



## Council Agenda Item

Meeting Date: September 6, 2022

Agenda Item: City Manager Recruitment

Staff Contact (name, email, phone): Judy Atkinson, [jatkinson@whitewater-wi.gov](mailto:jatkinson@whitewater-wi.gov), 262-473-0150

### BACKGROUND

(Enter the who, what when, where, why)

The City of Whitewater entered into an agreement with GOVHR USA to recruit for the City Manager position. This communication is to discuss and update the Common Council on the process as well as secure dates for Round 1 and Round 2(Final) interviews.

### PREVIOUS ACTIONS – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

(Dates, committees, action taken)

The Common Council agreed to hire GOVHR USA as the recruiter for the City Manager position, vacated by Cameron Clapper on August 12, 2022.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

(If none, state N/A)

Included in the fee.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Council to select Common Council Members to be involved in Round 1 of the Interview Process. Round 2 (Final Interviews) will require all Council Members to be in attendance.

### ATTACHMENT(S) INCLUDED:

1. GOVHR USA Draft Recruitment Calendar dated 8.30.2022
2. City Manager Recruitment Brochure



**RECRUITMENT CALENDAR  
WHITEWATER, WISCONSIN  
CITY MANAGER POSITION**

Date	Task
<b>August 2, 2022</b>	Consultant meets with City officials and staff, and seeks input on candidate's experience, background; organizational challenges, opportunities; community challenges, issues, etc.
<b>August 10, 2022</b>	Consultant submits draft Position Announcement to HR Manager.
<b>August 17, 2022</b>	City officials approve Position Announcement; GovHR places ads.
<b>August 23, 2022</b>	Consultant submits draft Recruitment Profile to HR Manager (and others?) for review and approval.
<b>August 26, 2022</b>	Consultant and City officials finalize Profile (brochure); Recruitment Profile is placed on GovHR USA Website and sent to potential candidates.
<b>September 23, 2022</b>	Deadline for resumes.
<b>September 23 – October 7, 2022</b>	Consultant reviews resumes, interviews candidates, conducts background reviews, due diligence, etc. Reference checks conducted. Consultant narrows field to 8 – 10 candidates for further consideration.
<b>Week of October 10, 2022</b>	Consultant's Recruitment Portfolio received by the City, two-three days prior to next task.
<b>Week of October 10, 2022</b>	Consultant meets with City officials to review the Recruitment Portfolio and discuss interview logistics; City officials choose candidates for interviews.
<b>Week of October 17 or 24, 2022</b>	City conducts 1st Interviews.
<b>One week later</b>	City conducts 2nd Interviews, if necessary.
<b>Mid-December 2022, early January 2023 (depending on length of notice candidates required to give current employer.)</b>	New employee begins employment.

August 30, 2022 Draft



**WHITEWATER, WISCONSIN**  
**CITY MANAGER**



**GovTEMPSUSA**

# CITY MANAGER WHITEWATER, WISCONSIN



## THE POSITION IN BRIEF

The City Manager is Whitewater's chief executive officer in charge of the city's day-to-day operations and budgets of approximately \$24 million. The City Manager reports to a seven-member Common Council, and oversees a workforce of more than 101 full-time employees. Whitewater is home to the University of Wisconsin – Whitewater, with a campus of more than 11,000 students.

## THE CITY

Potawatomi Native Americans once referred to Whitewater as "Minneiska," meaning "white water" named for the white sands of the Whitewater River (now called Whitewater Creek). Europeans first settled in the area in 1836. By 1844 Whitewater had grown to six stores, one grocery, two hotels, three blacksmith shops, a tailor, two cabinet shops, a cooper, a gristmill, and twenty-nine recorded homes.

In 1852, the first railway to cross Wisconsin laid its tracks through Whitewater, spurring industrial growth. Esterly Reaper Works was the largest employer in the 1880s. Various industries fueled Whitewater's growth until 1892, when the Esterly Reaper Works moved to Minnesota, thus marking the end of Whitewater's first industrial era.

During the World Wars and Great Depression, small trade and light industries were at the heart of Whitewater's economy. Agricultural products, including eggs, farm produce, cheese, dairy products, livestock, and small game made up two-thirds of Whitewater's trade at the time.

Meanwhile, the Whitewater Normal School (which later evolved into the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater) continued training teachers. The school made several changes through the years, including diversifying its studies. After World War II, veterans returning from war boosted enrollment, sending the school well on its way to becoming the university it is today. For more about Whitewater's history, see [Discover Whitewater](#).

Today, between the university, manufacturing, and the service industries, Whitewater continues to evolve and grow as a community. With a population of 14,889, the [City of Whitewater](#) is one hour southwest of Milwaukee and 45 minutes southeast of Madison. Whitewater is a talent generator that serves as a regional center for learning and lifelong growth, with a lively year-round cultural and outdoor recreation scene set in a welcoming small-town setting that is easy and accessible. This, along with outstanding schools and year-round recreational activities, make Whitewater the ideal place to live, work and shop.

## SNAPSHOT: WHITEWATER'S DEMOGRAPHICS AND AMENITIES:

Median age of **21** years old (factoring-in student population).

Median household income **\$36,176**

Median home value **\$178,400**

Land area of **9.14** miles.

Low crime rate.

Academic excellence offered by the [Whitewater Unified School District](#).

An abundant supply of competitively-priced water and sewage treatment capacity.

Quick and easy access to Interstate **I-43, I-90** and **Wisconsin Highway 12**. Easy drives to Madison (45 miles) Milwaukee (55 miles) and Chicago (108 miles).

The City supports a public library, the [Irvin L. Young Memorial Library](#), built in 1991. It is undergoing a capital campaign for a renovation and expansion project.

## LOCAL ATTRACTIONS INCLUDE:

- [Treyton's Field of Dreams Baseball Field](#)
- [Frawley Family Cravath Lakefront Amphitheater](#)
- Kettle Moraine State Forest & Ice Age Trail
- Willow Brook Golf Course
- Spring Creek Golf Course
- Cinemas of Whitewater
- [Whitewater Aquatic & Fitness Center](#)

Easily accessible award-winning health care.

Nearby distinguished institutions of higher learning including [University of Wisconsin – Whitewater](#), [University of Wisconsin – Madison](#), and [Blackhawk Technical College](#).

## THE ORGANIZATION AND THE POSITION

The City of Whitewater operates under the Council – Manager form of government. The Common Council is the legislative branch of City government, and is the forum for review and debate of proposed ordinances, resolutions and policies proposed by the standing Council committees and boards and commissions.

Council members are elected each April to serve two-year terms. There are five Aldermanic district council positions and two Council Member at Large positions. Odd number districts are up for election in odd years and seats for even-numbered districts are up for election in even-numbered years. One Council Member-at-Large seat is open each calendar year.

The Council President serves as the Common Council’s legislative leader, and presides at Council meetings. There are a number of boards and commissions that provide policy input to the Common Council and are comprised of citizen members and alderperson representation.

According to the City’s municipal code, “the City Manager shall have charge of the executive branch of the city government and shall possess and exercise all executive and administrative powers imposed and conferred by general law or special charter upon the mayor and common council and upon the various boards, commissions, and officers in force in this city at the time of its reorganization under Chapter 64 of the Wisconsin Statutes, in addition thereto, have such powers as are imposed and conferred upon him under said Chapter 64 and by state law.”

As the City’s chief executive officer, the City Manager leads, plans, organizes and directs the administration of the City of Whitewater toward fulfilling the goals and policies of the Common Council. The position assists the Common Council by facilitating the establishment of goals and proposing alternative strategies for their accomplishment. The City Manager directs the use of human and fiscal resources toward accomplishment of City goals. The city has a history of long-tenured city managers, with the most recent serving more than 10 years, resigning to take another administrative post in a larger Wisconsin jurisdiction.

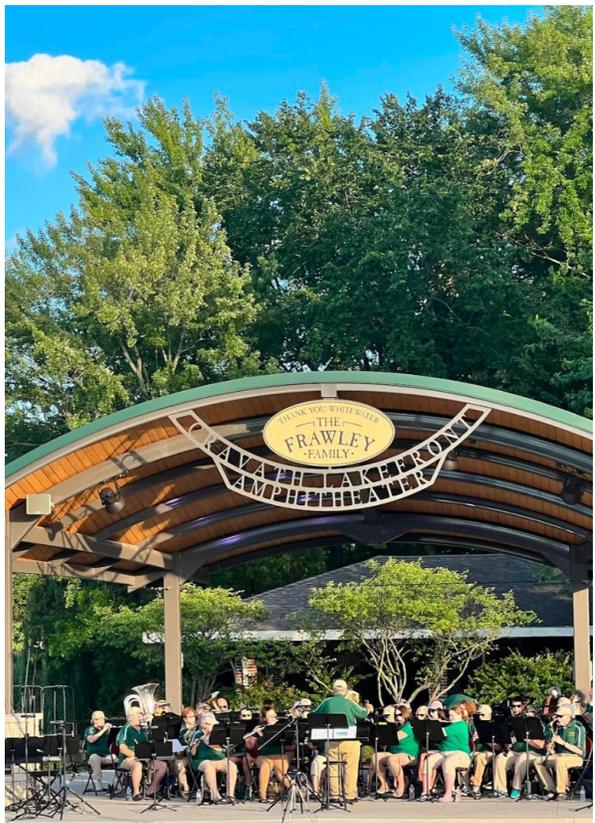
Whitewater is a full-service municipality including police, fire, rescue and EMS, public works and engineering, utilities (including water, wastewater, and storm water), library, parks and recreation, neighborhood services, and administrative services. The City has approximately 101 full-time employees, and a \$24 million combined budget. The City holds an A bond rating (S&P), has five TIDs and maintains a fund balance of more than 24%.



## EXPECTATIONS AND PROJECTS

- Over the years the City's provision of fire and EMS services through a paid-on-call model, in concert with neighboring communities, has strained the system's reliability. Demands on emergency medical services have significantly increased, while support from the other jurisdictions has declined. A number of alternative models have been explored, with the City concluding that its best alternative is to migrate to a paid-on-premise model, coupled with the City taking it over as a City department.
- In a recent analysis, City staff has said that in order to provide reliable Fire/EMS response, \$1,470,000 in additional funding is necessary to fund a paid-on-premise staffing model. The city's portion of this increase is \$1,100,000, with the remainder made up by the other jurisdictions. The increased cost is more than can be supported within existing revenue sources and the City is able to levy this amount only with the express approval of voters by referendum.
- Referendum approval will permit ongoing Fire/EMS response and capital equipment replacement. Approval will increase the estimated city property tax rate to Whitewater properties; an annual \$134.00 increase to the total tax bill for the average Whitewater residential property valued at \$206,000 is estimated.
- City staff is working with a communications firm to effectively educate voters about the need to increase the levy to fund Fire/EMS services. All have acknowledged that should the November 2022 referendum fail an alternate budget for FY 2023 will be required. Given that the total 2023 General Fund Budget adopted in fall of 2021 was \$10,417,000, the \$1.1 million necessary to ensure Fire/EMS response represents 10.6% of the total budget. Reallocation of resources to support these new Fire/EMS costs within existing revenue sources would significantly impact other municipal services. Hence, the next City Manager will be challenged with whatever decision is made by the community requiring an adept hand at integrating a new service to the community that may, or may not, lean heavily on the resources of other City departments.
- Whatever the outcome of the November 2022 referendum, as discussed above, the City's general fund and its utilities are in a good financial position, with an unrestricted general fund balance of around 24%. For the first time last year the City put into place a biennial budget, covering fiscal years (also CYs) 2022 and 2023.
- The City's finances, not unlike most Wisconsin municipalities, are tested by headwinds including limited sources of new revenue and a heavy reliance on property taxes. In addition, the City has a number of active TIF districts. The next City Manager can expect to work closely with the elected officials and financial team on seeking out new sources of revenue, critically assessing the city's expenditures, strategically planning for the city's long-term financial sustainability, and continuing to find ways to most efficiently deliver City services.





## EXPECTATIONS AND PROJECTS

- The next City Manager can expect to work cooperatively with elected officials, the Whitewater Community Development Authority (CDA), the Whitewater business community, and other stakeholders on matters related to economic development and redevelopment, as well as business retention and attraction, as the position plays a key role in the development of the community. The City's Economic Development Director position is vacant (the position also serves as the CDA's executive director), and key issues such as the City's need for more housing that covers a range of price points, the lack of a local grocery store, and addressing a high amount of renter-occupied housing, will be at the top of the list for the next City Manager.
- Though other economic challenges present themselves – many of the City's population are classified as low-to-moderate income coupled by a recent influx of immigrants, and some of the housing stock is in need of attention – other factors such as low unemployment and an energized business environment help to partially mitigate these conditions. In positioning the city for success in this area, the new City Manager will be also challenged to keep an eye on the broader implications that economic development brings to the City's finances, staffing, resources and its infrastructure.
- The new City Manager joins a management team whose tenure with the city varies. Some are seasoned, long-tenured employees while other department leaders are relatively new to their position and the organization. The next City Manager will find a team of professionals eager for a leader that is collaborative, fair-minded, and evenhanded. Steady, mature and professional leadership is desired by the Common Council and the management team. In addition, an ability to develop a big-picture view of the organization and community, while also being fluent on operational details, will be valuable for success in the position.
- The next City Manager should be comfortable having a visible and embedded role in the City and the organization, easily interacting with and embracing a wide spectrum of residents, individuals, community businesses and organizations.
- The City's desire for strong intergovernmental relationships within the region is keenly important. The next City Manager can expect to play a leading role in developing and cultivating close working alliances with state, county and municipal partners and neighbors.
- The City has a positive relationship with the University of Wisconsin – Whitewater, the fourth largest school in the UW system, with a student population exceeding 11,000. The good rapport reflects ongoing communication and responsiveness. Yet, not uncommon in municipalities that host colleges, campus growth and student activities sometime add challenges to municipal resources. And though the State of Wisconsin provides a payment to the City to compensate for municipal services provided to facilities that are owned by state agencies, recent payment of the Municipal Service Payment to the City (a formula-driven program frozen by the state since 2011) has fallen short by two-thirds. That program is overseen by the state, and not local campuses. Yet, by all accounts, the university is a central component to the local economy. All told, the next City Manager is expected to cultivate a high level of communication and collaboration and to maintain strong ties with the University by working collaboratively, confidently, creatively and objectively with University officials.



## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

### Must Haves

- A bachelor's degree or any equivalent combination of training and experience that brings the knowledge, abilities, skills and leadership to the management of a complex organization.
- A Master's degree in public administration, business administration or other advanced executive level training such as ICMA credentialing.
- At least eight years of increasingly responsible municipal administrative experience.
- Proven managerial and interpersonal skills to lead a dynamic organization in an active, engaged, and highly-educated community.
- Exceptional communication skills.
- Financial, analytical and budget management skills to lead a financially fit organization.
- Significant career success in building collaborative, effective relationships across departments.

### Management Style and Traits

- Have a background of professional and personal integrity, honesty and of leading/motivating personnel by example.
- Have the maturity, self-confidence, and strength of professional convictions to provide administrative insights and administrative counsel to the Common Council and Staff, being able to firmly and diplomatically present professional views and carry out administrative decisions in a timely, professional, and impartial manner.
- Possess a track record of addressing race, ethnic and culturally based issues in a thoughtful and progressive manner. Be someone who can build bridges and bring people together.
- Be an articulate, effective and transparent communicator, both orally and in writing. Be a proactive communicator with the Common Council, reporting at least weekly to the Council through a variety of means.
- Be someone who is comfortable listening to and talking with a wide spectrum of people; someone who can clearly and concisely present written and oral information to decision makers; willingly share information as appropriate.
- Be a strong administrative leader and be able to help City Staff to identify, analyze, prioritize, and thoroughly deliberate and address administrative and management issues which are critical toward meeting both current and longer range needs of the overall community.
- Be comfortable in delegating responsibility and authority to professional staff as a team player while remaining informed and conversant on the status of all programs and projects.
- Possess well developed organizational skills with the ability to balance numerous projects and issues.
- Be a "people person," sincerely personable, patient, calm and accessible. Have a sense of humor.
- Be one who can establish trust quickly with others and one who can relate to all elements of the community.
- Promote a strong, service-oriented, "customer relations" approach by all employees in dealing with citizenry.
- Be proactive, anticipatory and innovative. Possess an open mind and an open heart in dealing with the City's complex and challenging issues that sometimes compete with one another.

## COMPENSATION, BENEFITS AND THE ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE

The starting salary range is: \$110,000 – \$130,000 DOQ, plus exceptional benefits. The city is part of the [Wisconsin Retirement System](#).

The organization prides itself on its commitment to customer service and teamwork. Staff has a lot of daily interaction with one another and report strong interdepartmental relations. The city's organization is lean and city staff possesses a high-output work ethic.

The Common Council possesses a strong respect for City staff's work. Among themselves, elected officials are collegial and respectful of differing perspectives and points of view.

## HOW TO APPLY

Candidates should apply by September 23, 2022 with resume, cover letter and contact information for five work-related references to [www.GovHRjobs.com](http://www.GovHRjobs.com) to the attention of Lee Szymborski, Senior Vice President, GovHR USA, 630 Dundee Road, #225, Northbrook, IL 60062. Tel: 847-380-3240. The City is an Equal Opportunity Employer

