



WAITE PARK, MINNESOTA FIRE CHIEF

MGT

WAITE PARK, MINNESOTA FIRE CHIEF



THE COMMUNITY

[Waite Park](#) is a progressive, growing city located in [Stearns County](#), and the heart of the [St. Cloud](#) metropolitan area, about 70 miles northwest of the Twin Cities. While the city's population may be just over 8,300, it serves a daytime population of 25,000. The city serves as a regional [commercial and employment hub](#), anchored by major retail, service, and light industrial areas along key transportation corridors, including Interstate 94, Highway 23, and County State Aid Highway 75.

Waite Park combines a strong tax base and a high daytime population with established neighborhoods, diverse housing options, and an engaged, multicultural community. Residents and visitors enjoy a high quality of life supported by parks, trails, and signature amenities such as [Quarry Park and Nature Preserve](#), and the [Ledge Amphitheater](#). The city offers a full range of municipal services delivered by a collaborative, service-oriented city organization. With its regional impact, thoughtful growth, and deep commitment to community, Waite Park offers a dynamic and meaningful environment for public service.

DEMOGRAPHICS/GENERAL INFORMATION

Population: 8,342

Square miles: 12.71

Resident demographics by race:

White or Caucasian: 58%

Black or African American: 26%

Hispanic or Latino: 10%

Asian, alone: 3%

Two or more races: 3%

Median home value (owner occupied): \$245,000

Median household income: \$ 56,884

THE COMMUNITY (continued)

The city is known for its recreation with numerous parks and trails. [River Edge Park](#), a 42-acre park located along the Sauk River, has hosted several regional, state and national baseball tournaments and includes walking trails, pickleball courts and an outdoor fitness court. The city also boasts a connection to both the [Lake Wobegon and Glacial Lake state trails](#).

Waite Park is home to the 5,000-seat [“The Ledge Amphitheater”](#), a premier outdoor venue uniquely situated between two former granite quarries. With stunning natural views and convenient highway access, the amphitheater attracts national and regional musical, comedy, and theatrical performers—further strengthening Waite Park’s reputation as a vibrant regional destination.

[Quarry Park](#), a 600-acre county facility that attracts over 150,000 visitors annually, is located within Waite Park and is open year-round for swimming, hiking, snow shoeing, cross-country skiing and offers incredible views of the region from its observation tower. Quarry Park was also identified as a top 10 swimming hole in the country by [Travel Magazine](#). The granite industry is a rich part of [Waite Park’s history](#) and development, with two quarries still in operation today.

Waite Park is also served by the [Great River Regional Library](#) and [St. Cloud Area School District](#). With all the amenities of a larger city, Waite Park offers an outstanding quality of life for its residents, businesses, and visitors.





THE ORGANIZATION

The City of Waite Park operates as a [Statutory Plan A](#) city. This is a weak-mayor form of government with five members elected at-large including the mayor and four council members. All members, including the mayor, have equal voting power and its governing authority is derived by the State Legislature. Under this form of government, the council appoints a city administrator who oversees the daily operations of the city. The mayor and council members are elected to four year terms.

The city's administrator and department directors are a long tenured and collaborative team. The city has 49 full-time regular employees, 5 part-time employees and 12 paid on-call fire fighters. The city is a full-service city with a \$14 million-dollar general fund budget, a water utility of \$2.3 million, sewer fund of \$2.3 million and capital projects of \$2 to \$3 million annually. The city collects a local option sales tax of approximately \$1.3 million annually.





THE DEPARTMENT

In recent years, the landscape of volunteer and paid-on-call service has changed significantly. Increasing training requirements, time commitments, and workforce demands have made recruitment and retention more challenging. At the same time, the department has experienced the retirement of several long-serving members, some with 20 or more years of dedicated service to the community. Today, the department's roster has declined to fewer than 15 firefighters.

To ensure continued protection for the community, the City of Waite Park has established an automatic assistance contract with the City of St. Cloud to respond to all fire calls including medicals. This partnership, along with existing mutual aid agreements, reflects the city's commitment to maintaining a high level of service while navigating evolving staffing realities.

- In response to this change, the City has made the decision to establish a full-time Fire Chief position. This is more than a leadership role; it's a chance to shape the identity, culture, and operational future of an entire department.
- The department operates from a single station on 13th Avenue North which is currently being renovated and expanded. This location protects a uniquely varied landscape that includes busy commercial corridors, established residential neighborhoods, industrial zones, and the rugged terrain of Quarry Park.
- Firefighters serve as partners in hazardous materials incidents, educators in schools, and ambassadors for safety at community events.
- Waite Park is located within a dense and cooperative regional fire service network that includes St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell, St. Joseph, and St. Augusta. Mutual Aid and Automatic Aid are structured through strong regional partnerships, countywide coordination, and Minnesota's Intrastate Mutual Aid system. Together, these systems create a robust safety net for residents and responders alike.
- The department responded to 250 calls for service in 2025, including fire incidents, EMS (non-transport medical first response), service calls, mutual aid, and automatic aid responses.
- The department holds an ISO Class 4/4Y rating. EMS transport services are provided by Mayo Ambulance, the primary ALS provider for the St. Cloud metro area, with patients transported to St. Cloud Hospital, a Level II Trauma Center.
- The fire department budget is just under \$1.4 million for the current fiscal year.

FIRE CHIEF POSITION AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The Fire Chief serves as the executive leader of a paid-per-response municipal fire department, providing strategic direction, operational oversight, and administrative management. This position is responsible for ensuring the effective delivery of fire suppression, emergency response, fire prevention, and public education services within the community. The Fire Chief works closely with regional partners—including neighboring cities, regional fire chiefs, emergency management officials, and mutual-aid organizations—to strengthen service delivery across the greater Central MN area.

- **Strategic Leadership and Department Oversight:** Establishing a long-term vision for service delivery, evaluation of effective service delivery, balancing public safety outcomes, regional collaboration, staffing strategies, operational effectiveness, policy, and goal alignment both with the department and the city and more.
- **Operational Leadership:** Development of policies and procedures that provide appropriate emergency response profiles, building great working relationships both regionally and within the department, strong communications, continual improvement planning, and more.
- **Personnel Management and Recruitment:** Establishing clear expectations of personnel, structured performance standards, fostering a positive, team-oriented culture, creating a sustainable workforce and continued strong lines of positive communications and reinforcement of standards.
- **Regional Collaboration:** Understanding what resources are available and maximizing those relationships, having a collaborative and innovative approach to break down barriers preventing adequate emergency incident management, monitoring of innovative and trend setting systems and strategies.
- **Fire Prevention, Education and Community Outreach:** Knowing there are limited resources, being creative with partnerships, stakeholders, initiatives, campaigns, community events, city resources and more with a focus on the safety of the public served. Understanding the need for flexibility and creativity to meet the growing needs of the community.
- **Administrative and Budget Management:** Knowing how to maximize effectiveness with limited resources, showing municipal fiscal responsibility talents and creativity. Ability to manage funding accurately as a fiscal steward.





EXPERIENCE

- Seven years of progressively responsible fire service experience.
- Five years of supervisory or command level leadership (Captain, Battalion Chief, Assistant Chief, or equivalent).
- Experience working within a volunteer, paid on call, or combination department is a must.

LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS

- Proven ability to manage budgets, develop policy, and lead organizational planning.
- Experience as an engaged leader in personnel management, recruitment, training, and performance development.
- Strong understanding of modern fire suppression, EMS first response, incident command, and community risk reduction. Demonstrated ability to manage QA/QI, protocols, and medical relationships.
- Ability to collaborate effectively with city leadership, regional partners, and a diverse community.
- Have the capability to be an active participant in operations and training to safely function as a command officer on incident scenes including oversight of interior operations within IDLH conditions.
- Have a demonstrated record of fairness, transparency, and consistency in the administration of city policies and procedures and the willingness to address issues in a positive and timely manner. The chief must possess well-developed writing and public speaking skills and the utmost integrity.
- Must understand the need and have experience using data for problem solving, assessing community risk and vulnerabilities.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree in Fire Administration, Public Administration, Emergency Management, or a related field.
- Minimum Fire Officer II (MFSCB, or equivalent)
- Executive Fire Officer (EFO/NFA) coursework or completion.
- Chief Fire Officer (CFO) designation, or substantial progress in obtaining (CPSE/CFAI, some state programs accepted).
- Minimum EMR (Emergency Medical Responder), NREMT preferred.



COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

The annual starting salary range for this position is \$106,474.85-\$142,939.37 +/- depending upon qualifications. The City of Waite Park provides a comprehensive benefits package, including City contributions to a defined benefit plan (PERA), medical insurance, life insurance, sick and vacation accruals. The city also provides a short-term and long-term disability insurance policy for each employee as well as tuition reimbursement. Voluntary benefits include dental, vision, supplemental life, a 457 deferred compensation program. Residency is required within 30 minutes of the city.

HOW TO APPLY

Candidates should apply by April 10, 2026 @ 1700 hours CDT with resume, cover letter and contact information for five work-related, or professional references to [MGT Career Center](#) (electronic applications only). Questions may be addressed to the attention of T.E. Sashko, (847)380-3240x123. The City is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



WAITE PARK FIRE DEPARTMENT

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ASST CHIEF ROBERT MARTINS	CHIEF GARY CURTIS	ASST CHIEF ED BAUER
CAPTAIN RICK Mergen	TRAINING/SAFETY MICHAEL POST	LIEUTENANT CHRIS BALLA
RICK MILLER	DALE HASKAMP	RAY JAEGER
DARYL HASKAMP	RICK ALLEN	STEVE SCHBAUT
JOEL MOHS	JIM ALESHIRE	DARRIN HOLTBAUS
RANDY JOHNSON	KIRK DICKINSON	PAT DONLIN
TIM MURPHY	PETER BAHE	REN BAUER
PHIL SCHAEFER	SCOTT THYLEN	TODD JOHNSON
DEAN HASKAMP		GARY SCHBAUT