

city of
Bethel *Alaska*

CITY MANAGER



BETHEL, ALASKA



EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

CITY MANAGER

CITY OF Bethel, Alaska

Community Information

BETHEL, AK (Population: 6,500) is a remote city on the western coast of Alaska, approximately 400 miles west of Anchorage. Bethel is only accessible by air and river and it is the largest Kuskokwim River port, serving as a transportation and administrative hub for over 50 Alaskan villages. The biggest city in western Alaska, Bethel is in the top ten most populated communities of the state. With a population of over 6,500, the city is about 48 square miles with approximately 5 square miles is water. Unlike much of Alaska, the geography is primarily treeless as it is in the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, the second biggest wildlife preserve in the U.S.A.

Southwestern Alaska was and still is the traditional place of the Yup'ik people and their ancestors for thousands of years. They called their village Mamterillermiut, meaning "Smokehouse People", after their nearby fish smokehouse. In 1885, the Moravian Church established a mission in the area and eventually moved Bethel from Mamterillermiut to its present location on the west side of the Kuskokwim River. A United States post office was opened in 1905.

Development came to the area during and after World War II, causing a great social disruption among the Alaska Natives at the time. In 1971, Bethel established a community radio, which has been a strong influence in the redevelopment and revival of the Yup'ik culture. It was the first Native-owned and operated radio station in the U.S.A.

Within Bethel, there are approximately 36 miles of roads which are not connected to any contiguous highway system. The Port of Bethel is the northernmost medium-draft port in the U.S.A. River travel is the primary means of local transportation in the summer and supports barge service that provides goods to Kuskokwim villages. Winter ice roads lead to several local villages, but their condition varies depending on temperature and snow fall. The state-owned Bethel Airport is a regional transportation hub served by four passenger carriers and three major cargo carriers. The airport ranks third in the state for total number of flights.

The town's single paved road and numerous dirt/gravel roads support a taxicab industry. With approximately 100 taxi drivers, the town has more cab drivers per capita than any other city in the U.S.A. The town is also home to the Alaska State prison system's Yukon Kuskokwim Correctional Center.

Health care is provided by Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) which is a Tribal Organization that administers a comprehensive healthcare delivery system for 58 rural community in southwest Alaska. They operate the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital in Bethel and have recently completed a major renovation that will allow patients access to essential services and comprehensive health care in one location.

Bethel is a vibrant and bustling community and continues to be a hub of commerce and transportation for its residents and surrounding villages. The city could see some potential growth in the coming years through two proposed housing developments. The median household income is approximately \$83,400 with 32% of the population under the age of 18 and only 7% of the population over the age of 65, it is a young community.

Outdoor/Indoor Activities

Bethel offers a variety of indoor and outdoor recreational venues and one of the primary reasons that people seek it as a destination. With fishing, canoeing, boating, swimming and kayaking, there's always plenty to do on the Kuskokwim river and surrounding lakes. Subsistence activities for natives, such as hunting and fishing, are commonplace. On land, there are numerous activities offered throughout the year including hunting, bicycling, snow machining and skiing.

Bethel is home to the noted mid-distance dogsled race, the Kuskokwim 300. Held every January since 1980, the race commemorates an early mail route that once tied the settlement to the outside world. Top mushers and hundreds of sled dogs participate in the race, the largest purse offered by any 300-mile sled dog race. Bethel is also an established starting point to the "Float Alaska" wilderness river systems.

CITY MANAGER



Outdoor/Indoor Activities Continued

The Yukon-Kuskokwim (YK) Fitness Center houses many other activities for children and adults. Swimming classes along with open swim times and swimming meets are held year-round at the indoor pool. Additional activities include fitness classes, salsa dancing, judo and martial arts as well as tumbling for tots and women's empowerment and self-defense classes. The facility also houses many native pieces of art that depict the history of the Yukon.

Pinky's Park is approximately 27 acres of natural area that has youth sports fields as well as slightly over a mile of boardwalk which connects to other walking areas in the City. The City also operates Boat Harbor Park, Dillon Park, Wally Park and Tundra Ridge Park.



School System/Educational Opportunities

Lower Kuskokwim School District, with offices in Bethel, operates five schools in Bethel as well as others in the surrounding villages. Bethel is served by three elementary schools, Bethel high school and Kuskokwim Learning Academy.

Mekelnguut Elitnauriviat School ("M.E.") serves grades kindergarten through second grade and has approximately 260 students. Gladys Jung Elementary School (previously Kilbuck School) serves third grade through sixth grade and has an enrollment of approximately 350 students. Ayaprun Elitnaurvic School is a kindergarten through sixth grade Yup'ik-English bilingual program that originated from a total immersion language program and is housed within the two elementary schools.

Bethel Regional High School has approximately 500 students from grades seven through twelve. Kuskokwim Learning Academy has approximately 60 students that are a part of their dropout prevention program encouraging students to find a different path to academic success that might not be found in a traditional school setting.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks's (UAF) Cooperative Extension Service's Yukon-Kuskokwim District office is based in Bethel. The Yukon-Kuskokwim District office aims to support the population through education and outreach relevant to the local lifestyle and encouraging subsistence activities, such as hunting and fishing. The UAF Kuskokwim Campus offers many certificate and degree programs such as Nursing qualifications, medical billing, Associate of Applied Science, Bachelor's in Social Work or Education and a master's degree in Education or Rural Development and many others.

The district staff support many program activities which support improvement in the quality of life for the population. Some of these areas include: Bethel Community Garden, 4-H youth development, food preservation workshops, healthy homes, nutrition education, home energy education, StrongWomen and more.



UAF also operates the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center that celebrates the Yup'ik culture. The center serves as a regional gathering center for Southwest Alaskans to stimulate ideas, advance their knowledge, and enhance the quality of life. The Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center, Library, Kuskokwim Art Guild gift shop and Museum provide access to information, resources, and services to all members of the Bethel community and region.

Bethel City Government

Bethel is a general law, second-class city within the state's unorganized borough and operates under the manager form of government as defined in Alaska Statutes 29.20.460 through 29.20.520. The city is governed by a City Council consisting of an elected Mayor and six other elected council members for two-year terms. The City Manager is appointed by the Bethel Council and serves at its pleasure.

The City Manager's powers and duties are set in state law and the Municipal Code of the city. The Manager is the chief executive officer of the City. The Manager directs the day-to-day operations of the city. The manager's office also oversees a variety of interdisciplinary programs and initiatives while communicating the City Council's vision and values.

The City Manager's Office is responsible for many of the City's centralized functions:

1. Implementing public policies adopted by the City Council.
2. Actively managing the municipal organization to ensure efficient, cost-effective service delivery.
3. Supporting city departments and divisions in efforts to innovate and improve customer experience.
4. Providing public information through media requests and reports.
5. Developing and recommending policies that protect the city's fiscal foundation; and
6. Influencing state and federal policies that impact Bethel's ability to thrive.

Bethel has the following departments: Administration, Finance, Public Works, Planning, Police, Fire, and Bethel Port. Bethel is a fiscally conservative driven community placing value on keeping the financial stability of the community at the forefront of their capital planning and growth. They are a value-driven organization dedicated to responsive, respectful and courteous customer service. The total budget for 2019-2020 including all funds is about \$31 million with a general fund budget of around \$26.4 million. There are six enterprise funds which are comprised of the pool expenses, solid waste, municipal dock, water and sewer, leased property and transit. The city has approximately 100 FTE employees.

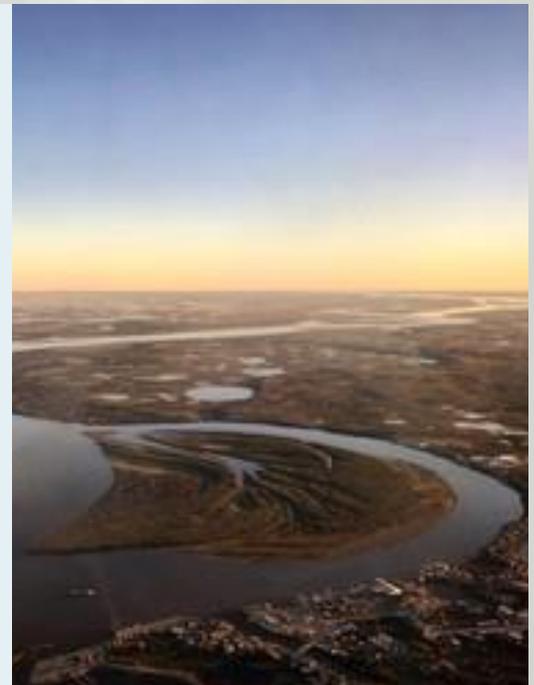
CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITES FOR THE CITY MANAGER

The city council is in the process of reviewing the current alcohol sales ordinances of the city. The voters of Bethel opted out of the State of Alaska's local option regulations thereby electing to limited restrictions of the sale of alcoholic beverages within the City. The City has modified the Bethel Municipal Code to implement more strict laws associated with the sale, distribution, purchasing and consumption of alcoholic beverages. This continues to be an issue that contributes to increased first-responder calls and nuisances to businesses and residents.

As with most communities, there are department heads that have moved to other positions or retired from the City. The Police Chief, City Planner and City Attorney positions are currently vacant. Additionally, there remain issues with recruitment and retention of employees especially with the Police and Public Works departments. As with other communities, they compete for these qualified employees and the city is seeking new ideas on how to retain those valued employees.

Bethel places a high value on quality of life through its commitment to recreational activities in the community and providing venues for them. This will be a continued focus as the community continues to grow in the future and more demand is placed on these facilities. The City will need to analyze the related costs associated with these facilities to determine how they can continue to meet a high quality of life for the residents of Bethel.

The City has gone through several managers in the past 10 years, so it is imperative that the new Manager build trust with employees and instill a sense of caring and respect for the personnel in place. Being able to have compassion for the employees and respect their expertise within their given roles, will enable them to again feel a part of a *TEAM*.



BETHEL, ALASKA

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

The City Council is seeking Candidates who are strong leaders in City/County Management with a proven record of providing effective leadership in a complex organization, preferably in a City, municipal or other level of government of similar size as Bethel. Experience working in Alaska is a plus, but not a requirement. Ideal candidates will be able to drive innovation and move agendas forward in a multi-stakeholder environment. The successful candidate will demonstrate excellent communication skills and significant career success in building collaborative, effective relationships across departments. Additional experience in strategic planning, budgeting and project management and complex problem solving with the ability to work effectively in a wide variety of governmental disciplines is important. The following factors of education, experience, and leadership and management skills have been identified as *ideal* attributes for the City Manager to possess to function effectively in the position.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- The desired candidates would possess a Bachelor's Degree in public administration, public policy, business or related field or an equivalent combination of education and experience that would demonstrate the skills and ability to perform the work.
- Five to seven years of progressively responsible experience in local government management, including significant experience at a senior level interacting with elected officials and other stakeholder groups.
- Candidates must possess proven managerial and interpersonal skills to lead a dynamic financially fit organization in a community with high customer-service expectations, community involvement and a desire for government transparency.
- Candidates must possess proven managerial abilities, including financial forecasting, revenue enhancement, capital improvement programming and budget development and control.
- Demonstrate significant accomplishments in complex project management with the ability to interact with elected officials, senior staff, commissions and community organizations in the development and implementation of project goals and objectives.
- Be skilled in working with elected officials as a group, and in a system of committees, and commissions. An appreciation for an active citizenry that expects community-outreach efforts from its government leaders.
- A full understanding of the remoteness of Bethel is essential to appreciate the challenges it presents as well as the opportunities of the area surrounding the community. Bethel is only accessible by land or by air and weather can have an effect on that accessibility.
- Candidates must have strong analytical skills with the ability to examine programs, budgets and proposed policies for efficiency and effectiveness; candidates must approach local government with a desire to improve processes and procedures in a thoughtful way that inspires directors and managers and other affected employees.
- Have experience in fostering business-community relationships with the City; be adept at how the City can craft meaningful and sustainable economic development initiatives.
- Have the ability to interpret and ensure compliance with applicable Federal, State and local policies, rules, laws and regulations.
- Have a strong understanding of government finances and budgetary preparations. Possess the ability to formulate a budget and capital improvement plan and present the proposed budget to City Council in a way that provides the most accurate information and transparency for City operations and financial stability.
- Have extensive experience in delivering written and oral presentations to officials at all levels of the organization, including elected officials.
- Demonstrate the ability to perform organizational analysis in determining the structure of city departments and how to best utilize personnel allocations and being able to present those ideas to the employees in a manner that affords open communication and feedback from employees.
- Have a proven track record of delegating to staff and fostering an attitude of teamwork and creativity in problem solving, while ultimately being accountable for the quality and effectiveness of overall performance of the organization.
- Have proven superior communication, interpersonal, and human relations skills, and adeptness at interacting with people possessing a wide variety of attitudes and in a wide variety of situations. Have a willingness to meet with citizens and assist them with issues they have involving City services.
- Have proven and successful managerial skills utilizing a consensus-building, team-oriented approach to managing staff members; have the ability to remain accountable for departmental activities without unnecessary micromanagement of senior staff.
- Be committed to the community and the City Management profession and have a willingness to commit to a long tenured service in the community.
- Have a balance of technical and leadership/management skills with people skills a high priority. Have skills in diplomacy and interpersonal skills and the ability to remain objective despite personal feelings towards a situation or person.



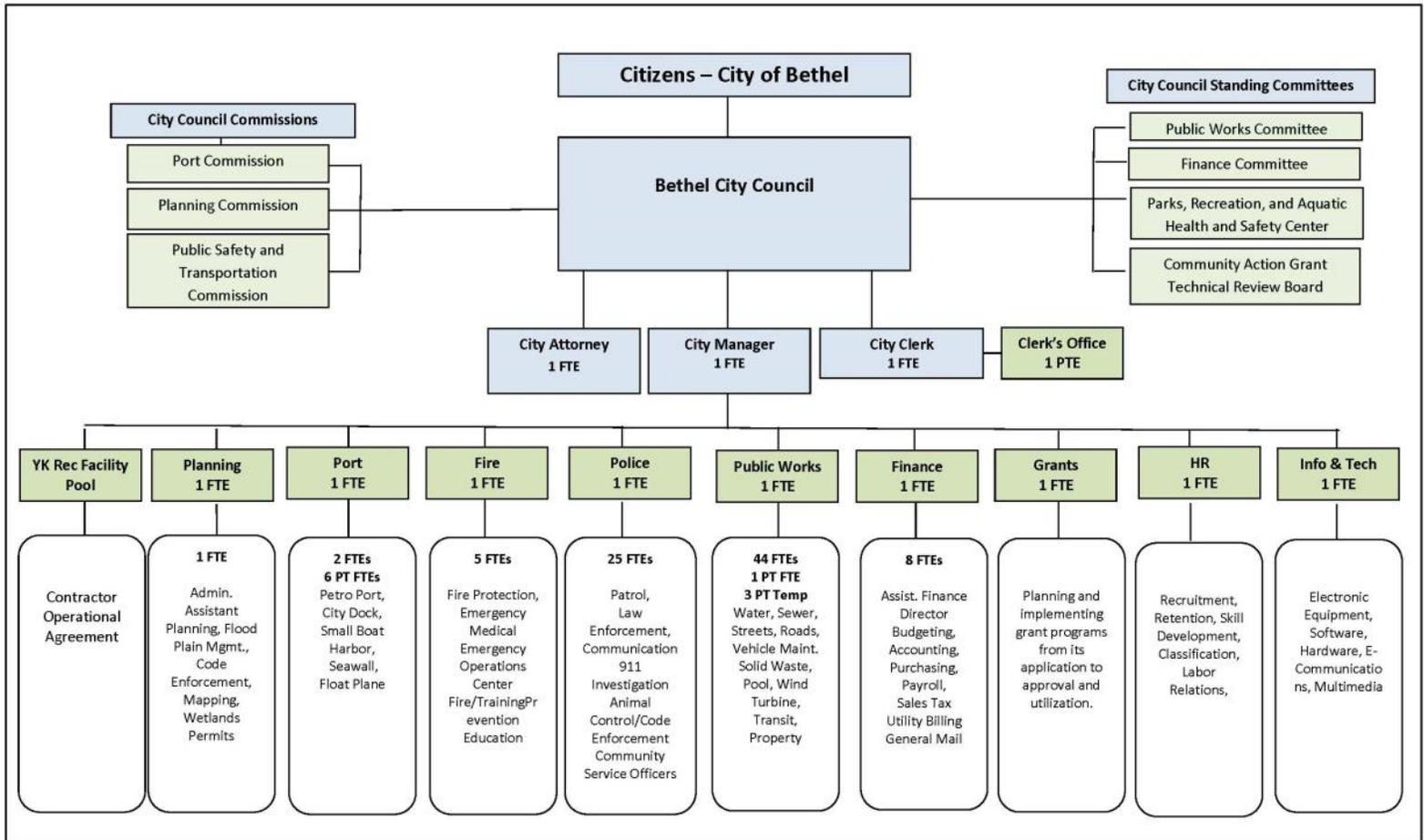
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Have the maturity, self-confidence, and strength of professional convictions to provide administrative insights and administrative counsel to the City Council and staff, being able to firmly and diplomatically present professional views and carry out administrative decisions in a timely, professional and impartial manner.
- Have a City-wide perspective and utilize a “we” mentality rather than an “I” mentality in dealing with all City matters. Possess a track record of addressing an issue in a thoughtful and progressive manner; be someone who can build bridges and bring people together.
- Have the ability to work with area intergovernmental organizations such as the school district, healthcare providers, Orutsararmuit Native Council (ONC) and others to understand their concerns and how it relates to their needs as well as inform them of issues that may involve their organizations resources and create working relationships to resolve resident issues.
- Establish a lasting credibility with Elected Officials and Department Directors; the ability to develop effective collaborative relationships is a must!
- Have strong communication skills, both orally and in writing, with the ability to interrelate with the public, City Council, department heads, staff and other stakeholders.
- Have the skills to present to audiences ranging from staff members to the community at large.
- Have the maturity and self-confidence to firmly and diplomatically present professional views, concerns, and implications of proposed policy actions that may be under consideration by the Bethel City Council, while also being committed to carrying out final decisions in a timely, professional, and impartial manner.
- Exhibit a style characterized by candor, directness, tactfulness, and diplomacy, with the ability to admit when mistakes were made, and when corrective action needs to be taken.
- Have a collaborative and open, friendly personality and management style and be one who can establish trust quickly with others. Know how to deal with conflict in a constructive manner. Have the ability to keep information confidential.
- Be able to represent the City to the residents of Bethel in a responsive and helpful manner. Have good listening skills and a willingness to work through challenges in a collegial, respectful manner.
- Maintain a calm demeanor during times of stress, providing thoughtful advice to residents, department heads and elected officials. Be flexible and open to change with a willingness to learn and ask questions. Be assertive when necessary, yet empathetic.



C O M M U N I T Y

Organizational Chart



HOW TO APPLY

The starting salary range for the position is \$135,000 - \$155,000 DOQ. The City also offers an outstanding fringe benefit package including low cost health, dental and vision. Residency within the City is required.

Send résumé, cover letter, and contact information for five (5) professional references by October 30, 2020 to: Sarah McKee, Senior Vice President, GovHR USA, TEL: 224/282-8310; Email: smckee@govhrusa.com.

All applications must be submitted electronically through our online application system at www.govhrjobs.com.



The City of Bethel is committed to compliance with the American Disabilities Act and is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Diversity and inclusion are critical to our success. We seek to recruit the most talented people from a diverse candidate pool and strongly encourage women, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities and veterans to apply.