



WEST BEND, WISCONSIN CITY ADMINISTRATOR



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THE POSITION IN BRIEF

The City Administrator is the chief administrative officer, reporting directly to the Mayor and Common Council, in charge of the City's day-to-day operations and oversees budgets of approximately \$50 million. The City is in excellent financial condition and has approximately 225 full-time employees.

THE CITY

The [City of West Bend](#) is a desirable, family-friendly, full-service municipality 30 minutes northwest of Milwaukee, and 90 minutes from Madison. The county seat of Washington County, West Bend is a commercial center and industrial hub situated along the Milwaukee River in the heart of the scenic Kettle Moraine area.

In the mid-1800s European settlement was initiated in West Bend following the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature's decision to build a road between Milwaukee and Fond du Lac, then the state's two largest cities. Commissioners assigned to lay out the road decided that the most suitable location for the new mid-point village was at the westward bend of the Milwaukee River.

Between 1970 and today, the population of West Bend has nearly doubled. During that time, the community saw the development of retail areas away from the city's downtown, specifically around the intersection of South Main Street and Paradise Drive and continuing west along Paradise Drive to U.S. Highway 45, a distance of approximately two miles. Even with the new retail areas, the downtown continues to thrive. It is home to restaurants, bars, specialty shops, boutique clothing stores, a bank, a variety of offices, as well as the recently renovated West Bend Theater.

Today, West Bend has 32,255 residents, approximately 14,300 homes, 1,200 acres of parks, and comprises 15.30 square miles. Proud of its historic sites, vibrant residential neighborhoods, solid businesses, and revitalized downtown, West Bend is home to many excellent cultural, recreational and educational amenities.



A SNAPSHOT OF WEST BEND'S DEMOGRAPHICS AND AMENITIES:

- Average age of 39.9 years old.
- White 93%, African American 2%, Hispanic/Latino 4%, Asian 1%.
- Median household income, \$75,043.
- Average home value, \$300,000.
- Land area of 15.30 square miles.
- Low crime rate.
- The [West Bend School District](#) serves West Bend, rated one of the best in the state with five elementary schools, an intermediate school, a middle school and two high schools. Newsweek magazine has named West Bend East and West High Schools among the top 5% of high schools in the nation. Residents also have access to a variety of private and parochial schools.
- An abundant supply of reasonably-priced water, energy, and sewage treatment capacity.
- Easy access to Interstates 94, 41, and 43, with U.S. Hwy 45 serving as the main connector to the region.
- Class-4 fire insurance rating, with the West Bend Fire Department serving an area of more than 40 square miles.
- Nearby award-winning health care.
- Distinguished institutions of higher learning are found throughout the area including the [University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee](#), [Marquette University](#), and [Concordia University Wisconsin](#). [Moraine Park Technical College](#) has a campus in West Bend, as does the [University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension Washington County](#).



THE ORGANIZATION

The City of West Bend operates under a Mayor – Council – City Administrator form of government. Under this form of government, an eight-member [Common Council](#) is elected, along with the [Mayor](#), to serve as the legislative branch of government for the City. The Mayor and Council (collectively known as the Common Council) enact ordinances and resolutions, approve the annual budget, set policies, and take other actions to oversee the West Bend government's processes. Aldermen are elected to two-year terms, the Mayor to three-year terms.

The City Administrator is appointed by the Common Council. The City Administrator's duties are outlined in the [City Code](#).

The City Administrator is in charge of day-to-day operations including oversight of an array departments and divisions, 225 full-time employees, [a budget of approximately \\$50 million](#), and [FY 2025 capital funding set at \\$5.6 M](#). The City is in excellent financial condition with a AA bond rating (S&P), and a fund balance of more than 36% of operating funds.

Departments and divisions include Administration, Assessor, Clerk, Communications, Community Development, Engineering, Finance, Fire, Human Resources, Information Technology, Library, Parks, Recreation and Forestry, Police, Public Works, and Water and Sewer Utilities. The [organization chart](#) describes the reporting relationships.

EXPECTATIONS AND PROJECTS

- **Development and economic vitality.** In partnership with the Mayor and Common Council, and the City's Community Development Director, community and economic development issues are expected to be one focal point for the next City Administrator. West Bend's location on the Milwaukee River, varied industries, and proximity to major Wisconsin roadways contribute to its economic success. Several major corporations are headquartered in West Bend, including West Bend Mutual Insurance Company, Manitou Americas, Delta Defense, and Serigraph, Inc. Downtown West Bend has been enjoying a surge of redevelopment, and the active [Downtown West Bend Association](#) is updating its downtown plan. The City has 14 active tax incremental financing districts, further evidence of the City's commitment to development and redevelopment, including an upcoming expansion to the City's newer industrial park.

Recently, public and private investment occurred within the historic downtown. Improvements to the downtown Riverwalk and associated parkways continued in the last couple years, and the City implemented a \$2,655,000 Neighborhood Investment Fund grant to complete the west side of the Riverwalk, a \$10M redevelopment project. The City completed a \$5M full reconstruction of historic Main Street 18 months ago. Downtown businesses are thriving from the new improvements made to streets, parking, and sidewalks through this project. Additional recent development projects and successes [can be found here](#).

While housing development is occurring within the city's limits, the City has identified additional pent-up housing needs that span the financial spectrum from workforce housing to higher-end single-family products. There is a significant share of multi-family housing and mixed-use available or coming on-line, and there is developer interest in this market, but single-family housing options are limited as is unimproved land. The City continues to compete with its neighboring communities as developers and homebuyers consider their building and buying options.

The next City Administrator can expect to work cooperatively with elected officials, the City's development team, the [West Bend Area Chamber of Commerce](#), [Economic Development Washington County](#), and other economic development stakeholders to advance the area's common goals for addressing development, redevelopment, business retention and attraction, and single-family housing growth opportunities. The new City Administrator will also be challenged to keep an eye on the broader implications that economic development brings to the City's finances, staffing, resources and its infrastructure.





- **Fiscal Management.** The City's latest [Annual Comprehensive Financial Report](#) demonstrates a strong financial position, with its fund balance of more than 36% (exceeding the City's policy of 17%) and an S&P bond rating of AA. Like all Wisconsin municipalities the City's finances are tested by various parameters guiding the generation of new sources of revenues, as well as the State of Wisconsin's tax levy limits. Correspondingly, infrastructure and capital improvements are always at the forefront of attention, and in West Bend a robust list of projects is always under consideration. For instance, a new fire station is expected to come online in 2026.

The next City Administrator can expect to work closely with the elected officials and City staff on seeking out new sources of revenue as well as continuing to find ways to deliver City services most efficiently. The new City Administrator can also anticipate guiding the City to meet the city's infrastructure goals by forecasting how the City can keep on top of capital demands. Of particular note, is the City's need to focus on roads, as a recent study showed a critical necessity to improve the quality of streets and roadways.

- **Visibility and Communication.** The next City Administrator should be comfortable having a visible and embedded role in the community and, equally important, within the organization, easily interacting with and embracing a wide spectrum of residents, individuals, community businesses and organizations. Along this vein, it is expected that the next City Administrator will develop close and consistent lines of communication with the Mayor, Common Council and City staff.

- **Team Management.** The new City Administrator joins a management team whose tenure with the city varies. Some are seasoned, long-tenured employees while other department leaders are new to their position and the organization. There is an immediate vacancy of the assistant administrator, creating an opportunity for the new Administrator to examine the position relative to his/her first few months of assessing the organization's needs.

The next City Administrator will find a team of professionals eager for a leader that is collaborative, fair-minded, communicative and one who encourages professional growth and development. During the next City Administrator's tenure there is the potential of several department heads retiring.

Steady, mature and professional leadership is desired by the Mayor and 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.

- **Long-range planning.** In addition to updating its 20-year-old comprehensive plan, City officials have expressed a desire for a new strategic plan. The new City Administrator will be encouraged to work with the Community Development Director and other staff to move these initiatives forward.
- **Intergovernmental Relations.** The City's desire for strong intergovernmental relationships within the region is keenly important, particularly with Washington County. The next City Administrator can expect to play a leading role in developing and cultivating close working alliances with state, county and municipal partners and neighbors.
- **Organizational Design and Service Delivery.** The new City Administrator is encouraged to assess the municipal organization and, over time, evaluate service delivery processes, procedures and methods. A fresh-eyed look at departmental and divisional organization, resource-sharing, and interactions with residents and the business community is welcomed, as the City is open to continuous improvement, new approaches, and a customer-focused philosophy.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Must Haves –

- A master's degree in public administration, political science, or closely related field.
- Eight – 10 years of increasingly responsible municipal executive level experience, including a minimum of three – five years as a city administrator or manager; or any combination of education and experience that demonstrates equivalent knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the work. ICMA Credentialing is a plus.
- Proven leadership, managerial, and interpersonal skills to direct a City team serving an engaged community.
- Financial, analytical and budget management skills to lead a financially fit organization.
- Demonstrable economic development experience is highly valued.

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; 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.
- Possess the ability to let City staff carry out their duties and grow professionally, understanding that the occasional misstep will happen and using these occasions to help the employee grow and thrive as part of the team.
- 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: \$175,000 – 195,000 +/- DOQ, plus an excellent benefits package including membership to 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 possesses a high-output work ethic.

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.

HOW TO APPLY

Apply online at www.GovHRjobs.com with a resume, cover letter and contact information for five professional references by April 28, 2025. Confidential inquiries may be sent to: Lee Szymborski and David De Angelis, Senior Consultants, MGT, Northfield, IL. Tel: 847-380-3240. The City is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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