

Dear City Administrator Working Group Members,

I appreciate the time and effort each of you has dedicated to reviewing the potential addition of a City Administrator position for the City of La Crosse. After reviewing the materials and following recent discussions, I wanted to share my perspective on what I believe are the most important benefits and concerns, especially regarding the financial impact this proposal could have on our community.

One of the clearest benefits of hiring a City Administrator would be bringing in professional management expertise to guide day-to-day operations and ensure stability across city departments. This could create greater consistency during mayoral transitions and help improve long-term planning. It would also allow the mayor and council to focus more on policymaking and big-picture strategy rather than administrative details. Additionally, department heads would benefit from having a central, consistent point of contact to coordinate operations, and the city could strengthen its position in negotiations or intergovernmental matters by having a dedicated professional represent La Crosse's interests.

That said, I have significant concerns about the financial implications of hiring a full-time City Administrator without adjusting the structure of the mayor's role. Adding a full-time administrator alongside a full-time mayor would create two high-level executive positions with substantial salaries and benefits, and this would represent a long-term financial commitment for the community. Given existing budget pressures/lending, staffing needs across departments, and even current limitations on office space, I believe we need to be careful about increasing ongoing personnel costs without a clear funding strategy that all council members agree upon.

If La Crosse decides to move forward with creating a City Administrator position, I strongly encourage the working group to consider reevaluating the mayor's role. A shift to a part-time mayoral position or a reduction in the mayor's salary could help offset the cost of hiring an administrator while still maintaining the leadership and representation that citizens expect. This adjustment would allow us to gain the benefits of professional administration without putting undue strain on the city budget.

Thank you again for your work on this important issue and for considering my perspective. I believe we can improve the city's administrative structure while also remaining fiscally responsible.

Best regards,

Matthew Rumde