



# City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall  
400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

## Meeting Agenda - Final

### City Administrator Working Group

---

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

11:30 AM

Miller Conference Room - City Hall

---

*This meeting is open for in-person attendance and will also be available through Zoom.*

*Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86075822983?pwd=Yms2Y4gbYBRWuUuWtb2tDOICWri5Pb.1>*

*Join by phone: 312-626-6799 US (Chicago) | Meeting ID: 860 7582 2983 | Passcode: 303414*

#### Call to Order

#### Welcome

#### Roll Call

*Erin Goggin, Barb Janssen, Mac Kiel, Mark Neumann, Larry Slezniow*

#### Approval of Minutes

*Minutes from March 12, 2025*

#### Agenda Items:

[24-1585](#) Proposed City Administrator position.

**Discussion and questions and answers with Daniel Foth, JD, Director, Certified Public Manager Program and Local Government Specialist, Local Government Education at University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension**

**Outline next steps for the working group based on information provided by Mr. Foth.**

**Establish agenda items for the April 9, 2025 meeting**

#### Adjournment

*Notice is further given that members of other governmental bodies may be present at the above scheduled meeting to gather information about a subject over which they have decision-making responsibility.*

#### **NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY**

*Requests from persons with a disability who need assistance to participate in this meeting should call the City Clerk's office at (608) 789-7510 or send an email to [ADAcityclerk@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:ADAcityclerk@cityoflacrosse.org), with as much advance notice as possible.*



# City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall  
400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

## Text File

File Number: 24-1585

---

**Agenda Date:**

**Version:** 1

**Status:** Agenda Ready

**In Control:** City Administrator Working Group

**File Type:** Review

**Agenda Number:**



# City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall  
400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

## Text File

File Number: 24-1287

---

**Agenda Date:** 10/10/2024

**Version:** 1

**Status:** Recommended to be  
Adopted

**In Control:** Common Council

**File Type:** Ordinance

**Agenda Number:**

## CHARTER ORDINANCE NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

A CHARTER ORDINANCE to create Section 19 of Appendix A of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse creating the position, duties and responsibilities of the Office of the City Administrator and removing duties from the Office of the Mayor.

The COMMON COUNCIL of the City of La Crosse do ordain as follows:

**Sec. 19. – Office of the City Administrator**

- (a) OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR. In order to provide the City of La Crosse with a more efficient, effective and responsible government under a system of a full-time Mayor and a part-time Common Council at a time when City government is becoming increasingly complex, there is hereby created the Office of City Administrator for the City of La Crosse.
- (b) APPOINTMENT, TERM OF OFFICE AND REMOVAL The administrator shall be appointed on the basis of merit with due regard to training, experience, administrative ability and general fitness for the office, by a majority vote of those present and voting of the Common Council. The administrator shall hold office for an indefinite term at the pleasure of the Council subject to removal at any time by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of all the members of the Council. The Council may establish other employment terms and conditions consistent with the provisions of this ordinance or the Municipal Code of the City of La Crosse.
- (c) RESIDENCY The administrator shall become a resident of the City of La Crosse within three (3) months following the date of appointment, unless this requirement is specifically waived or varied by the Common Council, and entered into with the administrator, covering the terms and conditions of residency.
- (d) QUALIFICATIONS The ideal qualifications for the administrator will include Bachelor of Arts or Science Degree and a Master's Degree in Public Administration, Public Finance or closely related field from an accredited university and have at least five (5) years of experience in City or County government as a City Administrator, City Manager, or County Administrator.
- (e) FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF THE ADMINISTRATOR The administrator, subject to the limitations defined in resolutions and ordinances of the City of La Crosse and Wisconsin State Statutes, shall be the chief administrative officer of the City, responsible only to the Common Council for proper administration of the business affairs of the City, pursuant to the statutes of the State of Wisconsin, the ordinances of the City of La Crosse, and the resolutions and directives of the Common Council, with power and duties as follows:
  - (1) General Duties
    - (a) Carry out policy directives of the Common Council established by resolution or ordinance which require administrative implementation, reporting promptly to the Common Council any difficulties encountered herein;
    - (b) Be responsible for the administration of all day-to-day operations of the City government including the monitoring of all city

- ordinances, resolutions, council meeting minutes and state statutes;
- (c) Prepare a plan of administration, including an organizational plan, which defines authority and responsibility for all nonstatutory positions of the City; and submit it to the Common Council for adoption as the official organization and administrative procedure plan for the City;
  - (d) Establish administrative procedures to measure and to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of City government according to current practices in local government, not inconsistent with subsection (c) above or policy directives of the Common Council which are established by resolution or ordinance;
  - (e) Serve as ex-officio non-voting member of all boards, commissions and committees of the City, except as specified by the Common Council or Wisconsin State Statutes;
  - (f) Keep information concerning current federal, state and county legislation and administrative rules affecting the City and submit appropriate reports and recommendations thereon to the Common Council;
  - (g) Keep informed concerning the availability of federal, state, county and nonprofit grants and funds for local programs and initiatives. Assist Department Heads and the Common Council in obtaining these funds under the direction of the Common Council;
  - (h) Represent the City in all matters involving legislative and intergovernmental affairs as authorized and directed as to that representation by the Common Council;
  - (i) Act as public information officer for the City with the responsibility of assuring that the news media are kept informed about the operations of the City and along with the City Clerk and City Attorney that all open meeting rules and regulations are followed;
  - (j) Established and maintain procedures to facilitate communications between citizens and City government to ensure that complaints, grievances, recommendations and other matters receive prompt attention by the responsible official, and to ensure that all such matters are expeditiously resolved;
  - (k) Promote the economic well-being and growth of the City through public and private sector cooperation.
- (2) Responsibilities to the Common Council.
- (a) Attend all meetings of the Common Council, assisting the Council as required in the performance of its duties.
  - (b) In coordination with the Common Council, Mayor, City Clerk and City Attorney, ensure that appropriate agendas are prepared for all meetings of the Common Council, all Council committees, and all other appropriate committees and commissions of the City, together with such supporting material as may be required; with nothing herein being construed as to give the administrator authority to limit or in any way prevent matters from being

considered by the Council, or any of its committees or commissions.

- (c) Coordinate the preparation of ordinances and resolutions as required by the Common Council and Department Heads.
- (d) Keep the Common Council regularly informed about the activities of the administrator's office by oral or written report at regular and special meetings of the Council.

(3) Personnel

- (a) Be responsible for the administrative direction and coordinator of all employees of the City according to the established organization procedures.
- (b) Consistent with the statutes of the State of Wisconsin, recommend to the Common Council the appointment, promotion, and when necessary for the good of the City, the suspension or removal of Department Heads.
- (c) In consultation with the Director of Human Resources see that complete and current personnel records, including specific job descriptions, for all City employees are kept; evaluate in conjunction with Department Heads the performance of all employees on a regular basis; recommend salary and wage scales for City employees not covered by collective bargaining agreements; develop and enforce high standards of performance by City employees; ensure that City employees have proper working conditions; work closely with Department Heads to promptly resolve personnel problems or grievances;
- (d) In cooperation with the appropriate Department Heads and Director of Human Resources and after following City policies and procedures, make a recommendation to the appropriate City officers regarding the appointment, promotion, and when necessary for the good of the City, the suspension or termination of employees below the Department Head level.
- (e) Manage and assist in labor contract negotiations and collective bargaining issues.
- (f) Work closely with Department Heads to ensure that employees receive adequate opportunities for training to maintain and improve their job-related knowledge and skills and act as the approving authority for requests by employees to attend conferences, meetings, training schools, etc., provided that funds have been budgeted for these activities.

(4) Finances, Budgeting, and Purchasing

- (a) Be responsible for the preparation of the annual City operating budget, including capital budget, in accordance with City

Ordinances and guidelines as may be provided by the Common Council and in coordination with Department Heads, pursuant to state statutes, for review and approval by the Common Council.

- (b) Administer the budget as adopted by the Common Council.
- (c) Report regularly to the Common Council on the current fiscal position of the City.
- (d) Supervise the accounting system of the City and ensure that the system employs methods in accordance with current professional accounting practices.
- (e) Administer the City's purchasing ordinance, policies, and procedures including all purchasing and contracting for supplies and services subject to the purchasing ordinance and procedures established by the Common Council and any limitation contained in the Wisconsin State Statues.

(5) Cooperation

- (a) All officials and employees of the City shall cooperate with and assist the administrator so that the City government shall function effectively and efficiently.

SECTION II: The provisions of this ordinance shall be deemed severable and it is expressly declared that the Common Council of the City of La Crosse would have passed the other provisions of this ordinance irrespective of whether or not one or more provisions may be declared invalid; and if any persons or circumstances is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance and the application of such provision of other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION III: This charter ordinance specifically removes those duties from the Office of Mayor to oversee the day-to-day operations, management and administration of the City of La Crosse that are found under § 62.09 (8) (a), Wis. Stat. Any charter provision or any previously enacted ordinance or charter ordinance inconsistent or in conflict with this ordinance is expressly repealed.

SECTION IV: This charter ordinance shall take effect sixty (60) days after its passage and publication subject to the provisions of Section 66.0101(5) Wis. Stat.

---

Mitch Reynolds, Mayor

---

Nikki M. Elsen, City Clerk

Passed:  
Approved:  
Published:



# **CITY OF LA CROSSE**

**400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601  
(608) 789-CITY  
[www.cityoflacrosse.org](http://www.cityoflacrosse.org)**

## LEGISLATION STAFF REPORT FOR COUNCIL

File ID            Caption

Staff/Department Responsible for Legislation

Requestor of Legislation

Location, if applicable

Summary/Purpose

Background

Fiscal Impact

Staff Recommendation



## Craig, Sondra

---

**From:** Carol Herlitzka <cherlitzka@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 12, 2024 1:46 PM  
**To:** ZZ City Clerk External  
**Cc:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** City Administrator

Some people who received this message don't often get email from cherlitzka@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

I recall the last Mayor(Mr Johnsrud wanted this and also an ambulance service!!!) Let me see, where did he go, after we did not vote him  
In again? Johnson creek, wi?  
We need less government, lower taxes, people with a brain, common sense, maybe normal citizens working for the people. This liberalism  
Does not seem to be working!!? We had the coulee region humane society, picking up lost pets. Now we have a woman (\$80.000) added,  
A person watching the homeless (\$140.000) I think there may be another person helping Mr sampson? The police helping the dog catcher??  
Where does this stop?? More taxex, more construction, more bike lanes, I have yet to see those bike lanes filled with riders? Maybe  
The high schoolers should start riding there bikes, instead of cars.

Thank you

Carol Herlitzka  
Tax payer

## Craig, Sondra

---

**From:** Randy <czarh1@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 12, 2024 12:14 PM  
**To:** ZZ City Clerk External; Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Mitch and City council

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Attention Mitch and City Council,

This email is to oppose you voting and hiring of a City Administrator. If the Mayor cannot handle the duties of his position that has been this way for many years then I suggest he resign and we get another vote to get another Mayor who can do the work. Many companies are working with less and many people are doing more in their positions. Our city must do the same. I also do not believe we are in the financial status to be hiring for a City Administrator. also this position would now be hired and not able to be voted in by the people. That takes the voice away from the tax payers. Always remember the tax payer of this city is where you get the money from and we need to keep it this way. I sure hope others in this community are giving you their voice on this issue and we keep it the way it is.

Thank you,  
Baylee,  
A concerned citizen,

**Elsen, Nikki**

---

**From:** Elsenn@cityoflacrosse.org  
**Subject:** FW: City Administrator/Mayor

---

**From:** McGinnisCasey, Diane <[Diane.McGinnisCasey@sheboyganwi.gov](mailto:Diane.McGinnisCasey@sheboyganwi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 5:26 PM  
**To:** Trane, Andrea <[tranea@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:tranea@cityoflacrosse.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: City Administrator/Mayor

\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Andrea,

All is well here on the east side of the state.

I know this is getting to you a little later than you wanted so I am not sure if it will be helpful now or not.

One of the biggest pros of an administrator is consistency. Regardless of elections, you have a leader within the organization that can provide continuation of vision while elected officials change. The other big advantage is you have a boss that is over department heads (outside of elected positions) that can address problems with individual department heads and between department heads. The budget process was also easier with an administrator because he/she has the final say on what is presented to council. This simplified the process greatly.

On the flip side, one of the largest challenges is when the Mayor and Administrator do not agree. Then as a department head it can be difficult to navigate when you are receiving conflicting direction. At a minimum you need to educate the council and mayor on their roles and ultimately everyone needs to understand that employees report to the administrator and not elected officials. If you don't have a strong person in the administrator role, this would be very difficult to navigate.

Those are some high level thoughts. If you want more, let me know.

Thanks,

Diane McGinnis-Casey  
Director, Planning and Development  
City of Sheboygan  
920-459-3383

**Elsen, Nikki**

---

**From:** Elsenn@cityoflacrosse.org  
**Subject:** FW: City Administrator/Mayor

---

**From:** Caroline Gregerson <[cityadmin@wabasha.org](mailto:cityadmin@wabasha.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 10, 2024 2:36 PM  
**Subject:** RE: City Administrator/Mayor

*Benefits of an Administrator versus Mayor*

- I think for La Crosse, if the Department Heads were under the management of the City Administrator, they (City Administrator) could play a positive role to ensure departments were consistently working together. I would definitely recommend all departments are under the management and oversight of the administrator or manager.
- A good city administrator focuses in on the vision of Council and Mayor and then can ensure various departments are able to be given the resources and authority to coordinate the vision and work together on the vision. There can be competing priorities for each department, so they have a role in moving forward with the right option and bringing staff consensus. They ensure everyone is “rowing in the same direction”.
- One major role they have is oversight on personnel and management issues for department heads. Those can be challenging issues at times. Our policy makers are very thankful not to have a role in that. I take in any complaints about staff and manage those.
- Focus on employee engagement and addressing employee concerns by bringing in background in organizational leadership. Many city administrators, including myself, focus on time making sure their department heads receive leadership training.
- The system helps the Mayor and Council to be able to focus on policy direction.
- The professionalized management and background in municipal governance and budgets can be helpful. This position can strategize around how to bring resources to the table to advance the policy makers goals and with a strong background in budgeting and financial planning, can help them realize those goals.
- We worked on a strategic plan together my first year, mission statement, and so we have a pretty clear path and agreement on their strategic goals and measure progress against the goals. Every budget year, we look at the strategic plan and progress. That’s sets some benchmarks to measure success for Council and the Administrator. <https://www.wabasha.org/strategicplan/>
- Mayors still play an important role in advancing projects important to them or championing an idea and then having the City Administrator execute the idea.
- Council has the option to provide a City Administrator annual performance reviews and also has the option to hire/fire this individual with a majority vote. This ensures accountability to Council.

The benefits of the Mayor for La Crosse that I see are that I think the Mayor of La Crosse is compensated at a much lower rate than a traditional administrator. I do think the current system in La Crosse does correctly put a lot of leadership capacity in the hands of individual departments. For example, issues that I might handle in my current role, are done by HR Director or Finance Director in La Crosse. I do think the role of “Mayor” brings weight to any conversation. La Crosse has a strong tradition of Mayoral leadership. I think a lot of the effectiveness of either system, can also depend on the individual.

I am sure it’s going to be a good discussion!

Kind Regards,

*Caroline Gregerson*

**Caroline Gregerson, City Administrator**

City of Wabasha

**Office Line:** 651-560-4860

**Work Mobile:** 651-412-5553

**Email:** [cityadmin@wabasha.org](mailto:cityadmin@wabasha.org)

900 Hiawatha Dr. E, Wabasha, MN 55981

## Elsen, Nikki

---

**From:** Elsenn@cityoflacrosse.org  
**Subject:** FW: testimonial request

---

**From:** Mayor Shawn Reilly <[sreilly@waukesha-wi.gov](mailto:sreilly@waukesha-wi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 10, 2024 2:41 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch <[reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: testimonial request

\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Mitch;

I am of the opinion that a City Administrator is best for larger municipalities as compared to those with just an elected Mayor. My position is based upon my experience. I was a municipal attorney for 23 years prior to being elected as Waukesha's Mayor. I have been a student of local government for most of my life. I have been Mayor of Waukesha for more than 10 years. There are times I wish I was a "Strong" Mayor, for my own selfish purposes. I truly believe however that the "Weak" Mayor/City Administrator model is what works best for the wellbeing and continuity of a city over time. (I am leaving out any comments regarding the City Manager form of government).

The two main reasons I have this opinion is that a City Administrator is insurance that professionalism and expertise in running the city has a high baseline at all times. The other main reason is that the Common Council generally will have its policy decisions followed more directly if there is a City Administrator/Mayor than if there is just an elected Mayor (without any City Administrator).

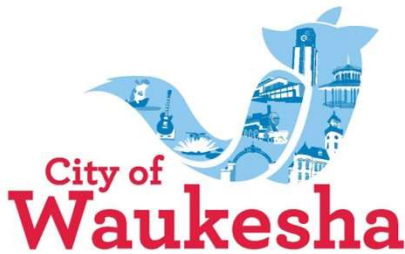
Continued professionalism and expertise are essential for a city to thrive. Elected Mayors can be good or bad. With a good Mayor, the city can thrive and be run professionally without any major problems. I recognize that many elected Mayors have the skills needed to run a large operation with many employees and large budgets. Often however, the elected Mayor lacks some (or all) of the needed skills to direct a large number of employees and run a complex and large organization. There are many examples where a Mayor was elected that did not have professionalism or expertise. At some point, I think every municipality makes the wrong choice as to whether it elected the best person for the job. We can all recall situations where the elected Mayor was a continual detriment to the well being of the community. If there is an Administrator, the bad Mayor problem is not cured but the overall damages to the integrity and reputation of the city are minimized because there is a professional individual with the authority to continue running the city day to day. Without a City Administrator, if there is a Mayor that actively creates detrimental issues, the Common Council should step in to take over more responsibility of the day to day running of the city. This is extremely difficult both procedurally and in practice. The Common Council needs to publicly step in and remove aspects of the authority of the Mayor. Besides figuring out how to accomplish this, it takes time. While this is occurring, the administration of the city is in a free fall. It can then take years for the city to get back on track. If there is a City Administrator, the process of blunting the bad actions of an incompetent Mayor are much easier and the fallout will never be as severe.

I also am a firm believer that the ultimate policy maker for municipalities is the majority vote of the Common Council. Whether a Mayor is good or bad, if there is a City Administrator, the policy decisions of the Common Council are more efficiently carried out if there is a City Administrator. Without a City Administrator, the Mayor is

in charge of carrying out the Common Council policy decisions. If the Mayor does not agree with the majority decision on policy decisions, the stand alone Mayor is easily able to slow walk any decision he/she disagrees with. The Mayor can pretty much ignore the Common Counsel policy decisions until he/she is called out on it. Even then, the Mayor can create impediments to the will of the Common Counsel almost indefinitely. When there is a City Administrator, the policy decisions of the Common Council will be followed. The City Administrator answers to the Common Council, not the Mayor.

Let me know if you want to discuss this further. If any of your Alders want to talk to me about this, I will be happy to make that happen.

Mayor Shawn Reilly



**Shawn N. Reilly**

Mayor  
City of Waukesha

P: 1-262-524-3700  
E: [sreilly@waukesha-wi.gov](mailto:sreilly@waukesha-wi.gov)  
[waukesha-wi.gov](http://waukesha-wi.gov)

201 Delafield St., Waukesha, WI 53188



---

**From:** Reynolds, Mitch <[reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 10, 2024 1:41 PM  
**To:** Mayor Shawn Reilly <[sreilly@waukesha-wi.gov](mailto:sreilly@waukesha-wi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: testimonial request

**NOTICE: External Email**

This email message originated from outside the City of Waukesha. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you have verified the sender. If there is concern, please report this email.

Can you just write down everything you said in that roundtable and send it to me? That was spot on

Mitch Reynolds  
Mayor  
City of La Crosse, Wisconsin, USA  
608.789.7500

---

**From:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 10, 2024 11:35:45 AM  
**To:** [sreilly@waukesha-wi.gov](mailto:sreilly@waukesha-wi.gov) <[sreilly@waukesha-wi.gov](mailto:sreilly@waukesha-wi.gov)>  
**Subject:** testimonial request

Hey Shawn,

Hope things are going well for you in Waukesha. Really appreciated your presentation in Milwaukee and was inspired to do a five-year budget projection of my own. Man, that makes everything seem really bleak.

Also hoping you can help me with something. I will have an ordinance change in front of the city council in a couple of weeks to add a city administrator. Currently, the plan is to maintain the mayor as a full-time position. One of the things I have been asked is how the role of mayor changes with an administrator in place and whether having a full-time mayor under the new leadership structure makes sense. Since you are one of just a few with that form of government, I was hoping I could get some sort of short overview/testimonial from you that I can share with a council executive meeting for a meeting on Monday.

Look forward to hearing from you.

m.

## Mitch Reynolds

Mayor  
City of La Crosse  
400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
(608) 789-7500  
[www.cityoflacrosse.org](http://www.cityoflacrosse.org)

The information contained in this email message may be privileged, confidential and protected from disclosure. The email is intended solely for the intended recipient to whom it is addressed. Any review, retransmission, dissemination, distribution, copying, or other use is strictly prohibited. If you have received this email in error, please respond to the sender at [reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org) and delete the material from any computer and/or server.

Notice: Please be aware that email sent to, or received from, the City of Waukesha should be presumed to be a public record, that it will be retained by the City as a public record, and will be subject to public disclosure under Wisconsin's open records law. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, please do not read it or forward it to another person, but notify the sender and then delete it.



**From:** Bob Gollnik <rgollnik@lacrossecounty.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 27, 2024 2:37 PM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen; ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** Comments: Proposal to create a City Administrator position for the City of La Crosse, WI

Some people who received this message don't often get email from rgollnik@lacrossecounty.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Members of the Common Council –

My name is Bob Gollnik, Executive Director of the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC), and a transportation planner with over 20 years of experience working across the United States. Our agency focuses on regional transportation planning for the La Crosse-La Crescent area, with the City of La Crosse as our largest member. Our policy board consists of the highest elected officials from 10 area member communities and the La Crosse County Board Chair. We also have two committees that involve multiple City of La Crosse technical staff.

Since becoming Director in 2023, I've had the privilege of working with Mayor Reynolds, who has been an excellent collaborator, fostering many conversations that have benefitted our regional efforts. His leadership and vision has highlighted the importance of professional city management, regardless of who holds office. I agree with Mayor Reynolds that a City Administrator in La Crosse is perhaps more urgent than ever, and long overdue. Cities of La Crosse's size—and even smaller municipalities—commonly have this role to ensure consistent, effective governance. While many points have been outlined for the council, I would like to emphasize a few key areas most relevant to our work and the benefits a City Administrator could bring to La Crosse's growth and development:

1. **Professional Leadership and Continuity:** A city administrator can provide expert leadership to navigate La Crosse's unique opportunities, balancing natural resources like the Mississippi River with sustainable urban growth and other pressing issues. With experience working with public agencies across the area (and state), we see how professional management leads to effective decision-making and sustainable development. An Administrator also provides continuity among departments and external collaborations despite political seasons.
2. **Efficient Resource Allocation:** In cities across the U.S., I've observed that city administrators can excel in maximizing public resources. La Crosse, with its focus on sustainability and community-driven initiatives, would benefit from an administrator who could strategically direct tax dollars, grants, and operational resources among departments and toward high-impact projects such as infrastructure upgrades, housing, and public safety.
3. **Policy Implementation:** La Crosse's recent and ambitious plans—ranging from riverfront development to expanding transit options—require dedicated oversight. A city administrator could streamline the execution of these plans, ensuring they are carried out efficiently and in line with the city's long-term visions.
4. **Day-to-Day Operations:** Managing the complexities of La Crosse, including public safety, environmental challenges like flooding, and a vibrant tourism sector, requires dedicated administrative focus. A city administrator could handle these operational details, freeing the mayor and council to prioritize strategic policy decisions and community engagement.

5. **Long-Term Planning:** Drawing on state and national best practices, a city administrator would help guide La Crosse through strategic growth, including economic development, affordable housing, homelessness concerns, and sustainability. This role would be crucial in planning for the city's future while maintaining a high quality of life for current residents.
6. **Non-Partisan Leadership:** As someone with experience working in diverse political environments, I have seen how a city administrator's non-partisan role ensures that decisions are based on professional expertise and community needs rather than political cycles. La Crosse could benefit from this continuity in leadership. The administrator also serves as a valuable resource in acclimating new administrations to key processes and initiatives within the city.
7. **Improved City Council Functionality:** A city administrator would allow La Crosse's city council to focus on legislation and community engagement, ensuring that administrative functions, such as budgeting and staff management, are professionally handled.
8. **Crisis Management:** From flooding to economic shifts to tourism-related events, La Crosse faces its share of challenges. Having observed city administrators in similar cities, their ability to coordinate rapid, efficient responses in times of crisis ensures better protection for residents and businesses.
9. **Community Engagement:** City administrators in other regions have proven effective at fostering meaningful dialogue between residents, businesses, and local governments. La Crosse, with its strong community identity, would benefit from a city administrator who facilitates this engagement, ensuring that public input drives decision-making.
10. **Accountability and Performance:** The city administrator is accountable to the council and public, La Crosse would see greater transparency and measurable performance in city operations and within city departments. This structure ensures that goals are met and that public trust remains strong.

I believe the role of a City Administrator would significantly enhance La Crosse's governance, providing stability and professional management to address the city's current and future needs while expanding collaborative opportunities with regional partners like us.

Please contact me if any of you would like to discuss further, and I strongly encourage you to consider this important ordinance.

Sincerely,

Bob Gollnik

**Bob Gollnik**

Executive Director – La Crosse Area Planning Committee (MPO)

Phone 608-785-5977/612-720-1852 Email [rgollnik@lacrossecounty.org](mailto:rgollnik@lacrossecounty.org)

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

This e-mail and attachments are intended for the addressed recipient only. If you are not the correct recipient please notify the sender of the delivery error and delete this message. Improper disclosure, copying, distribution, retransmission, or use of information from this e-mail is Prohibited, and may result in liability and damages for misuse of this information.

**Craig, Sondra**

---

**From:** Kelly <kellysueleibold@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 1, 2024 6:56 AM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** Fwd: Support for City Admin in La Crosse

Some people who received this message don't often get email from kellysueleibold@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Good morning City Council members! Please see the forwarded message below.

I saw a great LTE in the Tribune this morning from an Aron Newberry that I'll steal a quote from: "This investment in professional management will pay dividends by creating a more efficient, stable, and prosperous community for all La Crosse residents."

When I was on the City Council in my hometown, a community in southeastern Minnesota of under 4k people, I assumed having a City Administrator was the norm. Even though we had our political differences (as a healthy democracy should), having this leadership position allowed City business to run much more smoothly, and as Aron said, allowed elected officials to focus on long-term vision.

I hope you'll support this at J+A tonight. Thanks for all you do!

You can read the full letter here [https://lacrossetribune.com/opinion/letters/la-crosse-needs-consistent-professional-leadership---aron-newberry/article\\_6bd11530-7ec7-11ef-8174-97834a746b1d.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawFownFleHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHdSwACx2\\_p015OC2BKhH-pMwqmpF4Av7lBDqr2SA3jonXG3dCCUE3S73ug\\_aem\\_Rt30Sry9rG\\_Ll1v-RbcuFw](https://lacrossetribune.com/opinion/letters/la-crosse-needs-consistent-professional-leadership---aron-newberry/article_6bd11530-7ec7-11ef-8174-97834a746b1d.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawFownFleHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHdSwACx2_p015OC2BKhH-pMwqmpF4Av7lBDqr2SA3jonXG3dCCUE3S73ug_aem_Rt30Sry9rG_Ll1v-RbcuFw)

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Kelly <kellysueleibold@gmail.com>  
**Date:** Thu, Sep 26, 2024, 3:02 PM  
**Subject:** Support for City Admin in La Crosse  
**To:** <schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org>

Good afternoon Kristen,

I am writing to express my full support for creating a City Administrator position. I appreciated the comprehensive breakdown of the "rationale" on the City website, too.

As a newly elected supervisor on the La Crosse County Board, I've really enjoyed getting to know our Admin Jane Klekamp and to see how the flow of communication between department heads to her to the Board works. La Crosse County also has the opportunity to work collaboratively with the City on the Pathways Home plan, and you're well aware of the road bumps we've recently had to navigate.

I think an admin in La Crosse would be a huge benefit to the City. Perhaps with more consistency the Mayor's job would be less overwhelming from the start of onboarding and orientation. My small hometown in southeastern Minnesota has had an admin for years, and when I was on Pine Island City Council from

2018 to 2022 I saw firsthand how having an admin kept things internally organized so externally we could provide the best services to our community members.

Hope you're doing well and staying safe. Thanks for all you do.

**Kelly Leibold**

*507-272-5408*

## Elsen, Nikki

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Monday, September 30, 2024 11:26 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Subject:** FW: City Administrator NO date: 9/25

**From:** Paul Pierce <munchkinusnavy@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2024 8:38 AM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** City Administrator

You don't often get email from [munchkinusnavy@yahoo.com](mailto:munchkinusnavy@yahoo.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

I vote NO to a city administrator. However, I believe the decision is a done deal and it will happen regardless the wishes of the citizens.

The Mayor will then become a figurehead and his duties reduced to groundbreaking and ribbon cutting ceremonies. The Mayor's salary should then become a part time position with a substantial reduction in pay.

Paul Pierce  
Life Long La Crosse Resident

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

**Elsen, Nikki**

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Monday, September 30, 2024 11:28 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Subject:** City Admin or Mayor but not both Date 9/25/24

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

To Whom it may concern,

It seems to me that this position is another costly redundancy, especially at a time when we are cutting services like Libraries and Swimming pools.. Either have a City Administrator or a Mayor-not both. Also if we hire an administrator- combine it with any similar positions involving communications public and interdepartmental. Maybe then someone will oversee departments calling citizens back in a timely fashion.

Sincerely

Mark Flottmeyer

La Crosse Resident and tax payer

You have never been in this exact moment before, so you don't need to pretend you know what to do -  
Brian Andreas

**Elsen, Nikki**

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Monday, September 30, 2024 11:28 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Subject:** FW: City Administrator - Yes Date: 9/25/24

**From:** Gerald Reichert <outlook\_CE5D8961F830C3C6@outlook.com> **On Behalf Of** Gerald Reichert  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2024 12:52 PM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** City Administrator

You don't often get email from [gkreichert@charter.net](mailto:gkreichert@charter.net). [Learn why this is important](#)

**\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\***

I am 100% in favor of a City Administrator!!!!!!!

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

**Elsen, Nikki**

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Monday, September 30, 2024 11:29 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Subject:** FW: City Manager Position - Yes date: 9\_25\_24

**From:** Michael Kopski <medk557@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 25, 2024 3:54 PM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** City Manager Position

You don't often get email from [medk557@yahoo.com](mailto:medk557@yahoo.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

**\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\***

Good Afternoon

My feelings on the new City Managers position is a positive, as I believe La Crosse has grown to a size where people who have ran, and won for Mayor don't have the knowledge, and background to manage a city of our size. I also believe the Mayors position should be a position of being a tie breaker for the Common Council, and a Ambassador for the City of La Crosse only . If the average salary of a City Manager is around 185,000.00, and the current Mayor is at 77,000.00, I believe the Mayor's position being non managerial should be shaved to 50,000.00, with an expense account of 25,000.00 as an Ambassador for the City, so he can ride in all the area parades, and festivals.

Sincerely  
Michael Kopski  
1811 Market  
La Crosse, WI.  
[medk557@yahoo.com](mailto:medk557@yahoo.com)

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer



**Elsen, Nikki**

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Monday, September 30, 2024 11:30 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Subject:** City Admin NO 9\_25\_24

schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org  
Office: 608.789.8696  
Cell (preferred): 605.413.7596

**FOR NEWS AND UPDATES SIGN UP FOR E-NOTIFICATIONS [HERE](#)**

**From:** randy kemp <kemps2112@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 26, 2024 9:24 AM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** The idea of hiring a City Administrator is another big waste of tax payers money. Most of the job descriptions are duties the Mayor is supposed to be doing. If the Mayor can't or won't do his job, and wants to foist it off on someone else, maybe he sho...

You don't often get email from [kemps2112@gmail.com](mailto:kemps2112@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

**Elsen, Nikki**

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Monday, September 30, 2024 11:31 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Subject:** City Admin Yes 9\_26\_24

**From:** Kelly <kellysueleibold@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 26, 2024 3:03 PM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** Support for City Admin in La Crosse

You don't often get email from [kellysueleibold@gmail.com](mailto:kellysueleibold@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Good afternoon Kristen,

I am writing to express my full support for creating a City Administrator position. I appreciated the comprehensive breakdown of the "rationale" on the City website, too.

As a newly elected supervisor on the La Crosse County Board, I've really enjoyed getting to know our Admin Jane Klekamp and to see how the flow of communication between department heads to her to the Board works. La Crosse County also has the opportunity to work collaboratively with the City on the Pathways Home plan, and you're well aware of the road bumps we've recently had to navigate.

I think an admin in La Crosse would be a huge benefit to the City. Perhaps with more consistency the Mayor's job would be less overwhelming from the start of onboarding and orientation. My small hometown in southeastern Minnesota has had an admin for years, and when I was on Pine Island City Council from 2018 to 2022 I saw firsthand how having an admin kept things internally organized so externally we could provide the best services to our community members.

Hope you're doing well and staying safe. Thanks for all you do.

**Kelly Leibold**  
507-272-5408

**Craig, Sondra**

---

**From:** Aron Newberry <newberry54601@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 1, 2024 3:13 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 24-1287 Support letter for County Admin.

Some people who received this message don't often get email from newberry54601@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

**\*\*\* CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **\*\*\***

As La Crosse continues to grow, it's time to consider the benefits of hiring a professional city administrator to manage day-to-day operations and ensure efficient, transparent governance. Cities and counties nationwide, big and small, including local examples like the city of Onalaska and Trempealeau County, have successfully hired administrators to streamline services, improve accountability and save taxpayer money.

A city administrator brings professional expertise in public finance, urban planning and service coordination — skills critical to our community's sustainable growth. This role would allow our elected officials to focus on leadership and long-term vision while ensuring city operations run smoothly and effectively.

This model would benefit local businesses, community organizations and residents alike. Supporters include small business owners, the chamber of commerce, neighborhood associations and nonprofit groups that recognize the value of consistent, professional management. A city administrator can help us attract investment, improve infrastructure and provide better services to residents without the political pressures that often complicate decision-making. This investment in professional management will pay dividends by creating a more efficient, stable, and prosperous community for all La Crosse residents.

Vote Yes on approving a City Administrator position.

Sincerely,

Aron Newberry

913 6th St. S.

La Crosse, WI 54601

**Elsen, Nikki**

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 1, 2024 8:50 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Subject:** FW: City Administrator - Yes 10\_1\_24

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

As a former personnel director for the city, I would agree that a City Administrator would be appropriate for a city the size of La Crosse provided a well qualified professional is selected. The Administrator must be of course kept free from the political arena with removal for cause only.

Jerome Rusch  
La Crosse, WI

If you want to speak on an agenda item, please sign up at least 10 minutes before the start of the meeting.

Registration slips are not collected once the meeting begins but will be made part of the record.

## MEETING REGISTRATION

Name: Paul Borsheim Date: 10-1-24  
PLEASE PRINT

Municipality of Residence: Neillsville

Representation: Bordon Construction  
If you are representing an organization or person other than yourself at this meeting.

Agenda Item #: 24-1287  
Please fill out a separate sheet for each piece of legislation in which you are registering.

---

### Do you support or oppose the agenda item?

- Support  
 Oppose  
 Neither support nor oppose

### Do you want to speak?

- Yes, I want to speak.  
 No, I do not want to speak.  
 I do not want to speak, but I am available to answer questions.

If you want to speak on an agenda item, please sign up at least 10 minutes before the start of the meeting.

Registration slips are not collected once the meeting begins but will be made part of the record.

## MEETING REGISTRATION

Name: BILL HARNDEN Date: 10/1  
PLEASE PRINT

Municipality of Residence: LA CROSSE

Representation: Myself  
If you are representing an organization or person other than yourself at this meeting.

Agenda Item #: 24-1287  
Please fill out a separate sheet for each piece of legislation in which you are registering.

### Do you support or oppose the agenda item?

Support

Oppose

Neither support nor oppose

### Do you want to speak?

Yes, I want to speak.

No, I do not want to speak.

I do not want to speak, but I am available to answer questions.

If you want to speak on an agenda item, please sign up at least 10 minutes before the start of the meeting.

Registration slips are not collected once the meeting begins but will be made part of the record.

## MEETING REGISTRATION

Name: Andrew Ericson Date: 10/1/24  
PLEASE PRINT

Municipality of Residence: La Crosse

Representation: \_\_\_\_\_  
If you are representing an organization or person other than yourself at this meeting.

Agenda Item #: 24-1287  
Please fill out a separate sheet for each piece of legislation in which you are registering.

---

**Do you support or oppose the agenda item?**

- Support  
 Oppose  
 Neither support nor oppose

**Do you want to speak?**

- Yes, I want to speak.  
 No, I do not want to speak.  
 I do not want to speak, but I am available to answer questions.

# GUNDERSEN HEALTH SYSTEM®

October 1, 2024

City of La Crosse  
Common Council  
400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept this letter in support of the charter ordinance to create section 19 of Appendix A of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse creating the position, duties and responsibilities of the Office of the City Administrator and removing duties from the Office of the Mayor.

Many of the core issues our community faces—both the challenges and the opportunities—are long-term issues. These are conditions we will face for decades, not months or even years. A community our size needs operational guidance and certainty to advance addressing these issues as directed by the elected Council and the Mayor. The creation of a City Administrator position would allow for continuity in daily operations of the city and would bring expertise and professional training in the operations of critical services in local government including emergency services, public safety, intergovernmental relations, and community development. A City Administrator has the potential to further the efficiency and effectiveness of services in the City of La Crosse, allowing for continued leadership in the region and beyond. La Crosse is poised to continue its rise as a premier community in the Upper Midwest. Implementing a full-time City Administrator will help advance that rise, allowing our elected leaders to focus on vision and policy while the Administrator manages operations. This will help city government be even more responsive to all citizens.

Gundersen Health System—becoming Emplify Health—experiences firsthand many ways municipal services and operations of the City of La Crosse impact our patients, staff, and the community. I appreciate your thoughtful attention to this request and ask you to support and advance this proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Heather Schimmers  
President, Emplify Health, Gundersen Region



## Craig, Sondra

---

**From:** Wendy Butler <wbwb2@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 2, 2024 12:55 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** City administrator

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from wbwb2@icloud.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Dear City Council Members,

I strongly support approval of item 24-1287 to hire an administrator for the city of La Crosse. A professional with expertise in planning, finance, and service coordination will be a strong support for our department heads and will save taxpayer money. I also support continuing our mayoral position - full time or part time to be determined in the future.

Aaron Newberry's recent letter to the La Crosse Tribune succinctly states my views. Please support the hiring of a city administrator.

Thank you for your service to the citizens of La Crosse.

Wendy Butler  
1224 Heritage Court  
La Crosse  
68 317-8865  
Sent from my iPad

Dear Mayor and Common Council,

RE: Professionally trained and experienced Administrator

I am writing this letter to underscore the crucial need for a professional Administrator in the City of La Crosse. The role of an Administrator is pivotal in ensuring the smooth functioning of the city's operations. Below, I present my thoughts and comments on this matter.

No matter the organization, be it a non-profit, educational institution, governmental body, small business, or corporate enterprise, many factors contribute to the organization's health. The organization's health allows for adaptation to change, creates the culture, determines production outputs, maximizes allocation of financial resources, and creates the greatest service for the customer. While there are many factors in creating healthy organizations, three main factors are Leadership, Structure, and Professional Skill Requirements. Working on your organizational health is a pursuit in which improvement always exists, change is constantly necessary, and creating the proper focus is absolute. Like many of you working in various roles in different types of organizations, I have learned to ask a fundamental question with both little issues, conflict resolution, and significant decisions that question is "What does great look like?" Once "great" is defined, putting the pieces to pursue that objective becomes relatively easy. From my vantage point of view, "What does great look like?" for the City of La Crosse operations platform, it is easy to define that our city has a structural issue that causes a skills gap. Below, I will define some of these issues from my perspective, with the caveat that there is no silver bullet to improving an organization. It is constantly focused on intentional work "on" the organization versus working "in" the organization. We must recognize these issues and work towards change and improvement in our city's operations.

In the case of a city, the vision is the will of the people (which in written form is all the plans sitting on the shelves, some of which may be lacking implementation); the leadership is based on whom they choose to represent them. We choose to have an elected administrator (mayor) handling day-to-day operations; we elect a new administrator every 6.2 years since Mayor Medinger was in office. Then, we expect this person to have all the skills required to administer the city's business. I often joke that every 6.2 years, the whole City of La Crosse gets on a giant airplane, then we elect one of us as our pilot and hope like heck they have enough skill to get it off the ground and, more importantly, land the plane with most of us surviving. The probability of electing someone with the skills required to manage the complexity of a city is as close to zero as you can get. To make matters worse, this "newly elected administrator" manages the city's day-to-day operations but has zero authority to get the work done, as that lies with our common council. Fundamentally, our structure creates an administrator without professional skill, then provides a work environment in which they have no authority. This is not what great looks like. We need a collaborative effort to address these issues and create a better future for our city.

Having worked in many communities, my experience in working with communities with a professional Administration there are many benefits. Three recent projects we have worked on are as follows:

1. Professional administrators implement plans effectively. We did a \$18 million project approximately three years ago; we were selected via RFP in mid-April. By August 1st, we had completed all entitlements, and excavators were moving dirt for the project. Our team spent less than 4 hours in public meetings. This project also included approximately \$1M in public

sector projects that we completed in our scope of work. How? The administrator managed the process with professional skill, and the whole team at the city knew their marching orders and timeline for getting work done. This administrator's plans were not on a shelf; the team was implementing the people's plans, and the council was exceptionally well informed and received updates on the process; they knew the city business. This administrator knew the city economics so well that they provided us with the market rate rent projection with examples; additionally, due to the public-private partnership, they also knew the support needed to make the project work. This administrator and staff "knew their numbers." We are starting another project in the community in 2025. This community is the benchmark for what does great look like.

2. On September 16<sup>th</sup>, we broke ground on a \$32 million public-private partnership, including a new public library, community center, and 78 residential units. This collaborative project included many partners, including the school district, senior center, library board, several community members, vision groups, and our development team. This comprehensive project with significant deal structure complexity falls on the skill of one person, a first-time city administrator who worked his way up the ladder and was professionally educated and trained. The city administrator has managed this process with timelines and specifics, laid out steps to finish, facilitated vital community input, and managed the outside professional services required for a successful project. The mayor and council were active in this project's public meetings, engaged in the vetting process, and, most importantly, championed this great new addition to the community's urban core and its lasting impact. In La Crosse, we closed libraries.
3. The final project will be very familiar. An experienced administrator led it at the time, taking place in the core of the City of La Crosse. At the time of construction, it was one of the larger dollar-volume projects in the city's core. This project was led by the County Administrator and included a county administration building, Belle Square Block, and The Hub on the 6<sup>th</sup>. These three projects changed our urban core and turned parking lots into residential housing and business use, converting a minimally used bank building and repurposing it for county offices and turning an asbestos-infused office building to be repurposed for housing, which includes condos. The role of the administrator was critical; I think you would be hard-pressed to "elect" the required professional skill needed to put this project together.

Other strategic differences between our current structure and that of a city administrator, from my experience, are as follows:

1. Having a trained professional administer the duties associated with the day-to-day management of a city allows elected officials to be more impactful in their service to the community. An effective administrator will provide thoughtful expertise, excellent communication, good training, and a comprehensive approach to supporting the vision of the elected officials/community, which causes and empowers more of the people's vision to be done. An administrator managing day-to-day details strengthens the voice of the people.
2. The number of people willing to run for office will increase as it will not be a full-time job. I appreciate the work our current and past council have put into running our city, but let's face it, it is a considerable time commitment that most people can't do. This time commitment is a prime example of structural deficiency in the city operations. I serve on non-profit boards, but

only if they have paid professional staff, which allows me to contribute to my area of expertise without an extra full-time or part-time job.

3. A professional administrator will create an environment where all department heads can focus on the production needed to complete the community's vision with the authority to make necessary changes. Currently, our mayor has responsibilities/duties to perform. Still, the reality is the council manages those department heads, and the authority to replace department heads lies in the hands of the council, which creates a work environment in which a department head does not have to listen to our weak mayor. We have a lot of excellent department heads in the city; we also have department heads who choose not to follow the direction of the Mayor, as I have witnessed over the years. In essence, our mayor has responsibility with no authority, which is a broken operating platform, leading to a workplace that is less than desirable. With candor, our workforce deserves a trained, professional, and competent supervisor.
4. Communities need capital from the private sector to complete projects and facilitate economic development. In essence, our community is competing with other communities for that capital. I recently spoke at the Economic Development Association of Minnesota Summer Conference. After the presentation, I met several professional staff and administrators working to move their communities forward; I did not meet a single mayor. They are not even in the game.
5. Our current structure creates a void in leadership in day-to-day operations as our typical modern-day mayor's tenure is 6.2 years; the first half or more of their tenure is just figuring out the job and developing professional skills. When you have this void in leadership, it creates an environment of a de facto administrator. For many years of my early career, this role was served by our Director of Planning, Larry Kirch. Larry, in essence, served as a City Administrator. I don't think he asked to be in the role; he was just willing to do the work and filled the void the best he could.
6. By having a professionally trained Administrator, the mayor can more effectively lead in implementing the people's vision. For a couple of reasons, but typically, in most organizations, the visionary and implementer are not the same person, and the skills required are different. Let the Mayor be the champion voice and visionary of the people's will. Let a qualified, trained, and professional Administrator excel in the operations and implementation of the people's business.
7. Regarding the cost of this new position, the cost is what you will pay for an administrator. You will get the value by fixing the broken operating platform. A simple 1% savings in efficiency in a 75-million-dollar budget will more than pay for this position, but the real value lies in unrealized opportunity cost. To see this in action, what was the net benefit of new tax revenue, homes created, and economic impact in example 3 above?

I could continue regarding the value and benefits of a city administrator in creating a healthy organization focusing on Leadership, Structure, and Professional Skills. But I will end by saying that I believe this decision is the most critical to come before the council during my time working in the city. Now is the time to act and work "on" the structural problems within the city by hiring a city administrator to implement the vision created by our elected body.

As always, if I can help in any way, I will. Thank you for reading this letter. I am cheering you on in this decision.

Marvin Wanders

**Elsen, Nikki**

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 8, 2024 3:27 PM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Subject:** FW: City Administrator Salary 10/8/24

---

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 8, 2024 3:24 PM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** City Administrator Salary

You don't often get email from [jamesheffer@gmail.com](mailto:jamesheffer@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

**\*\*\* CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **\*\*\***

The considered salary of the possible City Administrator for the City of La Crosse is more than DOUBLE that of the Elected, publicly chosen Mayor of La Crosse, Wisconsin.  
It is time for the La Crosse City Council to make reasonable and acceptable decisions for non-elected persons of POWER!

James W. Sheffer, Behavioral Science, R.N.

Sent from my Aspire ES 15

## Elsen, Nikki

---

**From:** Elsenn@cityoflacrosse.org  
**Subject:** FW: CityAdministrator 10\_08\_24

---

**From:** Gretchen Burns <[gobvol@gmail.com](mailto:gobvol@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 8, 2024 3:46 PM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <[schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org)>  
**Subject:** CityAdministrator

You don't often get email from [gobvol@gmail.com](mailto:gobvol@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

**\*\*\* CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **\*\*\***

I am in favor of a city administrator. The mayor's race in the recent years has been merely a popularity contest with most being unqualified and unable to meet the many needs of our city. Once elected we discover the inadequacies of the mayor and are unable to remedy it until next election cycle. I don't see why we should have both. Perhaps so the mayor can be a meet and great and ceremonial head. If we have both then the mayor's salary should be decreased to help defray the administrator's salary and the mayor would have fewer responsibilities. We are at a crucial point in the survival of the quality of our city. It is very difficult to compete with our neighboring cities in many categories and we need an intelligent and motivating leader. Perhaps a city administrator is an answer.



# Human Resources

400 La Crosse St., La Crosse, WI 54601 • Tel: (608) 789-7595 • Fax: (608) 789-7598  
www.cityoflacrosse.org HR@cityoflacrosse.org

TO: Common Council  
Mayor Reynolds

FROM: Rebecca Franzen, Director of Human Resources

DATE: October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

RE: Anticipated Costs for City Administrator

Please find below the anticipated wages and benefits for the City Administrator position, should it be approved by Common Council.

As previously stated, the recommendation by McGrath Human Resources Group is that the City Administrator position be compensated at approximately 20% - 25% higher than department head positions to maintain an appropriate level of separation between the positions. Additional costs related to the position that have been assumed include (1) WRS employer contributions of 6.95%, (2) FICA Tax, (3) Health Insurance, (4) Life Insurance/Income Continuation Insurance, and (5) Non-Personal Expenses such as travel, training/registrations, memberships, and office supplies.

### Based on 20% Higher Than Current Highest Paid

	City Administrator	Notes
Contract Paid	Hours 2080	21.2% Insurance Rate and 3% COLA for 2025 assumed; both subject to change based on final budget.  Based on the highest paid employee as of 9.5.24 at Grade 19, Step 10
	Hourly Rate \$ 89.73	
	Subtotal \$ 186,645.89	
	WRS (6.95% of Salary) \$ 12,971.89	
	FICA (7.65% of Salary) \$ 14,278.41	
	Health Insurance \$ 17,552.87	
	Life/ICI Insurances (.006% of Salary) \$ 1,119.88	
	Non-Personal Expenses* \$ 10,000.00	
	<u>\$242,568.94</u>	

### Based on 25% Higher Than Current Highest Paid

	City Administrator	Notes
Contract Paid	Hours 2080	21.2% Insurance Rate and 3% COLA for 2025 assumed; both subject to change based on final budget.  Based on the highest paid employee as of 9.5.24 at Grade 19, Step 10
	Hourly Rate \$ 93.47	
	Subtotal \$ 194,422.80	
	WRS (6.95% of Salary) \$ 13,512.38	
	FICA (7.65% of Salary) \$ 14,873.34	
	Health Insurance \$ 17,552.87	
	Life/ICI Insurances (.006% of Salary) \$ 1,166.54	
	Non-Personal Expenses* \$ 10,000.00	
	<u>\$251,527.94</u>	

\*Non-Personal Expenses: Travel, Training/Registrations, Memberships, Office Supplies

Rebecca A. Franzen, SHRM-CP  
Director of Human Resources  
Gwendolyn A. Benish  
Human Resources Generalist

Audra M. Bloom  
Employee Benefits Specialist  
Angela M. Berget  
Human Resources Assistant

Angela R. Leisso  
Sr. Human Resources Generalist  
Heidi L. Stein  
Wellness Coordinator

The City Administrator's wages and benefits will be paid by the General Fund (50%), Enterprise Fund (45%) and TIF Admin (5%).

Based on the hiring plan that is proposed, we likely will not fill the role until July 2025. Below is an estimated budgetary impact for 2025. The Director of Finance and I are anticipating a cost of **\$121,284.47** - **\$125,763.97** for 2025.

Based on 20% Higher Than Current Highest

Paid Employee

General Fund	50%	\$	60,642.24
Enterprise Fund	45%	\$	54,578.01
TIF Admin	5%	\$	6,064.22
		\$	<u>121,284.47</u>

Based on 25% Higher Than Current Highest

Paid Employee

General Fund	50%	\$	62,881.99
Enterprise Fund	45%	\$	56,593.79
TIF Admin	5%	\$	6,288.20
		\$	<u>125,763.97</u>





# Human Resources

400 La Crosse St., La Crosse, WI 54601 • Tel: (608) 789-7595 • Fax: (608) 789-7598  
www.cityoflacrosse.org HR@cityoflacrosse.org

TO: Common Council  
Mayor Reynolds

FROM: Rebecca Franzen, Director of Human Resources

DATE: October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

RE: Draft Hiring Plan for City Administrator

### The Hiring Team:

To properly facilitate the hiring process of **City Administrator**, it is the Director of Human Resources recommendation that the hiring process is facilitated by a team referred to as the *City Administrator Search Team* with two sub teams: (1) the core team and (2) the selection team. The core team’s role is to manage the logistics of the process which includes outreach planning, time-lining, crafting position advertisements, etc. The members of the core team would be members of the Human Resources department and the recruitment firm.

The selection team’s role will be to participate in the screening process (i.e. resume review, virtual interview, in-person interviews and any other necessary subsequent interviews or public listening sessions). This team will be responsible for the final candidate selection.

The City Administrator Search Team will consist of at least 6 members. To ensure we have fair representation in the selection process, the selection team will be at least one (1) Finance and Personnel Committee member, at least one (1) Executive Committee member, the Mayor, at least two (2) department heads and the Director of Human Resources.

### Announcing the Position:

With the help and partnership of an executive recruitment firm, the position will be announced via numerous sources to ensure that a qualified, diverse pool of applicants is reached.

The Core Team will announce and advertise the position via the following channels:

- Recruitment firm reaching out to individuals and organizations on an outreach list.
- Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Wisconsin City/County Management Association job board
- Specialized mail advertising by recruitment firm
- City’s website
- Governmentjobs.com job board
- Any other locations recommended by the executive recruitment firm

The core team will monitor how frequently the job opening pages are visited and if we become concerned that we are not generating enough interest in the position, we will re-evaluate our approach and/or extend the application window.

**Rebecca A. Franzen, SHRM-CP**  
Director of Human Resources  
**Gwendolyn A. Benish**  
Human Resources Generalist

**Audra M. Bloom**  
Employee Benefits Specialist  
**Angela M. Berget**  
Human Resources Assistant

**Angela R. Leisso**  
Sr. Human Resources Generalist  
**Heidi L. Stein**  
Wellness Coordinator

### Screening the Candidates:

The Director of Human Resources will input all applicants into a tracking spreadsheet. The tracking spreadsheet will include a list of desired and required competencies that the screening team will use to review resumes and cover letters. The screening team will review all cover letters, resumes and key information about each candidate in the tracking sheet. Candidates will be rated red/yellow/green on how well they match the competencies listed in the job description/ordinance.

The screening team will have a virtual interview with all candidates that have been classified as green. Candidates classified as yellow will be revisited if we have any concerns about the strength of the green candidate pool. Candidates in the red pool will be sent regret notices.

Currently, the Director of Human Resources is anticipating at least two in-person interviews with the selection committee. Although this is subject to change based on how the interviews progress and if there is a need for further clarification from any candidate or the entire Common Council would like to host a special meeting and interview the candidate(s).

### Hiring Timeline:

Date	Task
By December 31 <sup>st</sup>	City Administrator Search Team is established with members from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Executive Committee</li><li>▪ Finance and Personnel Committee</li><li>▪ Department Heads</li><li>▪ Mayor</li><li>▪ Director of Human Resources</li></ul>
January 1 – January 31	Director of Human Resources gathers information on executive recruitment firms and brings a recommendation forward to the City Administrator Search Team.
March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Job posting goes live on all forms of marketing (i.e. website, social media, specialty organizations, etc.).
April 4 <sup>th</sup>	End of Application Period
April 4 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup>	Resume screening with selection team
April 28 <sup>th</sup> – May 9 <sup>th</sup>	Virtual Interviews with Candidates
May 19 <sup>th</sup> – May 30 <sup>th</sup>	First Round of In-Person Interviews with Candidates
June 9 <sup>th</sup> – June 20 <sup>th</sup>	Second Round of In-Person Interviews with Candidates <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ This will include a tour of the City with the La Crosse Chamber of Commerce's First Friend Program</li></ul>
Week of June 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Make Contingent Offer to Candidate <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Contingent on background check</li><li>▪ Pre-Employment Drug Screening</li></ul>
July 10 <sup>th</sup>	Candidate selection confirmed by Common Council
Week of July 28 <sup>th</sup>	City Administrator Hired

*\*Any breaks between dates on the schedule are intended to provide notice to the candidate to ensure availability and scheduling for potential travel to and from the City of La Crosse.*

*\*\*This is a tentative schedule and subject to change. We may add additional interviews with the full Common Council or additional department heads but that will be determined by the City Administrator Search Team.*



# Human Resources

400 La Crosse St., La Crosse, WI 54601 • Tel: (608) 789-7595 • Fax: (608) 789-7598  
www.cityoflacrosse.org HR@cityoflacrosse.org

## Selection of the Candidate:

The candidate selected for the role of City Administrator will be selected based on their education, qualifications and responses throughout the interview process.

The selection team will convene after each round of the screening process to review the candidates and determine which individuals will move forward to the next round and ultimately are extended a contingent offer.

The candidate selected for a contingent offer will be granted based on a majority vote of the City Administrator Search Team. The selection will be confirmed by the full Common Council.

Once a candidate is selected, the Director of Human Resources will work with the selection team and the executive recruitment firm to determine a wage offer for the candidate and create a contract with the partnership of the legal department. The candidate will undergo a background check, and a pre-employment drug screening conducted by a third-party.

## Onboarding:

Once the candidate has accepted the City's offer, all further onboarding will be handled by the Human Resources Department per usual City practice.

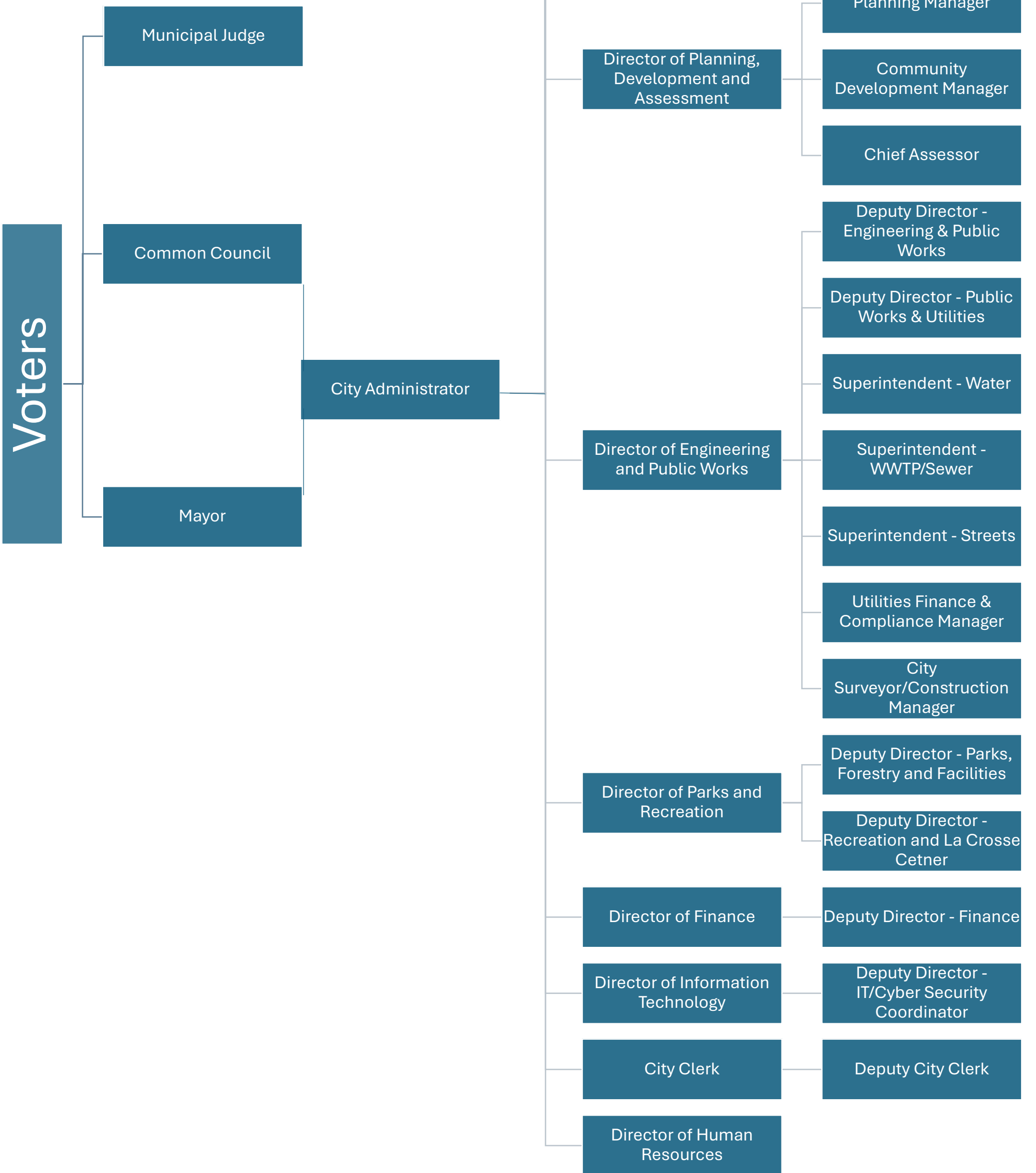
**Rebecca A. Franzen, SHRM-CP**  
Director of Human Resources  
**Gwendolyn A. Benish**  
Human Resources Generalist

**Audra M. Bloom**  
Employee Benefits Specialist  
**Angela M. Berget**  
Human Resources Assistant

**Angela R. Leisso**  
Sr. Human Resources Generalist  
**Heidi L. Stein**  
Wellness Coordinator

NOTE: the Library Board directly oversees the Library Director and staff of the La Crosse Public Library system. Boards/Commissions are not listed on this organizational chart.

NOTE: the Police and Fire Commission have authority over the Police Chief and Fire Chief for staffing (hiring, firing and discipline), but the City Administrator would have operational authority over the Police and Fire department. Boards, Committees and Commissions are not listed on the organizational chart.



## Elsen, Nikki

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 9, 2024 10:08 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Subject:** FW: City Administrator Position 10\_09\_24

---

**From:** Paul Pierce <munchkinusnavy@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 9, 2024 9:00 AM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** City Administrator Position

You don't often get email from [munchkinusnavy@yahoo.com](mailto:munchkinusnavy@yahoo.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

I vote NO to a city administrator. However, I believe the decision is a done deal and it will happen regardless the wishes of the citizens.

The Mayor will then become a figurehead and his duties reduced to groundbreaking and ribbon cutting ceremonies.

The Mayor's salary should then become a part time position with a substantial reduction in pay.

Paul Pierce  
Life Long La Crosse Resident

## Elsen, Nikki

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 9, 2024 6:25 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Cc:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** FW: City Administrator 10\_8\_24

---

**From:** Ruth Kurinsky <rkurin2@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 8, 2024 5:09 PM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** City Administrator

You don't often get email from [rkurin2@gmail.com](mailto:rkurin2@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

**\*\*\* CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **\*\*\***

I am not in favor of adding a city administrator. We don't need both a mayor and city administrator. Have one or the other not both.

## Elsen, Nikki

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 9, 2024 6:24 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Cc:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** FW: City Administrator Input 10\_8\_24

---

**From:** Anna Sprague <[sprague.anna@gmail.com](mailto:sprague.anna@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 8, 2024 9:19 PM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <[schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org)>  
**Subject:** City Administrator Input

You don't often get email from [sprague.anna@gmail.com](mailto:sprague.anna@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

**\*\*\* CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **\*\*\***

Dear Mx. Schadeberg and Council Members,

I am writing as a citizen residing at 1715 Barnabee Rd in La Crosse, WI, to express my support of adding a public administrator into the La Crosse's City Government. My personal and professional experience with the City of La Crosse has provided many opportunities to see where this position would benefit the City and its citizens. There are a number of silos that I have experienced between the various departments and depending on who you talk to at the City, you may get somewhat different answers or not be made aware of other resources available. Having someone with the daily oversight and authority to project manage the various departments in alignment with the goals set by the Mayor and Council would create efficiencies both within and across departments and externally with partner organizations.

I understand this can feel like a tremendous change and budget update but this is one of those moves that will allow for positive growth and will undoubtedly bring new opportunities as well as cost savings from the success of having a qualified administrator keeping the beat for everyone to work in tandem instead of against each other. Many other cities have shown what a successful working relationship can be with a city administrator, mayor and council, and I believe La Crosse is in a great position to see these benefits as well.

I'm happy to speak more about my experiences, and I encourage the City to support this new position from the mindset of an opportunity for growth.

Thank you,

Anna Sprague

## Elsen, Nikki

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 9, 2024 6:24 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Cc:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** FW: Public Comment: Proposal to Create a City Administrator 10\_8\_24

---

**From:** Trevor Sprague <tcsprague@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 8, 2024 9:33 PM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Proposal to Create a City Administrator

You don't often get email from [tcsprague@gmail.com](mailto:tcsprague@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

**\*\*\* CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **\*\*\***

Good evening,

I am writing in support of creating a city administrator position for La Crosse. A municipality of our size maintains a considerable workforce across numerous departments that requires greater coordination for day-to-day operations than we currently experience.

As an elected political official, the mayor is in the position to have more direction in policy and working with the common council. Individuals elected to the role of mayor often have no background in public administration, or even business administration, whereas a qualified City Administrator candidate would bring that experience directly to bear on the work of the city. An administrator free from the political process can provide consistency and efficiency in daily operations, provide more complete information and timely information to aid the mayor and council, and improve services for the entire community.

I believe the proposal is a good idea that would bring much needed support to our city employees, find and create efficiencies in the city's operations, and provide consistency among personnel changes in the common council and mayor's office.

Thank you,

Trevor Sprague  
1715 Barnabee Rd.  
La Crosse



## Elsen, Nikki

---

**From:** Schadeberg, Kristen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 9, 2024 6:23 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki  
**Cc:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** FW: City Administrator Position 10\_8\_24

---

**From:** David Buroker <peabody59@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 8, 2024 5:16 PM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** City Administrator Position

You don't often get email from [peabody59@gmail.com](mailto:peabody59@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

**\*\*\* CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **\*\*\***

To Whom It May Concern:

I led the City of La Crosse Human Resources Department for 5 years. After the conclusion of my first year in my position, the Mayor at that time, Tim Kabat, asked me to write a summary of my first year and provide any thoughts I had about how the City could do things more efficiently. My first suggestion was to add a City Administrator position. My rationale for this addition was the position would take the politics out of managing the operations of the city and it would help it run more effectively and efficiently.

The comparison I made at the time was to envision the Mayor being the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the city and the City Administrator being the Chief Operating Officer (COO). The Mayor would be the person providing their vision for the City and the City Administrator would be the one overseeing the operations.

In addition, since the City Administrator would be a city employee (not an elected official), it would also add consistency to the operations should there be turnover in the Mayor position.

This is a model that has proven to be very successful in other communities throughout the US. I strongly support Mayor Reynolds' recommendation in adding this position.

Sincerely,

David Buroker  
2208 Main Street  
La Crosse, WI  
Former Director of Human Resources

## Elsen, Nikki

---

**From:** Elsen@cityoflacrosse.org  
**Subject:** FW: In support of a City Administrator position 10\_9\_24

---

**From:** Natalie Heneghan <[natalie.heneghan@gmail.com](mailto:natalie.heneghan@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 9, 2024 2:47 PM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <[schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org)>  
**Subject:** In support of a City Administrator position

You don't often get email from [natalie.heneghan@gmail.com](mailto:natalie.heneghan@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

**\*\*\* CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **\*\*\***

Hello,

I'm writing to express my support of the proposal to create a City Administrator position for the City of La Crosse.

An administrator would bring more clarity and oversight to day-to-day processes. The person hired could effectively delegate and execute on Council's policies. This is an exciting prospect for taxpayers, local businesses, nonprofit agencies, and others who rely on a strong local government.

In both personal and professional situations, I've been frustrated by a lack of cross-departmental communication, clear over-burdening of city staff, and avoidable inefficiencies within La Crosse's city government. It's concerning to see all the missed opportunities and miscommunication. Many city staff I interact with fully acknowledge the gaps. I am confident the cost of hiring a City Administrator would immediately be offset by more efficient use of staff (and taxpayer) time and resources.

La Crosse must step up and join the ranks of municipalities across Wisconsin and throughout the nation that understand local government must be run efficiently, effectively, and transparently--and that it takes a talented executive to make that happen. Thank you for considering this proposal and reading my comments.

Thanks,  
Natalie Heneghan

**Craig, Sondra**

---

**From:** Andrew Ericson <ericson.andrew777@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 10, 2024 9:03 AM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen; ZZ City Clerk External  
**Subject:** City Administrator Support

\*\*\* **CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

**Mayor Reynolds and Common Council,**

I am writing to express my strong support for the creation of the City Administrator position in La Crosse.

As I mentioned during the J&A meeting last week, I fully endorse this initiative. Since Mayor Reynolds first brought up the idea in his State of the City address last January, I've been giving it a lot of thought. Initially, I was unsure, as I hadn't heard much about the role before. But the more I learned, the more it made sense. It's a smart, practical solution for a city like ours. Frankly, it was surprising to realize that we don't already have a "COO" type role. As I've come to understand the broad and nearly impossible responsibilities currently placed on the Mayor, it makes me wonder why we've waited so long to act.

Reading our comprehensive plan fills me with excitement for what this wonderful city can grow into. But if we truly want to reach that vision, we need to be serious about how we manage our operations now. I believe the best way to set us up for future success is by bringing in a City Administrator as soon as possible.

I understand the concerns about adding expenses to an already tight budget. For a moment, that gave me pause as well. But then I realized that part of the reason we're facing these budget challenges is due to short-term thinking and decision-making. This budget situation should serve as a wake-up call—an opportunity to bring on a City Administrator who can help us plan for the long term and manage our human, financial, and capital resources more effectively in the face of difficult headwinds.

I appreciate that La Crosse isn't breaking new ground with this discussion. The City Administrator role has been successfully implemented in municipalities across Wisconsin.

Looking ahead to the next mayoral election, I've been considering the difficult decision that city residents will have to make. On one hand, voters are looking for a mayor with a clear vision for the city's future in a shifting political environment. On the other hand, the role requires someone capable of managing the day-to-day operations of the city. It's almost impossible for voters to assess whether a prospective mayor would excel as a "COO" without the kind of thorough interview process and reference checks you'd expect for such a role. We need to separate these two functions.

In conclusion, I want what is best for La Crosse, and I firmly believe that creating a City Administrator position is the best path forward for our city.

**Respectfully,**  
Andrew Ericson  
La Crosse

**Elsen, Nikki**

---

**From:** Elsenn@cityoflacrosse.org  
**Subject:** FW: City Administrator 10\_09\_24

---

**From:** Troy Nedegaard <[tnedegaard21@gmail.com](mailto:tnedegaard21@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 9, 2024 7:45 PM  
**To:** Schadeberg, Kristen <[schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:schadebergk@cityoflacrosse.org)>  
**Subject:** City Administrator

You don't often get email from [tnedegaard21@gmail.com](mailto:tnedegaard21@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

**\*\*\* CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **\*\*\***

Given the opportunity to express my opinion I am not in favor of a proposed City Administrator. This is a waste of City financial resources (Tax payers dollars). This is taking away powers of the City residents that have a right to vote in a mayor that needs to do his or her job, which is both to act as a political figure and as an administrator.

To all council members please do not vote in favor of the City Administrator position.

City resident,

Troy Nedegaard

# Proposal to create a City Administrator position for the City of La Crosse, WI

## City Council to consider at October 10, 2024 meeting

Post Date: 09/24/2024



**Legislation has been introduced to add the position of City Administrator in the City of La Crosse.**

The information presented here is designed to provide some background on the nature of the position, how the addition may change operations of city government, and fiscal impacts of adding the position.

See [Proposed Ordinance](#)

[Professional Municipal Administrators - FAQs](#): Wisconsin City/County Management Association

Please review and help guide decision-making of the Common Council and Mayor on this issue with your comments.

### Rationale

Local governments are complex organizations that require expertise in community development, public safety, public works, emergency preparedness, planning, personnel, finance, customer service, intergovernmental relations and an administrative structure that encourages and supports overall team organization.

Additionally, communities throughout Wisconsin are increasingly facing global economic competition. Their abilities to compete depend not only on private sector initiatives, but on sophisticated and aggressive public efforts as well. The need for professional municipal administration is not a matter of a failure of local government, but rather adapting to changing condition by increasing the capacity of a municipality to provide effective and efficient services.

A publication of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities states that “as the need for full-time municipal management becomes greater, there has been a significant trend among Wisconsin municipalities toward hiring professional administrators.” An administrator acts as the chief administrative officer of the municipality.

## **Procedure**

Cities operating under Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 62 can establish the position of administrator by charter ordinance (2/3rds vote) or simple ordinance. The duties of the administrator can be tailored to meet the needs of the city, although there are certain responsibilities that should be included in all ordinances, especially in the areas of personnel and budgeting.

The position of the Mayor remains, except the responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the city is transferred to the administrator.

## **Expertise/skill levels of a municipal administrator**

Municipal administrators are trained to operate local governments. They are professionals in the same way that company executives, school superintendents, doctors and attorneys are professionals. There is a body of knowledge associated with their profession. Increasingly, the standard for professional administrators is that they have Master’s degrees in public administration, with training in budgeting, finance, personnel, labor relations, intergovernmental affairs, public works, community and economic development and public safety. They can gain administrative experience in other communities before they are ready to assume the position of City Administrator.

With focused education, training and prior experience, an administrator is already up-to-speed at the point in their careers when employment opportunities with larger municipalities become attainable. On the other hand, elected officials serving in administrative capacities do much of their learning while on the job. Administrators are part of a network of expertise and know where to go to get correct answers. They are committed to municipal administration as a career.

The community’s success is their success and, consequently, they have a very strong interest in doing the best job possible. Responsive Organizational Structure Administrators are responsible for the day-to-day operations of their municipalities. It is their responsibility to bring coordination to the provision of municipal services. They work to build a municipal team of department heads and other employees. They establish and enforce policies in the areas of personnel, purchasing, cash management, risk management, planning, and employee development. They are evaluated on their ability to provide more efficient and effective government. Administrators are responsible for advancing the organization in terms of overall performance and effectiveness. The administrator accomplishes this by bringing the council, mayor and staff together to set the priorities and to establish a framework for achieving the governmental mission of cost-effective quality services to the community.

Having an administrator provides more direct accountability to the council for the proper operation of municipal services. Elected officials know who is responsible. A dissatisfied council can easily dismiss the administrator. Stronger Council Elected councils benefit in several ways from an administrator. First, they can spend more of

their valuable time focusing on policy issues, community goals, and major projects rather than on administrative details. Second, they get better and more comprehensive information and analysis from the administrator in a staff role to enable them to make more informed decisions. Third, the changing role of the council may encourage more citizens to seek the office. Finally, the administrator can provide continuity when new persons are elected.

### **Duties of the Mayor and the Relationship with an Administrator**

The Mayor is the chief executive officer of the City. In this role, the mayor is responsible for the general welfare of the city. This responsibility is exercised in both a policy-making role by recommending policies to the council, breaking tie votes, and vetoing legislation; and an executive role by seeing that laws are enforced, and that city officers and employees properly do their jobs.

The responsibilities are mandated by state statute (Chapter 62.09 (8)) and consequently apply to mayor with and without administrators. The difference is in the manner in which the mayor exercises their executive responsibilities. In municipalities without administrators, the mayor exercises this responsibility directly by supervising day-to-day conduct of city activities.

- Department heads report to the Mayor and receive their assignment from the mayor.
- Department heads also receive assignments from the Council and are often asked by individual council members to perform tasks and projects.

Conflicting assignments and unclear reporting responsibilities can be avoided with an administrator. In municipalities with an administrator, the mayor exercises the executive responsibility indirectly by monitoring activities of the administrator and the various departments of the city government. The administrator is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city government including the supervisions of department heads. The duties of a mayor in a municipality with an administrator are as follows: The mayor shall serve as the chief executive officer of the city, performing executive responsibilities by monitoring the activities of the administrator and the various departments of city government to see that city ordinances and state laws are enforced. This requires knowledge of ordinances and laws and a procedure for monitoring city activities.

1. The Mayor shall serve as the policy leader for the community, providing policy information and recommendations to the Council.
2. The Mayor shall preside over the Council.
3. The Mayor shall vote in the event of a tie vote by the Council.
4. The Mayor shall have the authority to veto ordinances passed by the Council.
5. The Mayor shall serve as the chief representative of the city in relations with the media.
6. The Mayor shall represent the city in meetings with and presentations to other governmental groups, businesses, community groups and others.

7. The Mayor shall work with residents of the city in receiving their comments and complaints and seeking appropriate responses, in conjunction with the administrator and, if desired, the Council.

8. The Mayor shall perform any other duties not specified here that are defined in Chapter 62.09 (8).

### **Duties of Administrator in a Municipality with a Mayor**

1. The Administrator coordinates and prepares the operating budget as a key policy document and presents the budget to the Council.
2. The Administrator establishes governmental effectiveness and performance measures/outcomes.
3. The Administrator coordinates and supervises a cooperative and interdisciplinary team of professionals serving the varying needs of the community.
4. The Administrator ensures that the organization is a high performing and learning organization.
5. The Administrator is responsible to the Council for the overall coordination and direction of the day-to-day operations of City government.
6. The Administrator is charged with providing the Council policy information and recommendations and implementation of Council policies.
7. The Administrator ensures that there is a fair and uniform application of policy between all departments within the city organization.

### **Myths about the City Administrator Position**

- A. Hiring an administrator means giving up your right to elect your leader. **False.** The elected council members are the policy makers, and the administrator reports to them. The administrator is responsible for carrying out the policies on a day-to-day basis. The administrator can be terminated at any time by the Common Council.
- B. Hiring an administrator takes power away from the Common Council. **False.** It will strengthen the position of the governing council to make key decisions. It will, however, result in adjustments in who is responsible for what.
- C. Administrators costs too much. **Not so true.** Although the salary range is currently between \$170,000 and \$190,000 per year, efficient management will likely pay for itself within a short period of time.
- D. Administrators don't stay very long in one community. **False.** In Wisconsin, the average is about seven years and experiences over fifteen years are not uncommon.
- E. Full-time mayors are the same as administrators. **False.** Mayors are elected for their political leadership, not their experience and education in administering the day-to-day operations of the municipality. Some mayors may have administrative skills; others may not.

### **Additional Resources:**



UW-Oskosh Whitburn Center for Governance and Policy Research - Professional Management in Wisconsin Municipalities

<b>City</b>	<b>Type of Management</b>	<b>Population</b>
Eau Claire	City Manager	69,737
Fond du Lac	City Manager	44,339
Janesville	City Manager	65,911
Oshkosh	City Manager	65,948
Sheboygan**	City Administrator	49,773
Wauwatosa	City Administrator	47,289
West Allis**	City Administrator	58,950
Onalaska	City Administrator	18,975
Beloit	City Manager	36,449
Kenosha**	City Administrator	98,484

\*\*Also has elected mayor

Compensation range from City of La Crosse Finance Department:

The salary range we are recommending is \$186,645.89 - \$194,422.80 based on current staff salaries but may increase if COLA are approved and/or step increases are provided prior to filling this position.

## **Resources Related to Hiring a City Administrator**

### **Wisconsin City/County Management Association**

<https://www.wcma-wi.org/>

### **Recruitment Guidelines for Selecting a Local Government Administrator**

<https://wcma-wi.org/DocumentCenter/View/1594/ICMA-Recruitment-Guidelines-Handbook-Update>



Date: January 10, 2025

To: Rebecca Franzen, Human Resources Director

From: Malayna Halvorson Maes, Senior HR Consultant

Re: 2025 City Administrator

---

Salary

In 2024, the City requested recommendations on the City Administrator salary range. The firm collected salary ranges and incumbent rates for city manager/city administrator positions from the comparable organizations used in the 2022 study. The following comparable organizations were surveyed:

Eau Claire	City Manager
Fond du Lac	City Manager
Janesville	City Manager
Oshkosh	City Manager
Sheboygan	City Administrator
Wauwatosa	City Administrator
West Allis	City Administrator
Onalaska, WI	City Administrator
Rochester, MN	City Administrator
Winona, MN	City Manager
Beloit	City Manager
Kenosha	City Administrator
La Crosse County	County Administrator

At that time, we offered the City two very similar salary range options to tie the range to the existing compensation structure. We recommend approximately a 20%- 25% separation.

The range recommendations have now been trended by 2.75%, which would result in the range of \$153,921-\$201,879. Now, the City does not need to have a salary range. It can simply use this range to give the City Council salary range parameters for an employment agreement.

With that said, I understand the highest paid department director is just under \$160,000 per year effective with the 2025 salary increases. The City should be conscious of that and anticipate an annual base salary of between \$190,000-\$200,000 per year, which retains that 20%-25% separation from the highest compensated director.

In 2024, monthly car allowance, phone allowance, and deferred compensation contributions were also noted. Car allowance ranged from \$250-\$500 for 46% of the comparables. Cell Phone allowance ranged from \$78-\$120 per month for 30% of the comparables, and two (2) communities reported deferred compensation as a flat amount or percentage of base, although this is becoming more popular. It should be noted that the IRS limit for Deferred Compensation for 2025 is \$23,500. These are added items that may be discussed and included in the total compensation offer for the position.

### Responsibility Change

The City also inquired if the City should expect any change in salary at the department director level, due to the creation of a City Administrator. The Market does not distinguish a difference in these forms of government. The position of a director will continue to work on the strategic direction of a department, have oversight of operations, budget management, personnel management, policy management etc. They will all continue to have their industry market we will align their positions to. A City Administrator will have broad authority to lead the organization, ensuring the policy decisions of the council are carried out, strategic planning, preparing the annual budget, serving as a key advisor to the elected officials, lead and supervise the department directors, and ensuring operational and administrative functions are complete. The City Administrator does not carry out day to day department operations; rather this is a function of the department directors, who are hired to be the subject matter experts in their field of expertise. Given the size and level of complexity of municipal government for organizations of the city's size, I would not envision this to change.

Should you wish to discuss further as the City continues its planning, please let me know.

## Craig, Sondra

---

**From:** Chavalas, Mark <mchavalas@eagle.uwlax.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 3, 2025 11:03 AM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** re: City Administrator

Some people who received this message don't often get email from mchavalas@eagle.uwlax.edu. [Learn why this is important](#)

**\*\*\* CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **\*\*\***

Hello:

We are opposed to the hiring of a City Administrator for the following reasons:

1. It creates another paid government position for a job that should already be done by the Mayor and current staff of employees.
2. It provides a powerful leadership position that the citizens of La Crosse do not vote on. Thus we cannot vote the person out, like we can the Mayor and City Council.
3. The City of La Crosse is not much larger than it was in 1940 (about 42,000), but our administrative staff is much larger.

Thank you,  
Sincerely,

Mark and Kimberlee Chavalas  
114 19th St. South,  
La Crosse, WI. 54601