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**From:** DENNIS OLASON <dnaolason@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 6, 2019 10:54 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Subject:** Fwd: RE: Council concerns

----- Original Message -----

From: Samuel Crawford <SCrawford@cityofblaine.com>  
To: 'DENNIS OLASON' <dnaolason@comcast.net>  
Cc: Michael Jones <mjones@cityofblaine.com>  
Date: February 1, 2019 at 3:59 PM  
Subject: RE: Council concerns

Hi Mr. Olason,

The individual will not be disqualified if they win the election. However there will still be a conflict of interest.

The absence is unexcused if the Councilmember does not inform the Mayor, City Manager, or the City Clerk of their absence prior to the meeting, and if the vote to excuse the Councilmember fails.

**BMC - 2.08.027 Excused absences.**

A. Excused absences shall be defined as follows:

1. RCW [35A.12.060](#) provides that a council member shall forfeit his or her office by failing to attend three consecutive regular meetings of the council without being excused by the council.

2. Members of the council may be so excused by complying with this section. The member shall contact the city manager, city clerk, or presiding officer prior to the meeting. The city manager or city clerk shall convey the message to the presiding officer. Following roll call, the presiding officer shall inform the council of the member's absence. The presiding officer shall ask for a motion to excuse the absent member. Upon passage of such motion by a majority of members present, the absent member shall be considered excused and the clerk shall make an appropriate notation in the minutes. When more than one council member is absent, each council member's absence shall be voted on separately.

Thank you,

Samuel Crawford, MPA

City Clerk/Assistant to the City Manager

City of Blaine

435 Martin St., Ste. 3000

Blaine, WA 98230

360-332-8311 Ext. 3320

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**From:** DENNIS OLASON [mailto:dnaolason@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Friday, February 1, 2019 3:44 PM

**To:** Samuel Crawford

**Subject:** RE: Council concerns

Thanks Sam.

It seems strange that an individual can win the election and then be disqualified. Does the other candidate then replace the disqualified individual or is the position vacant and the Council appoints a replacement? Interesting-----

I am still concerned that about absences. The penalty for 3 unexcused absences is the person forfeits their position on the Council. And yet there are no explanations as to what constitutes an unexcused absence. A request is made by the individual to be excused and that is the only information that the other Council members have for granting the request.

I will attempt to explain this to the individuals that aske about absences and compensation.

Dennis

On February 1, 2019 at 12:52 PM Samuel Crawford  
<SCrawford@cityofblaine.com> wrote:

Hi Mr. Olason,

In regards to your email, no one was disqualified from serving on City Council. The three qualifications to be on Council are:

1. Live in the correct Ward
2. Live in Blaine for at least one year prior to being appointed
3. Registered voter

Although there was a conflict of interest with one of the candidates due to their spouse being employed by the City, this is not a disqualifying factor. This candidate is able to run for that same seat in the upcoming 2019 election if they choose to do so. If they win the seat, a conflict of interest will still exist. In terms of adjusting the qualifications to serve on Council, State law dictates these rules. We will not be recommending changes to Council.

Councilmembers vote to excuse absences because a Councilmember will lose their seat if they have three unexcused absences. This is based on City Code (<https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Blaine/#!/Blaine02/Blaine0208.html#2.08.027>), as well as WA law ([RCW 35A.12.060](https://www.wa.gov/legislation/rcw/35A/35A.12.060)). Yes, Councilmembers receive compensation for excused absences. This is based on Blaine Municipal Code 2.68.020 (Ordinance 11-2798): <https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Blaine/#!/Blaine02/Blaine0268.html#2.68>

Thank you,

**Samuel Crawford, MPA**

**City Clerk/Assistant to the City Manager**

**City of Blaine**

**435 Martin St., Ste. 3000**

**Blaine, WA 98230**

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**From:** DENNIS OLASON [mailto:dnaolason@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 29, 2019 12:34 PM  
**To:** Samuel Crawford; Michael Jones; City Council  
**Subject:** Council concerns

The process for the appointment of new Council members raises questions regarding vetting of candidates. Presently, you must live in the Ward where the vacancy exists and be a registered voter. Based on the information Jon Sitkin provided the Council, there are situations that can and did disqualify a candidate. Spouse was employed by the City. There maybe other factors that would disqualify a candidate as well.

In fairness to candidates, the Council needs to update the present policy to include factors that would prevent a candidate from serving on the Council. In August 2019, the primary for three Council position will take place. New vetting rules should be in place prior to the primary.

There are two questions I am continually asked regarding absences by Council members for the bi-monthly Council meetings:

1. Why do the seating members vote to excuse absent member(s)? Their thoughts are if you are not present it speaks for itself.
2. Do absent Council members receive compensation for the meeting they miss? If so, why?

It might be a good time to review the importance of time commitment by Council members. Deciding important issues for the citizens of Blaine should be done by all seven Council members. When only a minimum of four are present there is concern that the position on the Council may not be of prime importance.

Finally, Sam Crawford did a good job of publicizing the names of the candidates for the vacant Council position. There should be, however, included with the name a means for citizens to contact the candidates.

Dennis