



# WAUKESHA, WISCONSIN FIRE CHIEF

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## THE POSITION IN BRIEF

The Waukesha Fire Department provides the city with emergency medical services, fire prevention and inspections, fire suppression, juvenile fire education, special rescue services and other community programs. The Fire Chief oversees the fire department's day-to-day operations and manages a budget of about \$16.4 million. The position is a key part of the overall senior leadership team for the city with a focus on a "dedication to enhancing the community's quality of life through efficient, effective and responsive government."

## THE COMMUNITY

The City of Waukesha, with a population of 71,158, is an award-winning and growing community located west of Milwaukee. The City has experienced considerable residential, commercial and employment growth. Nationally recognized as one of the "100 Best Places to Live" in the U.S., and in 2020 and 2021, the City was named as one of the "Top Workplaces" by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

Waukesha is the seventh largest city in the state with a daytime population of approximately 100,000 people. It is located in one of the fastest growing and wealthiest counties in Wisconsin and its commercial and residential boom is expected to continue.





## THE COMMUNITY (continued)

The City has a thriving historic downtown boasting concerts, a farmer's market, scenic Riverwalk, and festivals. The location on the river, historic buildings, and strong artist culture all contribute to the unique character of the City. Waukesha also includes great neighborhoods, excellent schools, and an award-winning park system with recreation programs for the whole family.

There are 31,280 households in Waukesha. A wide variety of housing sizes, styles and price ranges are available throughout the community from older structures to new construction home sites. The median household income is \$65,688; median home values, per market reports, are approximately \$310,000. Waukesha's population is approximately 84% white, 12% Hispanic and 4% African American. The neighboring City of Milwaukee has more than 600,000 residents, and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Statistical Area has a population of more than 1.5 million.

Education is a top priority for the Waukesha community. There are excellent public and private schools from K through 12 in the City. The City is home to the state's oldest college, Carroll University (est. 1848). Waukesha County Technical College also serves the City. The greater Milwaukee area offers a wide variety of higher education opportunities. Among among them include the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee and Marquette University.

Diverse recreational opportunities abound in Waukesha and the surrounding area. The City manages 45 parks and 1,100 acres of open land. There are hundreds of miles of biking and hiking trails in and around the City. Waukesha is within minutes of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. There are 12 golf courses and 77 lakes within the County. Waukesha hosts a lively arts community ranging from the Wisconsin Philharmonic and Waukesha Civic Theatre to the Waukesha Choral Union and free summer concerts at the Les Paul Band shell.

For more about activities and events, see [Visit Waukesha](#).

For more about the city's organization, [see this link](#).





## CITY GOVERNMENT

The City of Waukesha is an independent, full-service municipality governed by a [Mayor](#) elected at large and a 15-member [Common Council](#), each elected by district. The Mayor serves as the City's chief executive officer. The Common Council, through standing committees, provides policy oversight of City activities, services, and programs.

The City Administrator is responsible for administering the day-to-day operations of the City, providing leadership and direction to the City's management staff which include the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Assessor, City Clerk/Treasurer, Public Works Director, Community Development Director, Finance Director, Library Director, Director of Information Services, Cemetery Director, Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director and Human Resources Director. The City also has an elected City Attorney and Municipal Judge.

The retiring Fire Chief has been with the city for more than 36 years, the last 10 as Chief. Statutorily the Fire Chief reports to the Mayor yet works closely with the City Administrator. For hiring, discipline and other employment matters, the Chief works with the Police and Fire Commission. The city's elected officials and management team enjoy strong and mutually respectful work relationships.







## OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

Waukesha is in excellent financial condition with an AA2 bond rating and a fund balance exceeding 28%. Like all Wisconsin municipalities, however, the city's finances are significantly challenged by various parameters guiding the generation of new sources of revenues, as well as State of Wisconsin tax levy limits.

- The department has approximately 117 personnel with about one hundred of those assigned to shifts on a California schedule; 35 are EMT's and 65 are Paramedics. Shift personnel are represented by IAFF Local 407.
- As a modern all-hazards agency, the department responded to over 9,200 incidents in 2023 including technical rescue within the city and region. The city provides their own emergency telecommunications 9-1-1 services.
- Approximately 80% of the department's responses are EMS related. The department is proud to be the first paramedic-level provider in Waukesha County with an origination date of 1975 and one of the oldest programs in the State of Wisconsin.
- The department also focuses on the prevention of incidents through a robust and well-developed Community Risk Reduction plan.
- The department has an ISO Class 2 rating. Waukesha is a registered agency with the Center for Public Safety Excellence for accreditation.
- Dispatch is handled by the City's Police Department.

The next fire chief will be an integral part of conversations related to operationally effective financial strategies with a focus on maintaining the excellent level of service enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The fire chief can expect to continue supporting a robust five-year [Community Investment Plan \(CIP\)](#) that is supported by the community and Common Council. The city is dedicated to continuous improvement. The next fire chief will be encouraged to nurture and foster what is, by many accounts, already a collegial and high-output organizational culture both in the department and the city.

In late 2018, the Common Council adopted a [Strategic Plan](#). As a road map for the future, the Plan has helped establish goals, objectives, and strategies to help make significant and measurable improvements for the city. It has been a successful and respected guide, as it has been reflected in the various policies adopted by the Common Council and embodied in the City's budget, Community Investment Plan (CIP), the Master Plan, and department level strategic initiatives.

The Fire Chief position offers the ideal candidate the chance to build on a strong tradition of excellence. Operating from five modern fire stations, Waukesha's department is a progressive, all hazards' fire/EMS (ALS) service for an area of approximately twenty-five square miles, and a daytime population of more than 100,000. The department places a high-level value in treating people with dignity, continually striving to deliver service that is effective, efficient, and equitable supporting and promoting the highest quality of life in Waukesha to its residents and visitors.





**THE FIRE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION:**  
To safely protect the lives and properties of our community.

**VALUES AND ETHICS:**  
"We place a high value in treating people with dignity. We continuously strive to deliver service that is effective, efficient, and equitable to all areas of our organization. As part of the Greater Waukesha Community, we strive to provide the highest level of service to contribute to the quality of life in Waukesha."

**COMMITMENTS:**

- Honesty and integrity
- Risk Management
- "We will risk a lot to save lives."
- "We will risk some to save lives that may already be lost, and the property of our citizens."
- "We will risk nothing to save that which is already lost."
- "Wowing" customer service
- Respect for Diversity
- High Performance
- Openness and Teamwork
- Planning for a safer future
- Coordination and Cooperation with all levels of government







## CANDIDATE QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

- The city is seeking an experienced, innovative, collaborative fire/EMS leader with demonstrated managerial, interpersonal and customer service skills. Successful candidates will be able to demonstrate a balance of commitment to the organization as well as the senior management team of the city with a genuine confidence and approachable personality to residents, business and governmental leaders. This position requires the ability to act with honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, and dependability at all times.
- It is particularly important that the next Fire Chief be an integral, engaged, and transparent leader of the Fire Department, with a strong background in modern fire, EMS, Community Risk Reduction, emergency management and all hazards' practices.
- The new Fire Chief must understand the need to use data for problem solving, assessing community risk and vulnerabilities with exceptional computer skills.
- The Fire Chief should have a positive track record of strong bargaining relations with proven experience in fostering collaboration with Bargaining Unit members.
- The ability to mentor and foster leadership roles within the staff, succession planning, and a global vision of the community's needs and vision are critical. Creativity and the ability to guide and balance change is a must.
- The capability to be an active participant in operations and training to safely function as a command officer on incident scenes.
- The ability to develop strong relationships with surrounding Fire/EMS agencies supporting regional response planning and programs.
- The next Fire Chief will also have a demonstrated record of fairness, transparency, and consistency in the administration of Departmental policies and procedures and the willingness to address issues in a positive and timely manner. This position requires well-developed writing, public speaking skills, and the utmost integrity.

## Qualified candidates should have:

- A bachelor's degree in public safety administration or related field from an accredited college or university. A master's degree preferred.
- Experience in a managerial role in the fire and emergency medical services, including a minimum of five years of experience in a progressively responsible command/supervisory positions at the rank of Assistant Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, or equivalent duties and responsibilities commensurate with the position.
- The successful completion of the Executive Fire Officer Program offered by the National Fire Academy, and/or Chief Fire Officer Designation is desired.
- Experience as an innovative, collaborative fire/EMS leader with demonstrated staff management, interpersonal and customer service skills.
- The ability to develop strong relationships with surrounding Fire/EMS agencies for the most comprehensive and balanced approach to high-level services for the residents of the city.
- Well-developed writing and public speaking skills and the utmost integrity.

## COMPENSATION, BENEFITS AND THE ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE

A starting salary range is \$119,000 - \$140,000 +/- DOQ, and an excellent benefit package is offered. The city offers a competitive benefits package including health, dental, and vision insurance, HSA, PTO, cell phone, and participation in the Wisconsin Retirement System.

The Mayor and Common Council possess a strong respect for City staff's work. Among themselves, elected officials are collegial and respectful of differing perspectives and points of view. The city seeks to attract the most talented people from a diverse candidate pool. The City of Waukesha is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

## HOW TO APPLY

Candidates interested in applying for the position should submit their résumé and cover letter electronically by April 8, 2024, along with contact information for five (5) work-related and/or professional references to [GovHRjobs.com](http://GovHRjobs.com). Questions may be addressed to Lee Szymborski, Senior Vice-President @ (847)380-3197 or T.E. Sashko, Vice-President @ (847)380-3240x123.

