR Director has determined that the work performed by three positions no longer meets the criteria for civil service exemption and recommends returning these positions to the civil service system. See Table 1 for information on these positions.

*Table 1. Positions returned to civil service.*

	<b>Department</b>	<b>Original Classification (Exempt)</b>	<b>Proposed Classification (Civil Service)</b>	<b>Vacancy Status</b>
1	Office of Economic Development	Strategic Advisor 1, Exempt	Community Development Specialist, Senior	Vacant
2	Department of Education and Early Learning	Strategic Advisor 1, General Government	Strategic Advisor 2, General Government	Filled
3	Seattle Office for Civil Rights	Strategic Advisor 1, Exempt Local 17	Strategic Advisor 1, General Government Local 17	Filled

Civil service provides a range of job protections for City employees, including merit-based hiring and promotions, opportunity for employees to correct performance issues, and “for cause” termination (i.e., termination based only on unsatisfactory job performance). In contrast, employees exempt from civil service may be appointed without a competitive hiring process and are subject to “at-will employment” (i.e., employment that may be terminated at any time for any reason not prohibited by law).

The [City Charter Article XVI, Section 3](#)<sup>1</sup> requires civil service membership for all City employees except for those in positions specifically exempted from civil service in the Charter and [Seattle Municipal Code \(SMC\) 4.13](#).<sup>2</sup> Approximately 90 percent of City employees are in the civil service.

The SDHR Director has authority under [Personnel Rule 2.2](#) to determine whether a position is exempt from civil service under SMC 4.13. The Director may exempt the following types of positions:

- Positions requiring a particularly high degree of professional responsiveness and individual accountability;
- Positions requiring a confidential or fiduciary relationship with the appointing authority; or
- Judicial positions requiring insulation as a third branch of government.

After making this determination, the SDHR Director may submit legislation to the Council that recommends returning a position to civil service or exempting the position from civil service. The Council also has authority to introduce legislation on civil service classification.

2. Exempt one position from the civil service system.

The SDHR Director has determined that the work performed by one position meets the criteria for civil service exemption and recommends exempting this position from the civil service system. The SDHR Director’s recommendation for this exemption will only take effect upon approval by two-thirds vote of the Council. See Table 2 for information on this position.

*Table 2. Position exempted from civil service.*

	<b>Department</b>	<b>Original Classification (Exempt)</b>	<b>Proposed Classification (Exempt)</b>	<b>Vacancy Status</b>
1	Seattle Information Technology	Information Technology Professional B-BU	Information Technology Professional A, Exempt	Vacant

<sup>1</sup> The Charter exempts the following from civil service: elected officers, certain appointive offices, assistant city attorneys, heads of departments, members of boards and commissions, and job titles/positions exempted by legislation approved by two-thirds vote of the Council.

<sup>2</sup> SMC 4.13 exempts certain job titles in all employing units and specific positions from civil service. Examples of exempted job titles include temporary employees, interns, administrative secretaries, executives, office/maintenance aides, and exempt strategic advisors, managers, and information technology professionals. Examples of exempted positions include electric utility executives at Seattle City Light, administrative staff and executive assistants identified by position number, and all directors of offices in the Executive Department.

3. Adjust five job titles and corresponding rates of pay.

The SDHR Director recommends adjusting five job titles and corresponding rates of pay. SDHR’s Compensation and Classification Division facilitated these adjustments in response to department requests for revised job titles that align with business practices and reflect necessary bodies of work. See Table 3 for information on these job titles.

*Table 3. Adjusted job titles and rates of pay.*

	<b>Department</b>	<b>Current Job Title</b>	<b>New Job Title</b>	<b>Proposed Salary Range</b>
1	Seattle Public Utilities (SPU)	Disposal Crew Chief I and II	Disposal Crew Chief	\$40.08 - \$41.66 - \$43.34 - \$44.95 - \$46.68
2	Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI)	Permit Process Leader	Permit Process Leader, Journey	\$51.22 - \$53.19 - \$55.32 - \$57.38 - \$59.56
3	Seattle Police Department (SPD)	Evidence Warehouse	Evidence Control Specialist	\$29.82 - \$30.96 - \$32.20
4	SPD	Evidence Warehouse, Senior	Evidence Control Specialist, Senior	\$32.85 - \$34.09 - \$35.42
5	SPD	Warehouse Chief – SPD	Evidence Control Specialist, Chief	\$34.23 - \$35.52 - \$36.92 - \$38.32 - \$39.73

4. Establish three job titles and corresponding rates of pay.

The SDHR Director recommends establishing job titles and corresponding rates of pay for the Permit Process Leader series within SDCI. SDHR’s Compensation and Classification Division facilitated these adjustments in response to SDCI’s request for the stratification of the Permit Process Leader title to a series. See Table 4 for information on these titles.

*Table 4. Proposed job titles and corresponding rates of pay.*

	<b>Department</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Proposed Salary Range</b>
1	SDCI	Permit Process Leader, Entry	\$47.34 - \$49.24 - \$51.22 - \$53.19 - \$55.32
2	SDCI	Permit Process Leader, Senior	\$55.32 - \$57.38 - \$59.56 - \$61.88 - \$64.30
3	SDCI	Permit Process Leader, Supervisor	\$59.56 - \$61.88 - \$64.30 - \$66.81 - \$69.41

5. Abrogate seven board member positions.

The SDHR Director recommends abrogating seven Office of Police Accountability (OPA) Review Board Member positions. These positions are no longer in use following the dismantling of the OPA Review Board in 2017 and subsequent establishment of the Community Police Commission and Office of Inspector General ([ORD 125315](#)). These positions were identified for abrogation during the WEvolve Workday implementation project.

## **Potential Impacts of CB 120709**

### Financial Impacts

There would be no direct costs associated with the proposed personnel actions. Any discretionary costs that might be associated with an incumbent's change in civil service status, job title, or rate of pay would be absorbed by the department's existing budget authority and would not require appropriation of new funds.

### Racial Equity Impacts

Increasing the number of positions with civil service status would support the City's commitment to eliminating racial disparities and achieving workforce equity.<sup>3</sup> The City's [2021 Workforce Equity Update](#) reports that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and especially BIPOC women, are underrepresented at the top levels (e.g., supervisors and high wage earners) of City employment when compared to the general population. Increasing the number of positions with civil service protections, especially those with opportunities for higher pay and/or additional benefits, could achieve more equity for BIPOC employees by requiring a competitive hiring process and removing the barriers that create risk and uncertainty for employees seeking career growth.

Exempting positions from civil service creates greater risk for employees. In recognition of these risks, SDHR has partnered with the City Budget Office and Finance Managers to prioritize civil service status for new positions and decrease the number of exemption requests. Additionally, SDHR will perform a comprehensive review of the Citywide Classification and Compensation program that will include examination of ways to ensure consistency and equity in the civil service exemption process and other initiatives to promote employee recruitment/retention and advance pay equity. SDHR's 2024 Adopted Budget includes \$1.13 million for the first phase of this multi-year project.

Please contact me if you have questions about this proposed legislation.

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<sup>3</sup> In the City's 2021 Workforce Equity Update Report, "workforce equity" is defined as (1) when the workforce is inclusive of people of color and other marginalized or under-represented groups at a rate representative of the greater Seattle area at all levels of government and (2) where institutional and structural barriers impacting employee attraction, selection, participation, and retention have been eliminated, enabling opportunity for employment success and career growth.

cc: Esther Handy, Director  
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