

City of  
**WASHBURN**  
WISCONSIN



# City Administrator Washburn, WI

Position Profile



Public Administration Associates



# The Community

Washburn, WI is a community in northern Wisconsin's picturesque Bayfield County and serves as the County Seat. Washburn is located on the shore of Lake Superior's Chequamegon Bay along STH 13. Washburn operates a full-service Marina with slips for rent and ownership, boat repair and store for supplies and souvenirs. Washburn is 20 minutes from the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and 1 hour from the 1.5 million acre Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest where outdoor recreation opportunities abound. Washburn is 80 minutes from Duluth/Superior, 3 hours from Eau Claire and 3.5 hours from the Twin Cities, MN where entertainment, cultural and professional sports venues are abundant. Originally settled as a Village in the 1880's, the current City of Washburn was incorporated into a City in 1904.

At 3.9 square miles, Washburn offers its 2,005 residents a great mix of residential, retail and commercial uses surrounded by an abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities ranging from skiing, fishing, hunting, camping, snowmobiling/ATV and hiking/biking trails. In addition to the opportunities to explore and enjoy Lake Superior, the region is also near multiple lakes and waterways. The community has an idyllic small-town quality of life with nearby big city amenities that make it an extremely attractive place to live, learn, work and play.

Washburn median household income (2022 dollars) was \$56,080 with 89% living in owner-occupied dwellings with a median home value of \$156,200. While Washburn's population is on a slight decline, its property values grow (31% increase in equalized value in the last five years).

Washburn is known as a recreational paradise but is also known for the hard work and resilience of its residents. Like many communities, Washburn experienced a shortage of EMT's with its ambulance service, so in 2022, the community approved a referendum to increase the property tax levy to hire full-time EMT's and increase pay for paid-on-call EMT's

Washburn is an employment center for the region with over 1000 people commuting into the City daily for work and is recognized regionally, nationally, and globally for the products created here. Over 30 large & small businesses with focuses in agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality, personal finance, medical clinic and personal services are located in Washburn.

In addition to Bayfield County as Washburn's largest employer, the Washburn School District is home to Washburn High School, Washburn Elementary School, Middle School, Early Learning Center and WI Virtual School. Additionally, Northland College and Northwood Technical College are located in Ashland, WI (7 miles from Washburn) and UW-Superior approximately 80 minutes away. Washburn Ironworks foundry produces and distributes products throughout the Midwest.



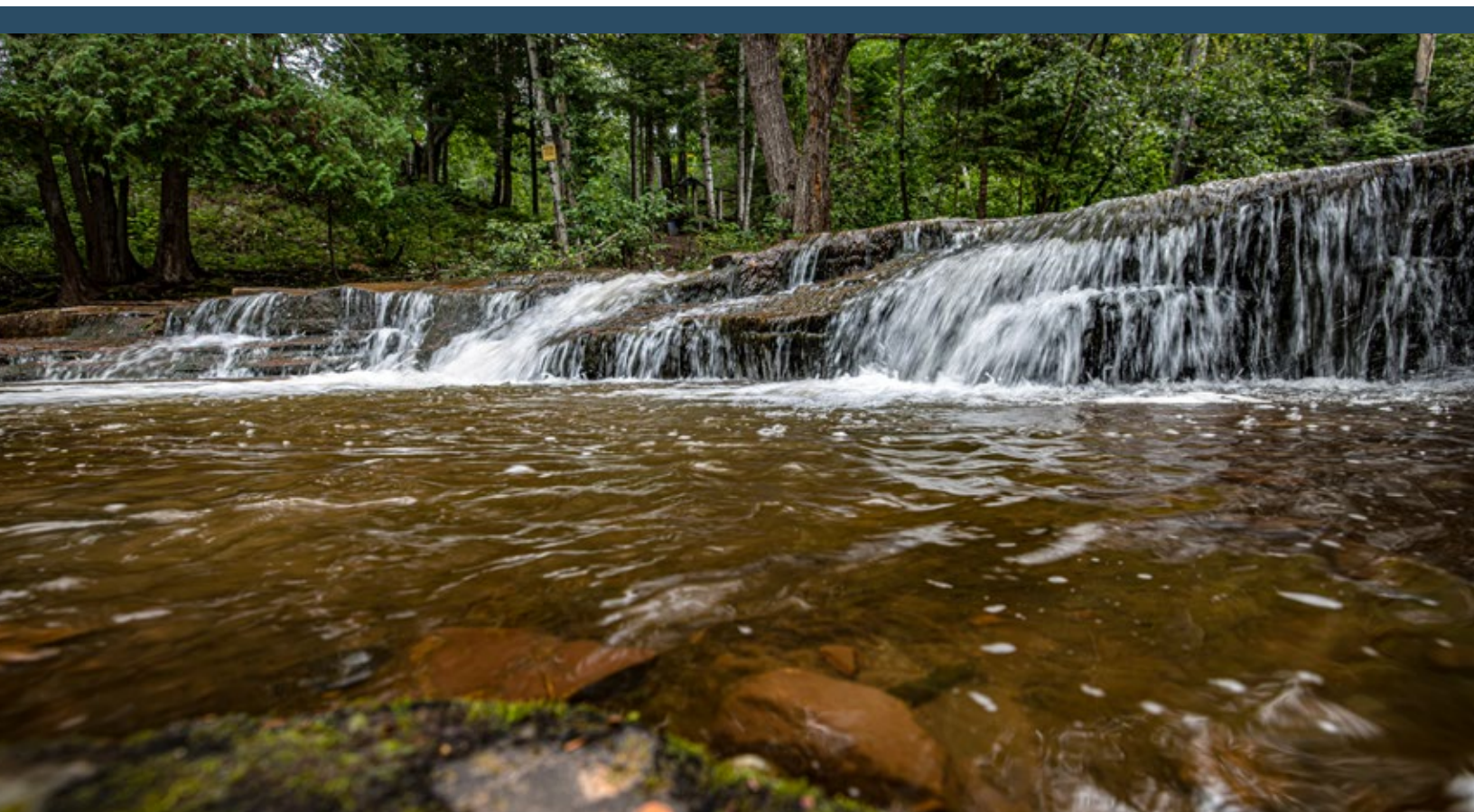
# The Position

Washburn has a City Council form of government organized under Wisconsin State Statutes Chapter 62. The Mayor (Mary Motiff) was recently elected in this leadership role in 2020 and the seven Alderpersons are non-partisan positions (two from each of the three districts, and one at-large).

The City Administrator oversees a staff of 21 Full time and 50 part-time and seasonal employees as well as the day-to-day City operations guided by policies and directives approved by the City Council. The City Administrator prepares the annual budget with the assistance from the Assistant City Administrator and 5 department heads (Fire Chief, Chief of Police, Public Works Director, Treasurer, & Ambulance Director) and approval of the City Council. Washburn also operate a full-service Library, Marina, stormwater, water & wastewater utilities, and 2 campgrounds. The City Administrator also directs internal City operations and external relations, listens to the concerns and requests from the community, and anticipates municipal needs. The City Administrator advises the Mayor, council members, Commissions and other standing committees based on research, state law and intergovernmental peer discussions.

Other responsibilities of the City Administrator include; planning, zoning administration, community and economic development, personnel management, vendor management and serves as City Clerk (supervising a Deputy Clerk/Treasurer). Additionally, the Administrator, in conjunction with the City Treasurer, manages City and utility finances.

The Administrator oversees an approximate \$2.98M annual operating budget (general fund) with a property tax levy of \$1.3M, excluding municipal utilities and a Tax Increment District.



# Washburn Finances

The 2024 Washburn City Budget totals approximately \$5.2M with a breakdown of budgeted expenses as follows:

General Government: \$463,962  
Public Safety: \$1,153,232  
Public Works: \$676,174  
Health & Human Services: \$42,157  
Culture, Recreation, and Education: \$511,411  
Conservation & Development: \$25,679  
Miscellaneous/Contingency: \$111,000  
**Total General Fund: \$2,983,615**

Capital Fund: \$374,410  
Debt Service Fund: \$315,091  
TID #2 Fund: \$30,000  
TID #3 Fund: \$82,684  
Harbor Commission Fund: \$218,428  
Water Utility Fund: \$487,107  
Sewer Utility Fund: \$604,594  
Storm Water Utility Fund: \$114,858  
**Total All Funds: \$5,210,787**

The City had a General Fund Balance of \$1,645,361 on December 31, 2023 which represents a healthy 55% of the 2024 City General Fund Budget. The City applied \$264,963 of that amount towards the 2024 Budget up slightly from the \$247,104 applied in the previous year.

Financial highlights from the Washburn 2023 Audit include the following:

- Total governmental fund revenues were \$5,827,278; including \$1,669,726 of property taxes, \$654,888 of general state aid, and \$3,018,673 of charges for services and operating and capital grants. Total governmental fund expenditures were \$5,327,948. The City reduced the amount of prior outstanding general obligation debt by \$470,779.
- Total business-type activity fund revenues were \$1,241,317; including \$1,219,983 of user fees. Total business-type activity expenditures were \$1,388,023. The City reduced the amount of business-type debt by \$263,419.
- The City's financial status, as reflected in total net position, increased by \$149,268. Net position of governmental activities due to operations increased by \$295,974 and business-type activities (water, sewer, storm water) decreased by \$146,706.
- Overall, the City's equipment, buildings, and roads are in good to fair shape. Buildings are in good shape; however, adequate funds for maintenance and repairs are needed to keep them that way. Roads are in fair shape at best with several roads in need of reconstruction. With the STH 13 project scheduled in 2024, many of the city streets are seeing much higher levels of traffic and taking a beating.

The 2023 Audit also highlighted the following factors that will impact the City's financial future:

1. Development within the City has not been adequate to keep up with necessary tax revenue generation. The Washburn Iron Works expansion and the Dollar General development are recently completed projects. The City is hopeful that a proposed new brewery will soon begin construction, which would be a significant development for Washburn's downtown area.
2. The City is taking on a large water and sewer project with the phase under construction in 2024. This work will coincide with the reconstruction of SDTH 13 in the City. Improvements will also be made to the storm water system and there will be additional street amenities to enhance the attractiveness of the downtown. Additional debt will be incurred for these projects, so the City's debt limit is expected to rise by 2027.
3. The City has struggled with frozen or declining support from the State of Wisconsin to maintain operations and services at current levels. While state aid was increased in certain areas in 2024, it has not solved the underlying issue. The City had planned to proceed with a campground expansion project to increase revenues for its operating purposes; however, a citizen led direct legislation petition was approved at the April 2024 election which has halted that project at least temporarily. Without additional revenue in the coming years, the City will be forced to make further cutbacks in operations and staff if current trends continue.





# Opportunities and Challenges

Despite its relatively small size, Washburn has an aggressive capital improvement plan, economic (re)development, quality of life enhancements, infrastructure maintenance and strategic planning initiatives underway. The major project is the reconstruction of Bayfield Street (STH 13) through Washburn. Phase 1 of the 2-phase project is well underway. The City Administrator will be involved in the levying of special assessments, coordinating funding, administering pay requests and coordination of communication with residents and businesses along the impacted construction zone. The City Administrator will continue the planning for Phase 2 with the DOT. The next Administrator must be willing to take the reins and continue to drive these plans forward while keeping abreast of surfacing economic development and funding opportunities that will benefit the City.

The City of Washburn updated the Comprehensive Plan in 2023. This update consists of a complete revision of the planning document with the inclusion of an Outdoor Recreation component, which will serve as the City's comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. Here's a link to the updated Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the City of Washburn partnered with UW-Extension in 2021 to develop Community Branding book to assist the City in marketing its assets. Here is a link to Washburn's Brand Report.

Future impactful opportunities for the next Administrator include continuation of the economic development momentum, coordinating a General Obligation debt issuance, expansion to the campgrounds and coordinating projects from TID No. 3 created in 2015.





# The Ideal Washburn Candidate

The ideal candidate should be a person with strong experience in budget development and management; capital improvement planning and execution and a track record of economic development successes. The next City Administrator shall possess the ability to think outside the box, possess a strong work ethic; be a team builder and leader in addressing community issues with a record of organizational accomplishments. The candidate should possess open and positive communication skills; demonstrate strong listening skills, be proactive in responding to economic development opportunities, work harmoniously with both elected officials and other governmental entities, be a leader in commercial development and community planning and have a successful track record of obtaining grant funding.

The Washburn Administrator plays a critical role in the continued economic development and community redevelopment that is a high priority for the community. The prior City Administrator has helped coordinate the City's economic development for many years, as well as a mindful manager of effective allocation of its resources. As such, the next City Administrator should have a good working knowledge of various business financing mechanisms, including grant writing, management of Tax Increment Districts, developer agreements and utility financing.

## Skills and Experience

The successful candidate must demonstrate a strong background in economic development and Tax Increment District management; budget development and management; capital project planning and management; as well as grant writing and intergovernmental relationships. Possess several years of progressively responsible administrative and leadership experience in a municipal organization. Consideration of candidates with private sector or military experience will be made if they can demonstrate accomplishments that directly relate to necessary skills identified.



# Qualifications (and Compensation)

Require Bachelor's Degree in public or business administration or related field; prefer Master's Degree.

Must have a valid Driver's License, or ability to obtain one.

Residency in the community is encouraged but not required.

Starting salary range: \$95K-\$115K DOQ, plus excellent benefits.

Additional information about the City's personnel and compensation policies can be found in the Washburn Employee Handbook. Contact Shawn Murphy, Public Administration Associates for a copy at SLQ9469@live.com. In addition to the benefits summarized, the City will consider relocation expenses for the selected candidate.

## How to Apply

Send cover letter, resume, salary history and five work-related references to Public Administration Associates, LLC,

**Attn:** Shawn Murphy, Associate

**Address:** 1155 W. South Street Whitewater WI 53190

**E-mail:** SLQ9469@live.com

**Application Deadline: August 30, 2024**

*Confidentiality must be requested by the applicant and cannot be guaranteed for the finalists.*

*Visit the community website at [www.cityofwashburn.gov](http://www.cityofwashburn.gov) for additional information.*

