



# Public Works Director City of Fort Atkinson, WI

Position Profile



Public Administration Associates



# City of Fort Atkinson Director of Public Works Position Announcement

The City of Fort Atkinson is seeking a collaborative and innovative leader to join its team as its next Public Works Director. The City is ideally situated between the Madison and Milwaukee metropolitan regions in southern Wisconsin and combines a small-town ambiance with nearby big city amenities. Fort Atkinson has a bustling downtown, business parks, abundant outdoor recreational opportunities, great schools, and many historic and cultural amenities.

The City is a full-service community that prides itself on being a great place to live, work, play, learn, and visit as well as for providing high quality municipal services.

Fort Atkinson's Public Works Director leads a department of multiple divisions: Airport, Building and Zoning, Electrical, Engineering, Shared Ride Taxi, and Streets/Operations, as well as Stormwater, Wastewater, and Water Utilities. The city engineer position is currently vacant and the City expects the new Public Works Director to be involved in the recruitment/selection of this position.

The salary range is \$116,000-\$127,890, plus excellent benefits. The Director reports directly to the City Manager. Operating under the Council-Manager form of government, the Fort Atkinson City Council is comprised of 5 members elected at-large on a non-Partisan basis for two-year overlapping terms. The 2025 total DPW department operating budget is \$13.2M including utilities. The position leads a staff of 30 full-time employees. The city 2025 Capital Improvement Budget is \$9.3M which the DPW Director also assists in developing and overseeing.

A bachelor's degree in business, public administration, civil engineering, planning or related field is required. A Master's degree and/or P.E. (professional registered engineer) designation are a plus. This position requires advanced professional knowledge in the principles and practices of public works administration, engineering, capital project development and implementation, field maintenance operations and program development. Requires knowledge of applicable laws, codes, ordinances, and regulations governing public works construction, maintenance, and engineering design best practices.



# The Fort Atkinson Community

Fort Atkinson is located along the Rock River in Jefferson County (population 85,740). The city is named for General Henry Atkinson (1782-1842), who built a temporary fort, Fort Koshkonong in 1832 during the Black Hawk War at the confluence of the Bark and Rock Rivers. Dwight Foster became Fort Atkinson's first nonindigenous settler when he selected the area for his home in 1836.

Fort Atkinson's 19th- and early 20th-century building history is preserved in the Main Street and Merchants Avenue historic districts. Fort Atkinson incorporated as a city in 1878. The city's largest employer is Fort HealthCare, an integrated hospital and health system. Other major employers include Spacesaver, Jones Dairy Farm, NORAC Systems and OSI Industries.

A large tourist attraction, the Fireside Dinner Theatre, draws thousands of visitors each year. Other local tourist attractions include the Hoard Historical Museum and Glacial River Bike Trail. Primary automobile transportation is provided via Highway 12, Highway 26, Highway 89 and Highway 106. Highway 26 provides easy access to Interstate 94, leading to downtown Milwaukee in about an hour; and to Interstate 90 leading to downtown Chicago in about 2.5 hours. Highway 12 provides access to the Madison metro area in about 45 minutes.

The city's school age population is served by the Fort Atkinson School District, which has four elementary schools, a middle school and a high school. Barrie, Rockwell, Purdy, and Luther elementary schools serve grades kindergarten to grade 5, Fort Atkinson Middle School grades 6 to 8, and Fort Atkinson High School grades 9 to 12. The community is also served by several private parochial schools, day cares, and school age care through the Badgerland After School Enrichment program (BASE).



# The Fort Atkinson Municipal Organization

The City of Fort Atkinson operates under the Council Manager form of government and has a governing body made up of five City Council members, including an internally elected Council President. Council members are elected at large on a non-partisan basis for a two-year overlapping terms. The city provides a full range of municipal services including police, fire protection, library, museum, parks and recreation, public works, water and sanitary sewer. The Director of Public Works serves under the general direction and supervision of the City Manager.

## The Ideal Candidate

The City of Fort Atkinson is looking for the following attributes in their recruitment for the Director of Public Works:

### **Skills and Past Performance**

The successful candidate will have strong communication and Leadership Abilities. Excellent communication skills are a must, including the ability to listen and understand (rather than to immediately respond), communicate with various community stakeholders and partners, and develop good relations with elected leadership and city staff. The City desires a Director of Public Works who has strong engineering and project management skills; can manage outside contractors, both construction and engineering; develop and manage budgets and control expenditures; and develop long-term planning and project execution. This individual must be willing to devote the necessary time to achieve the goals and objectives established by the City Council and City Manager. Knowledge of municipal operations and demonstrated leadership qualities are desirable. Candidates must have demonstrated experience in supervision of employees, financial management and budgeting. Experience and expertise in planning and carrying out capital improvement projects on a long-term basis is desirable, as well as positioning the City to receive state and federal grants.

## **Personal Qualities**

Candidates must have both personal and professional integrity. They must be able to demonstrate collaborative management and team building skills and utilize active listening skills in conjunction with effective leadership skills. They must have strong work ethic and a positive, productive attitude toward citizens. Candidates must not be afraid of conflict and be willing and able to mediate conflictual situations when necessary and appropriate. An ability to be an “out of the box” type of thinker is also desired. A person with a high degree of emotional intelligence is desired, particularly one who is adept at both self-management and management of relationships with others.

# **The Director of Public Works will oversee and manage the following divisions:**

## **Airport.**

Fort Atkinson Municipal Airport - including the maintenance and operation of all runways, taxiways, hangars, lighting and fuel systems, and ground leases. Capital planning includes the use of federal funds to invest in improvements to pavements, structures, and fuel systems.

## **Building and Zoning.**

The Building Inspector and Zoning Administrator is responsible for management and implementation of the City's Zoning Code, inspection program, certain aspects of code enforcement program, some responsibilities for building maintenance, and reports to the Plan Commission on items related to review and interpretation of requests involving the Zoning Code. The Public Works Director manages and provides support to this office on a frequent basis with Plan Commission requests, code enforcement issues, and Right of Way Permits.

The Building and Zoning Division within the Public Works Department issues all zoning permits; residential and commercial building permits; HVAC, electrical, and plumbing permits as well as the review of those permit applications. The Division is responsible for the coordination of those inspections as well as reviewing all potential projects to ensure that they are following the City's Zoning Ordinances. This includes reviewing new signs, building placement, building design, potential use, parking, fences and more. The purpose of this Division is to ensure that structures built in the City of Fort Atkinson are safe and built-in accordance with the state statutes, as well as using Chapter 15 Zoning Ordinance to protect the health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience, and general welfare of the community.

## **Electrical.**

The Electrical Division consists of one full-time Master Electrician/Division Supervisor. Examples of duties and responsibilities include:

- Plan and perform preventative maintenance and regular repairs of a municipal electrical system, including but not limited to electrical systems and wiring within all municipal owned facilities, city owned street lighting and controls, walk path/bike trail lighting, traffic signal and controls, water wells, sanitary lift stations, airport lighting, city parks, aquatic center, civil defense system, design/plan/install underground electrical conduit systems, 2-way vehicle radio system and various non electrical related repairs throughout the city.
- Screen Diggers hotline for possible underground conflicts and locate city facilities as necessary.
- Determine material needs, prepare documents, make recommendations and estimate repair costs to other departments and facilities.
- On-call 24/7/365 days a year for all traffic, lighting and other electrical emergencies along with after-hours Digger Hotline locates.

## **Engineering Services.**

Responsibility for planning, managing, maintaining, designing and inspecting all new and existing City infrastructure within the public right of way. Generally, this consists of the storm water collection system, sanitary collection system, water distribution system, streets, terraces, and sidewalks. The City Engineer position assists with these items. This position is currently vacant, and the next Public Works Director will assist in filling this role.

## **Planning and Development.**

As a member of the planning team, the Public Works Director, along with the City Manager, Zoning Administrator, and Public Relations Executive Assistant work to identify development and planning opportunities, vet development proposals and manage relationships with Developers, the County, and Towns beyond the City's municipal boundary. The goal is to ensure growth opportunities are preserved, requests for development are heard through the Planning Commission, and that the City remains competitive when opportunities for development come up. The Director of Public Works or City Engineer will serve as secretary of the Planning Commission (voting member).

## **Shared Ride Taxi.**

The Public Works Director is responsible for contract negotiations, responding to community requests, quarterly review of performance, annual submission of state grant funding, fleet management, and federal performance reporting for the shared-ride taxi program.

## **Street Operations.**

The Department of Public Works is charged with the responsibility of managing and maintaining the public portions of the City of Fort Atkinson infrastructure which includes the following:

- Roadways – 64 miles, or 686,400 lineal lane feet of pavement “concrete and asphalt”, concrete curb and gutter and sidewalks, and various grass greenspace areas within the public rights-of way.
- Storm Sewer System – 229,000 lineal feet of a variety of pipes, 1,600 catch basins and inlets, 800 manholes, and 120 outfalls.
- Sanitary Sewer Collection System – 352,000 lineal feet of a variety of pipes and 1500 manholes.
- Street Signs – 3000 various types of signage.
- Trees – 4500 various street terrace and parking lot trees.

The Public Works Operations Division also maintains all city fleet vehicles from the heaviest and largest fire trucks, plow / haul trucks and wheel loaders to medium and light duty pickup trucks, concrete equipment, and paint sprayers.

## **Utilities.**

### **Stormwater Utility**

The Stormwater Utility collects funding from property owners to reduce pollution from the City of Fort Atkinson into the Rock and Bark Rivers. The Public Works Director manages the utility including annual reports to the Wisconsin DNR, implementation and compliance with the TMDL, management and maintenance of both private and public collection and treatment systems, public outreach, and capital budgeting for long term project development, including compliance with the City’s TMDL.

### **Water Utility**

The Water Utility is responsible for providing a safe reliable drinking water supply for the residents and businesses of Fort Atkinson. The Director works with the Superintendent to ensure the annual maintenance is being performed and planning for significant capital improvements is in place. The Director specifically manages rate cases, main replacement, and larger strategic projects such as new pressure zones and standing water needs.

### **Wastewater Utility**

The Wastewater Utility manages the residential and industrial treatment of City waste. The Director works with the Superintendent to ensure annual plant maintenance is being performed and planning for significant capital improvements is in place. The Director specifically manages rate cases and the entire collection system bringing waste to the plant, including maintenance, inspection and rehab on over 65 miles of sewer.

# Future Challenges and Opportunities

Overall, the person in this position will have the opportunity to make a huge difference in a small community and see the tangible results of their work. The City of Fort Atkinson is on the cusp of more growth and development than it has seen in the last 20 years. The City is focused on supporting business and housing development while maintaining high-quality essential services.

Some of the projects that the new Public Works Director will be engaged in are listed below:

## **New Public Works and Parks Operations Facility**

- The project will be completed in spring 2025, and the City will celebrate with an open house
- The Public Works Director's office will be at the Municipal Building; however, he or she is expected to show presence at the facility

## **Ridge View Estates subdivision planning and development**

- Currently City-owned land with Development Agreement in place with private developer
- Features 35 acres of multi-family housing and single-family housing under contract, with another 40ish acres possible in the future
- Administration of a \$1.4M grant for the relocation and urbanization of the connector road (Banker Road)
- Utility and infrastructure planning for the additional 40 acres

## **New Affordable Housing Fund**

- Opportunity to be part of the creation, prioritization, and implementation of a new program to support additional housing in this community

## **Tax Increment Districts and Financing**

- The person in this position will be engaged in the planning, creation, and administration of TIDs
- 1 TID closure in 2025
- 2 TID closures planned for 2026
- 2 new TIDs in 2023
- Opportunity for additional TIDs throughout the City

## **PSC-Approved Water Main Replacement Program**

- Planning for road projects driven by water main replacement funds
- This provides an opportunity for the Public Works Director to build on existing long-term road planning and make it his or her own

## **Lead Service Program**

- Water Utility staff continue to work toward the goal of identifying and replacing all lead services in the City
- The person in this position will have an opportunity to shape the City's response to the lead service replacement mandates and the program over the next 10 years



**Grant Administration** - the previous Public Works Director did a great job applying for DOT grants. Now the City has a few that need planning and implementation:

- Banker Road - \$1.4M
- Sidewalk Infill (safe routes to school)- \$1.7M
- South Main Street Pedestrian Path
- South Main Street
- Commonwealth Drive
- Carbon reduction grant for downtown signals

**Connecting Highways** – the City has many connecting highways (12 East, 12 West, 12, 89, 106), all of which are in various stages of rehabilitation. Hwy 106 has been pushed back several times. The person in this position will work with the DOT on these connecting highway projects

**Former Loeb-Lorman scrapyard site remediation and redevelopment**

**Sidewalk planning, funding, and implementation**

**Comprehensive Plan “pulse check” and potential for update**

**Engagement in Wastewater Treatment Facility Solar Project**

**Potential redevelopment of Koshkonong Estates** - a series of undeveloped lots now owned by the City. The subdivision is currently being studied due to several water issues (artisan, stormwater, wetlands, floodplains). The person in this position will be an integral part in determining how to move forward with this subdivision, which will serve as both a challenge and an opportunity.

**Airport Master Planning**

**Attraction and development of new residential, commercial, and industrial projects.**

# How to Apply

If you are interested in this challenging and rewarding role, please send your cover letter, resume, salary history, and 5 work-related references (in one PDF file) to Public Administration Associates (PAA), LLC

**Attn:** Bruce Stelzner, Associate

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

**E-mail:** bruce.stelzner@yahoo.com

**Application Deadline: February 19, 2025**

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

For more information, visit the community website at [www.fortatkinsonwi.gov](http://www.fortatkinsonwi.gov). The Fort Atkinson Public Works Director Position Profile is posted on the PAA website at [www.public-administration.com](http://www.public-administration.com).



**Watch the Public Works Director Video Announcement from Fort Atkinson City Manager Houseman :**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vx50AuAv7uU>

