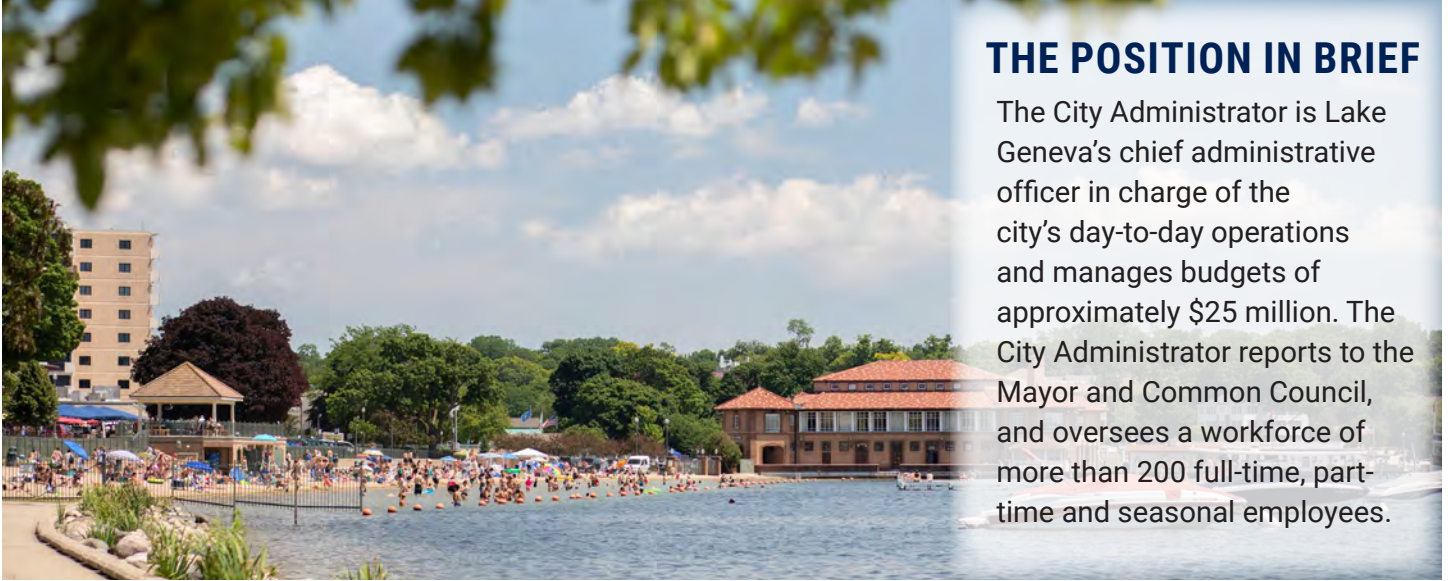




# LAKE GENEVA, WISCONSIN CITY ADMINISTRATOR



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## THE POSITION IN BRIEF

The City Administrator is Lake Geneva's chief administrative officer in charge of the city's day-to-day operations and manages budgets of approximately \$25 million. The City Administrator reports to the Mayor and Common Council, and oversees a workforce of more than 200 full-time, part-time and seasonal employees.

## THE CITY

A beautiful resort community with more than 20 downtown buildings on Main Street listed on the National Register of Historic Places, [Lake Geneva](#) has a population of 8,277 and is 75 miles northwest of Chicago and 45 miles southwest of Milwaukee. The City is proud of its small-town appeal, historical sites and vibrant residential neighborhoods. Recognized as "One of a Dozen Distinctive Destinations" by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the City sits on the eastern shore of Geneva Lake in Walworth County.

The first record of European settlers discovering Geneva Lake was a party traveling in 1831 between Chicago (then known as Fort Dearborn) and Portage (Fort Winnebago), an area not previously noted on the river and lake highways mapped by frontier pioneers. After the Civil War, the railroad from Chicago made Lake Geneva a summer resort destination for industrialists and wealthy families from Chicago. Lake Geneva became known as the Newport (RI) of the West, with the area's growth and reputation as a respite stimulated by the Chicago Fire of 1871 when many families retreated to their summer homes while Chicago was rebuilt. As stately homes and mansions have been built on the lake since the 1850s, the City has long-established itself as a resort and prestigious, independent community.

Today, the City which lies in the triangle of population and development influence of Chicago, Rockford and Milwaukee, swells to three times its year-round population during the summer months. The City provides a range of services to a diverse group of year-round residents and visitors.

The focal point of the community, Geneva Lake, is accessible to the public and covers an area of approximately 8.6 square miles, or more than 5,500 acres. The lake is 7.5 miles long and is 144 feet at its deepest. Geologists believe that it is a filled-in basin formed from a receding glacier. Lakeshore attractions include Big Foot Beach State Park operated by the State of Wisconsin, Lake Geneva Yacht Club, Aurora University's George Williams campus, and the Yerkes Observatory which resides in one of the three communities located on Geneva Lake, the Village of Williams Bay. In addition to Williams Bay and Lake Geneva, the third municipality on the lake is Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake.

Community spirit and activities are bountiful in Lake Geneva. The community is home to close to three dozen hotels and resorts and is host to a wide variety of year-round activities and community events. See [Visit Lake Geneva](#) for more information.





## THE ORGANIZATION

The City, incorporated first as a village in 1856, then as a city in 1886, is governed by a Mayor and eight Aldermen. Two Aldermen are elected to each of four districts on a non-partisan basis for staggered two-year terms. The City also has an elected Judge, Attorney and Treasurer.

The City employs a full-time professional City Administrator along with well-qualified Department Heads to professionally manage the City's affairs and public services. Three City Administrators have served the City over the last 23 years, with the most recent one retiring in late 2024.

Major areas of operation include the Department of Public Works and Utilities with water distribution and wastewater systems, Streets Department, Police Department, Fire Department, Building and Zoning Department, and other professional support staff. The City is also served by a public library, a recreation program operated in collaboration with the Geneva Lakes Family YMCA, and economic development efforts in partnership with the Lake Geneva Economic Development Corporation.

The City employs approximately 99 Full-Time, 81 Part-Time and 43 Seasonal employees. The City Administrator manages budgets (general fund and enterprise) of more than \$25 million. The City's equalized value is more than \$1.9 billion.

### A snapshot of Lake Geneva's demographics and amenities:

Average age 45 years old

White 90%, Hispanic/Latino 9% and African American 1%

Median household income, \$62,883

Median value of a Lake Geneva home, \$290,800

Land area of 6.87 square miles

Low crime rate

Community residents have a choice of both public and private elementary and high schools. Lake Geneva is served by the [Lake Geneva Joint One School District](#) which consists of one middle school and three elementary schools, and the Lake Geneva-Genoa City Union High School District, which consists of Badger High School.

An abundant supply of inexpensive water, energy, and sewage treatment capacity.

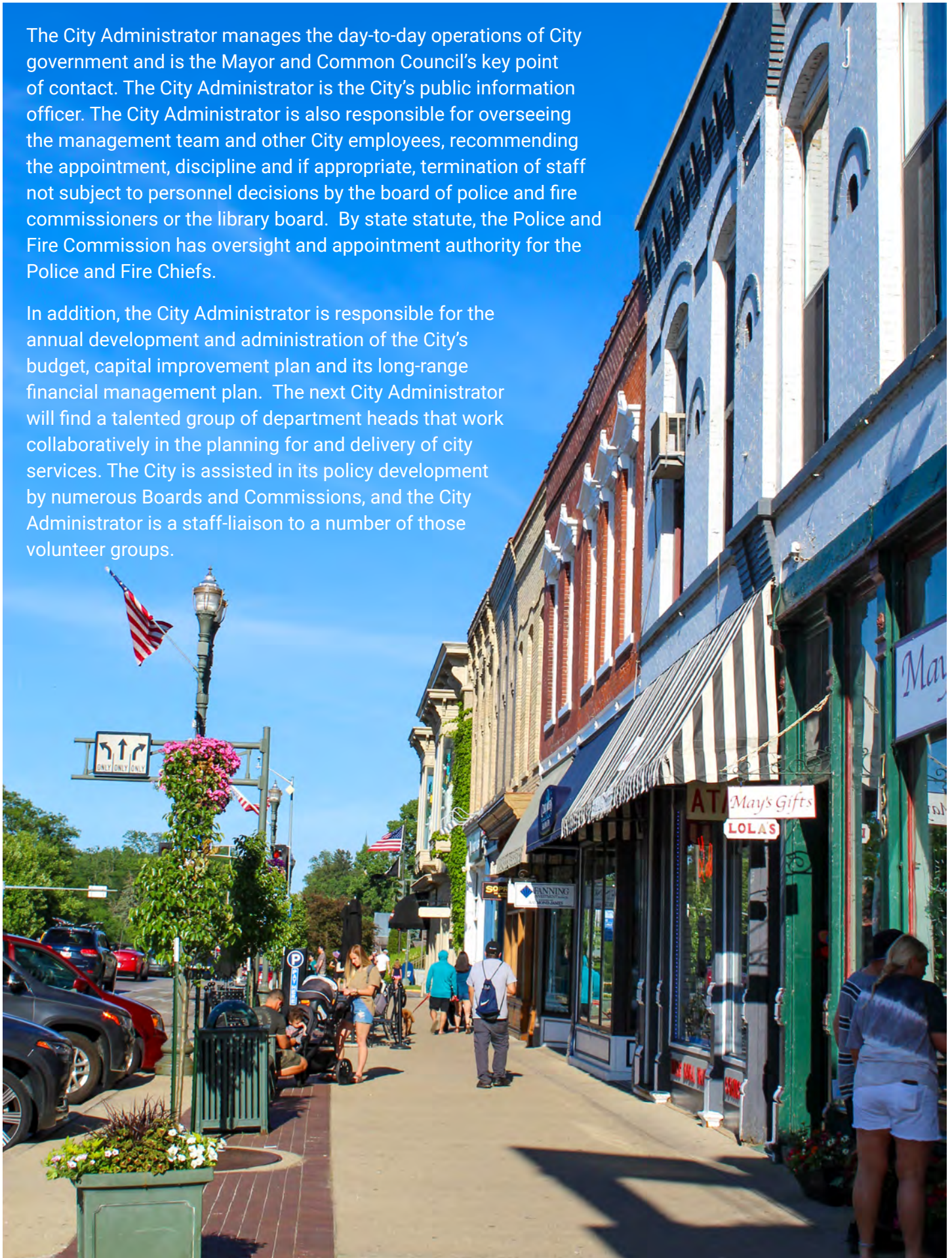
Parks and recreational facilities including more than a dozen parks, two nature preserves, Lake Geneva Beach, and the 23-mile Geneva Lake shore path that encircles the lake which is open to the public. There are more than two dozen golf courses within a thirty-minute drive from Lake Geneva.

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



The City Administrator manages the day-to-day operations of City government and is the Mayor and Common Council's key point of contact. The City Administrator is the City's public information officer. The City Administrator is also responsible for overseeing the management team and other City employees, recommending the appointment, discipline and if appropriate, termination of staff not subject to personnel decisions by the board of police and fire commissioners or the library board. By state statute, the Police and Fire Commission has oversight and appointment authority for the Police and Fire Chiefs.

In addition, the City Administrator is responsible for the annual development and administration of the City's budget, capital improvement plan and its long-range financial management plan. The next City Administrator will find a talented group of department heads that work collaboratively in the planning for and delivery of city services. The City is assisted in its policy development by numerous Boards and Commissions, and the City Administrator is a staff-liaison to a number of those volunteer groups.







## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- The City is in a strong financial position, with its fund balance exceeding 62%. Like all Wisconsin municipalities, however, the City's finances are tested by various parameters guiding the generation of new sources of revenues, as well as State of Wisconsin tax levy limits. The next City Administrator can expect to work closely with the elected and appointed officials on seeking out new sources of revenue as well as continuing to find ways to most efficiently deliver City services.
- The community prides itself on being a resort community, paired with a long heritage of year-round residents, and it has been undergoing managed growth both in residential units and commercial development over a number of years, growth that serves permanent residents and seasonal visitors alike. There continues to be potential for growth through vacant land opportunities. The Common Council sees its next City Administrator working in cooperation with the Lake Geneva Economic Development Corporation to complement their efforts that compete with neighboring communities for economic development activity.
- The new City Administrator is encouraged to look at the municipal organization and over time, evaluate service delivery processes, procedures and methods, departmental and division organization, collaboration, and resource-sharing. The City is dedicated to continuous improvement and sees this recruitment as an opportunity for a fresh look at the organization.
- In a small community where residents and visitors have high customer-service expectations and involvement in civic affairs, the next City Administrator should be comfortable having a visible role in the City, easily interacting with, and embracing a wide spectrum of residents, individuals, and community businesses and organizations.
- Wisconsin's Department of Transportation is proposing to improve approximately 2.5 miles of Wisconsin Highway 50 through Lake Geneva beginning in 2027. Highway 50, the city's main arterial highway is also downtown's Main Street. Public meetings have been held, with more hosted by the state expected. Naturally, downtown businesses and tourist activities can expect to be affected by the work, and the next City Administrator can expect to take an assertive role in collaborating with the state to ensure that the impacts are reasonable and manageable on the community and their livelihoods.
- Short-term rentals are a topic of much discussion in communities across Wisconsin, including Lake Geneva. Lake Geneva has three rental type categories: Bed and Breakfasts, commercial indoor lodging (hotels, motels, etc.) and short-term rentals such as those through Airbnb and VRBO. In a resort community, the impact of short-term rentals is more acute, and occasionally a nuisance in the City. The next City Administrator will join the conversation on how to effectively minimize the annoyances of short-term rentals upon the city's year-round residents while also balancing the demands and expectations of visitors from around the country.
- In 2023, the City purchased the 200-acre Hillmoor Golf Course which was closed in 2009 and has been considering the property's long-term use that is restricted to non-commercial and non-residential uses. This significant amount of open space needs a plan and is expected to tap the City's financial resources, a challenge that the next City Administrator can anticipate helping city officials traverse.

## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

### MUST HAVES

- A bachelor's degree in public administration, political science or related field; a master's degree in public administration or closely related field is preferred.
- Increasingly responsible local government management experience as an administrator, assistant administrator or department head, or equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Proven visionary leadership, managerial, and interpersonal skills to lead a dynamic, financially fit organization in a community with high customer-service expectations. Experience in managing a resort community is a plus.
- A team-oriented, strategic-thinking approach toward staff leadership, human resources skills and supervisory experience.
- Strong communication and collaboration skills.
- Financial, analytical and budget management skills to lead a financially fit organization.



### MANAGEMENT STYLE AND TRAITS

- Be an articulate and effective communicator, both orally and in writing, someone who is comfortable listening to and talking with a wide spectrum of people, and someone who can clearly and concisely present written and oral information to decision makers.
- Have a history of regularly communicating with elected officials, keeping them abreast of city matters and developing issues.
- Be a strong leader able to successfully facilitate and assist 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 one that can quickly assess the capabilities of staff, especially newer department heads, by providing them the guidance they need to succeed and the encouragement to look at their newly inherited operations with a critical eye.
- Be a self-starter who has the vitality and energy to motivate and lead others.
- Have the ability to lead an organization in establishing goals and objectives that are achievable and accountable.
- Have fine-tuned intergovernmental relations skills.
- Have a record of keeping up to date and abreast of modern municipal technology, programs and procedures, understanding how technology can be used to enhance transparency in government, increase efficiencies and provide better customer service for residents.
- Possess well-developed organizational skills and have the ability to balance numerous projects and issues while keeping on task. Know when to drill into the details and critically assess issues without losing sight of the city's bigger, strategic direction.
- Be a "people person," sincerely personable, patient, and accessible, and one who can relate with all persons in the community.
- Promote a strong, service-oriented, "customer relations" approach by all municipal employees in dealing with citizenry.
- Have complete personal and professional integrity, gaining respect and inspiring the trust and confidence of subordinates, co-workers, and elected and appointed officials, as well as the general public.



## COMPENSATION, BENEFITS AND THE ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE

The starting salary range is \$160,000 +/- (midpoint) DOQ, plus an excellent benefit package including 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 opening is being re-advertised as the result of an accepted job offer subsequently rejected by the finalist, who eventually decided to stay in his current job. In fairness to the process and other candidates, the Common Council decided to re-open the position

## HOW TO APPLY

Candidates should apply by February 10, 2025 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 Consultant, MGT, Northfield, IL. Tel: 847-380-3240. The City is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

*Photo Credit: At the Lake Magazine*



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