

CITY OF WAUKEGAN, IL

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE



EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT



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CITY OF WAUKEGAN DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

Waukegan, IL (89,369) offers a diversity of cultures, religions and ethnic heritages to its residents and business community. Waukegan is one of five major cities located on the western shore of Lake Michigan; it is located at the top of the State of Illinois. The City is focused on professionalizing staff to guide efforts and offer consistency in service delivery. The community is seeking a highly capable and experienced Finance Director who will provide leadership and offer support and fiscal guidance to the Mayor and other City officials, Executive Team and staff. The City has a priority to ensure strategic and much needed investment in infrastructure. As a large, complex full-service, home rule organization consisting of 468 employees and a FY23 annual budget of \$233.4M, candidates will lead innovation, identify key performance indicators, and recommend new methods and approaches, policy and programmatic changes to ensure continuous improvement within the finance department. The Finance department oversees the development and administration of the annual budget and all financial operations including Licensing, Water Utility billing and Finance and Accounting. The Director also serves as a member of the City's negotiation team for collective bargaining and is a member of the Executive team.

CITY ORGANIZATION

The City of Waukegan, a home rule community, is the seat of Lake County government, located 45 miles north of Chicago and 60 miles south of Milwaukee with a population of approximately 90,000, and a labor force of more than 50,000. Waukegan is a full-service municipal government with a full-time elected Mayor and nine Aldermen elected to represent wards. The City Clerk and City Treasurer are also elected. The city provides police, fire, emergency dispatch, and public works services to its residents, as well as maintaining a water plant and providing other important municipal services such as code enforcement and economic development. The City with 468 employees and a total of 6 collective bargaining agreements, has five functional areas: Building, Planning & Development; Central Administrative Services; Fire & Medical Emergency; Police & Emergency Dispatch; and Public Works, Engineering, Water & Sewer. The Finance Department is within Central Administrative Services, and the Finance Director reports directly to the Mayor or designee. As the leading elected official, the Mayor has indicated strong support for the professionalism and integrity of the staff. Almost one-half of the Executive Team members are newly hired or recently promoted and focused on raising the capacity of the organization to offer high quality and reliable services to the residents and businesses. With the new AmericanPlace Casino and other lakefront development projects, Waukegan is poised for progress.



WAUKEGAN AT A GLANCE

Waukegan, located in Lake County is centered between the City of Chicago and Milwaukee at the northeast corner of Illinois. With its ideal location on the western shore of Lake Michigan, the city offers to community members an array of schools and a nationally recognized park district that focuses on improving the health and wellness of residents. There is a wide variety of housing options with a significant number of single family and rental units to choose among to suit all housing needs. Residents enjoy easy access to major transportation systems and a vital downtown and thriving business environment. Waukegan is the county seat for Lake County. The City has a long history of welcoming a diversity of cultures and ethnicities. The Waukegan Arts Council offers residents quality literary, performing and visual arts programming among Waukegan's many long-standing and emerging arts and cultural venues. The community also has easy access to excellent medical facilities, major shopping centers, and outstanding restaurants.

KEY FACTS ABOUT WAUKEGAN

Population: 89,369

Median Age: 33.1

Households: 29,981

Median Household Income: \$53,778

EAV 2020: \$1,356,204,346

Language Spoken at Home: English only (44.9%); Spanish (49.3%); Other (5.8%)

To learn more about Waukegan, click [here](#) for the City's website.

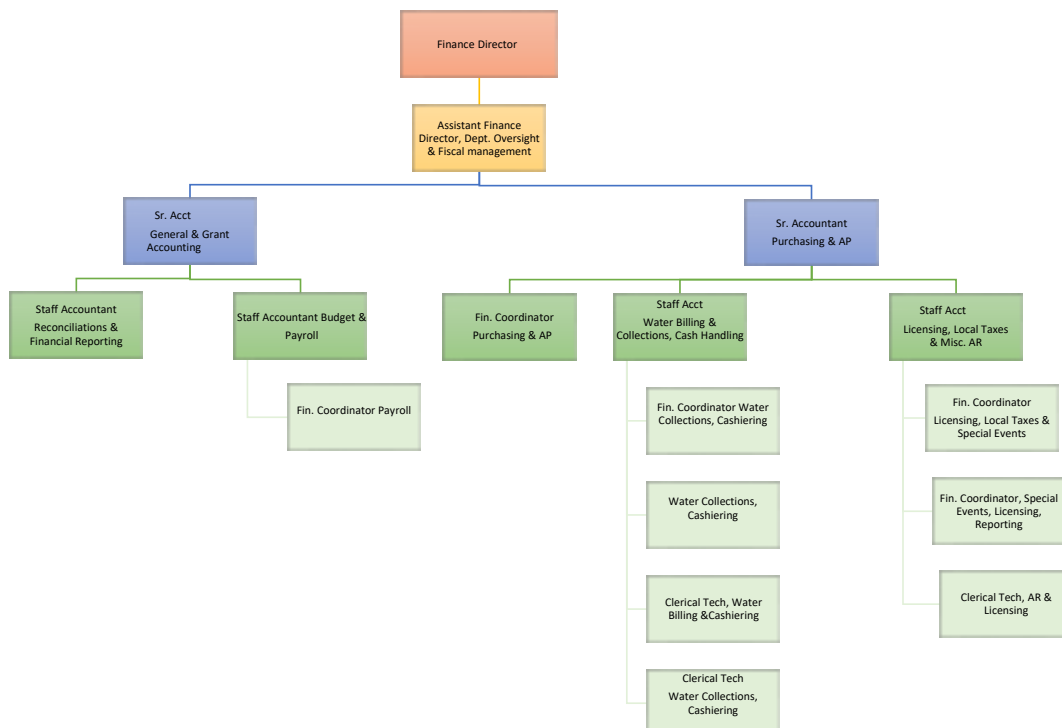
THE DEPARTMENT

The Finance Director will supervise a Department committed to fiscal responsibility demonstrating leadership over licensing, water utility billing and the Finance and Accounting department. The new director will lead innovation and implement updated local government financial best practices and methods. The Department benefits from an eager and committed team of 16 total employees (Director, Assistant Director, two Senior Accountants charged with oversight of general accounting and purchasing, four Staff Accountants, five Finance Coordinators, and three Clerical Technicians) who will benefit from a team-oriented, supportive, and accessible mentor to ensure assist with professional growth and foster strong customer service internally and externally. The Department provides: accounting and financial reporting, budgeting and long-term financial planning, capital financing, cash management and investment of City funds, payment of bills, payroll, utility billing, licensing and collection of revenue. The staff assists residents with payments for City services and programs, including water, parking permits, vehicle stickers and closing letters. The May 1, 2023 budget calls for expenditures of \$233.4 million inclusive of planned capital and debt expense of \$50 million. The General Fund is \$91.6 million. A significant portion of the revenues for this year include \$5.7m in assorted fees related to the \$500 million Casino construction.

The Director will serve as a key partner to the City Executive team members assisting in the development of long-term financial capital improvements and other strategies to address the City's expenditure needs. The new Director serves as the liaison to the secretary to the City Council's Finance and Purchasing Committee where financial policy issues are discussed and recommendations are developed for the City Council including items related to procurement, contracts, tax levies, bonds and fees.

The Finance Director will be regularly relied upon to interact and share their knowledge, guidance and financial counsel with the City Council through oral presentations. Offering well-timed information that anticipates questions, educates and offers insight into municipal finance to promote thoughtful interchanges and feedback will be helpful. The Finance Director will demonstrate an ability to foster a high degree of trust and confidence in their department's expertise. Establishing collaborative and productive relationships with internal and external stakeholders to ensure a high degree of credibility and demonstrate financial integrity is a must. Demonstrating an understanding of the dynamics and cycles of government is essential.

Finance Department Organizational Structure



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The City's is looking for an energetic finance professional who will assess and develop strategic improvements to the financial operations and methods. The department offers many opportunities and projects to bolster the financial strength and increase efficiency of the village operations. The successful candidate will address the following challenges and opportunities:

Address process improvements to create a high level of performance, responsiveness, and accountability in a fast paced, quality driven organization. Assist in refining priorities and programs aligning demands with resources (human capital and financial resources).

Focus on employee development and mentoring - fostering professional development, ensuring the Department provides accessible, friendly support and guidance in local government financial management. Create a culture of engagement, support and problem solving within Finance and across other Departments.

Develop a strategy for the capital project needs of the community including new facilities, technology and other equipment.

Technology: Embrace change and focus on efficiency; improve integration and implement new methods to transition from outdated approaches to improve reliability, accuracy, and customer service.

Provide effective financial and cash management of a multi-year capital improvement program; effectively identify financial resources to fund capital project needs, including having solid knowledge of debt management principles, implementation and strategies; identify a means to consistently address technology needs.

Provide steady, resilient guidance and approaches to budget and financial strategies to elected officials and the Executive Team; collaborate to develop strong alternate positions; assure a calm response and offer innovative options to challenging situations.



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Knowledge, Abilities and Skills:

- Possess a Bachelor's Degree in finance or accounting; a Master's Degree (MBA or MPA), CPA or CPFO is desirable. Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning.
- Have a minimum of seven years of increasingly responsible experience in public accounting and finance, including at least two years of administrative responsibility.
- Strong organizational leadership, with excellent strategic management, problem-solving and personnel skills. Offer support and partner with other Departments on their financial needs.
- Strong understanding of municipal budgeting, fund accounting, asset management/depreciation and financial reporting; the ability to enhance budgeting, accounting, utility billing and financial reporting practices to ensure an understanding of the consequences of policy decisions on fiscal sustainability.
- Experience with the financial aspects of municipal operations including enterprise funds particularly utilities, and permit fees; experience with alternative revenue sources.
- Possess strong financial management abilities in budget development and implementation, revenue and expenditure forecasting, long-term capital improvement financing, debt management, and cash investments; knowledge of Illinois laws with respect to tax increment financing (TIF), and drug forfeiture asset accounting is a plus.
- Have the ability to diplomatically challenge policy leaders when recommending and debating financial issues to ensure the best options are considered and discussed. In turn, have the humility to support final decisions made by other parties if they are not consistent with recommendations.
- Knowledge of rules and regulations governing municipal financial management in Illinois, including generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).
- An approachable leadership style that is steeped in collaboration, communication, and ethical and transparent management. The next Finance Director must be a strategic thinker with strong communication skills to ensure continued delivery of high quality, efficient, and effective municipal services.
- An ability to communicate the status of municipal finances to the community and elected officials using graphs, charts and written communication. The new Director will be able to communicate complex financial matters in an understandable manner to a wide variety of stakeholders.
- Experience in team-building, consensus building, and executive leadership collaboration with the ability to effectively engage elected and appointed officials in a way that fosters complex problem-solving to address the City's financial health.
- Have a strong knowledge and experience with implementation of computer technology and financial application software as they affect the Finance Department and other City Departments.
- Value diversity, equity and inclusion recognizing that a welcoming and inclusive culture is imperative to attract and retain employees resulting in the provision of high quality, equitable service.



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE WILL BE

- An exemplary finance professional demonstrating responsiveness, personal and professional integrity, inspiring the trust and confidence of co-workers and the public. An excellent project manager who can effectively prioritize and work effectively to achieve positive results for the organization.
- A Finance Director or an experienced Assistant Finance Director in an organization of similar complexity to Waukegan.
- An active participant in the City leadership team engaging in continuous improvement; an individual who can serve as a devil's advocate and support the decisions of the organization. An individual who will diplomatically challenge policy directions that impact financial sustainability; a decision maker who will provide direction, coach and mentor and advise fellow employees.
- A mentor and creative problem-solver, encouraging and empowering employees to find new and better ways to get work done, while also applying, maintaining, and respecting the regulatory framework that guides local government finance. The candidate will have a genuine passion for public service, sharing enthusiasm for community engagement and customer service.
- A valued member of the City's management team, maintaining effective working relationships with elected officials, boards, City administration, all levels of employees, vendors and unions. Proven interpersonal and human relations skills, and adeptness at interacting with a wide variety of people possessing various attitudes and positions are all important and desirable qualities for the next Director.





COMPENSATION

The full salary range is \$127,214 to \$171,213 with an anticipated starting salary of \$146,000 to \$152,000 +/- DOQ. The City offers a competitive benefits package including membership in the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, and an optional 457b deferred compensation program. Residency is not required.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested candidates should apply by November 28, 2022, with a cover letter, resume, and contact information of at least five (5) professional references to www.GovHRjobs.com to the attention of Katy Rush, Vice President, GovHR USA, 630 Dundee Road, Suite 225 Northbrook, IL 60062. Questions regarding the City of Waukegan Finance Director position can be directed to Ms. Rush:

Katy Rush, Vice President, GovHRUSA
Tel: 847-380-3240 x.122

The City of Waukegan is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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www.GovHRUSA.com