



City Administrator Viroqua, Wisconsin

Position Profile



Public Administration Associates



📷 Special thanks to Brandie Myhre for use of the photos in this document.

THE COMMUNITY

The City of Viroqua (pop. 4,524) is located in scenic Vernon County, in southwest Wisconsin's nationally recognized Driftless Region, an area known for its rolling hills, trout streams, scenic valleys, and unmatched outdoor recreation opportunities. As the county seat of Vernon County, Viroqua serves as the governmental, commercial, healthcare, educational, cultural, food & resource center for the region. Viroqua is an accredited Main Street America community whose downtown is listed on both the Wisconsin and National Registers of Historic Places. The community has earned a statewide and regional reputation for its vibrant downtown, historic character, entrepreneurial spirit, thriving arts, music & food scene, and strong support for local businesses and organic agriculture.

The community combines the charm and values of a small town with progressive economic and cultural development initiatives. Residents enjoy a high quality of life with excellent school options, wellness & healthcare access, diverse recreational opportunities year-round, and a welcoming community atmosphere. Viroqua is located approximately 45 minutes from La Crosse and about two hours from both Madison and Eau Claire.

The City is recognized throughout the Midwest as a destination community for tourism, local foods, outdoor recreation, arts & music, and entrepreneurship. Viroqua's strong sense of community pride and civic engagement make it an ideal place in which to live, work, root a family and grow old.

Recreation & Tourism

Viroqua is situated in one of Wisconsin's premier outdoor recreation regions. The nearby Kickapoo Valley Reserve encompasses over 8,500 acres and provides nationally recognized trout fishing, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, trails, hunting, wildlife observation, and cross-country skiing opportunities.

The region's scenic beauty attracts thousands of visitors annually and supports a growing tourism economy. Local cycling routes, rural scenic drives, parks & trails, golf opportunities, and outdoor festivals contribute to the area's strong recreational identity.

Viroqua is also known as a food tourism destination, supported by local organic agriculture, farm-to-table dining, artisan food production, farmers markets, and specialty retail businesses. The community hosts numerous events and festivals throughout the year that celebrate the area's culture, heritage, arts, music, and agriculture.

Schools & Healthcare

The community is served by the highly regarded Viroqua Area School District, known for strong academic performance, community involvement, and diverse extracurricular programming. Educational opportunities are further enhanced by private school offerings, nearby technical colleges and higher education institutions, colleges, and a folk school, within the city and county.

Well-rounded wellness and healthcare services are anchored in the city. There is a hospital & ER, Vernon Healthcare, shared alongside Emplify clinics, which provides comprehensive medical services to residents throughout Vernon County and the surrounding region. The community also benefits from access to specialty care and regional medical centers in nearby La Crosse.





THE MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION

The City operates under a Mayor/Common Council form of government. The Mayor and nine-member Common Council are elected on a non-partisan basis serving staggered two-year terms. Municipal services include police protection, fire protection, public works, utilities, parks and recreation, library services, cemetery operations, planning and zoning, municipal airport and other traditional municipal services expected in a full-service community.

The City Administrator works closely with department heads, elected officials, community organizations, business leaders, economic development and regional partners to advance organizational goals and community priorities.

Strategic Priorities & Capital Projects

The next City Administrator will play an important role in guiding several significant community and organizational initiatives, including:

- Completion and adoption of the new Comprehensive Plan, Outdoor Recreation and Park Plan and Historic Preservation Plan
- Economic development and redevelopment initiatives, ongoing and new
- Housing development and workforce housing strategy
- Update and implementation of the City's Capital Improvement Program
- Administration and oversight of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) projects
- Collaborate with Viroqua Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Commission to finish and open the Viroqua Welcome Center
- Major vehicle and equipment replacement planning
- Infrastructure maintenance and capital planning
- Long-range financial planning and budget management
- Continued downtown revitalization efforts
- Grant identification, application, and administration

The City has demonstrated a strong commitment to maintaining infrastructure and planning for long-term financial stability while balancing growth and redevelopment opportunities. The next City Administrator will inherit a city in motion and the foundations of a newly built City Hall, Fire Station and Police Station.

Economic Development

Viroqua maintains a diverse local economy built upon agriculture, tourism, healthcare, education, small business entrepreneurship, retail commerce, and light manufacturing. The City and its nonprofit chamber organization, Viroqua Chamber Main Street, actively promote business retention, downtown revitalization, redevelopment, tourism promotion, and entrepreneurship through several local, state, and federal economic development programs. The City of Viroqua currently maintains two active Tax Incremental Districts that support redevelopment and infrastructure investment initiatives and prioritize:

- Providing reliable services to all residents and a quality work environment for our whole team.
- Improving housing inventory and development to ensure safe, affordable homes of all sizes are available so residents can find their fit across their lifetime.
- Redevelopment opportunities that enhance our sense of place.
- Downtown reinvestment and historic preservation.
- Infrastructure improvements to create lively, safe, & accessible streets & parks.
- Business expansion initiatives.

Viroqua's historic downtown district remains one of the strongest economic and cultural assets in the community, featuring locally owned retail shops, restaurants, professional services, entertainment venues, and arts-related businesses.





BUDGET & WORKFORCE

As of December 31, 2024 audit figures, Viroqua has \$6.1 million in outstanding debt, supported by TIF and Utilities. Viroqua enjoys a healthy unassigned fund balance of \$2.26 Million or 41% of its 2024 general fund budget. The 2026 adopted budgets may be viewed [HERE](#).

The City maintains a diversified municipal financial structure and a strong commitment to long-term capital planning. The City is looking to the new Administrator to guide the 2027 budget development & review process.

2026 Budget Highlights

- General Fund (including Debt Service): approximately \$6.3 million
- Tax Levy: approximately \$2.95 million
- Water Utility Budget: approximately \$1.14 million
- Sewer Utility Budget: approximately \$1.56 million

The City's 2026 proposed general property tax levy totals approximately \$2,945,968, representing a 4.7% increase over the prior year. As of 12/31/2024, the City holds approximately \$11.43 million in outstanding general obligation indebtedness with a 2024 debt limit capacity of approximately \$21.98 million.

Additional financial highlights include:

- Active Tax Increment Districts #6 and #7
- Multi-year capital improvement planning
- Utility enterprise operations with substantial infrastructure assets

Staffing

Staffing includes approximately 38 full-time employees and approximately 58 part-time and seasonal employees serving residents through administration, airport, police, fire, public works, sewer & water utilities, library, parks, and other municipal operations.



THE POSITION

Viroqua is seeking an experienced, collaborative, and innovative leader to serve as its next City Administrator following the current Administrator's appointment as Vernon County Coordinator. Appointed by the Mayor and Common Council, the City Administrator serves as the chief administrative officer of the City and is responsible for directing daily municipal operations, implementing Council policies, coordinating departmental activities, overseeing personnel administration, preparing and administering the annual budget, overseeing economic development initiatives, overseeing zoning administration, and managing capital improvement and infrastructure projects.

The ideal candidate will possess strong leadership and communication skills, a collaborative management style, strong integrity, a successful record of relationship building, and the ability to work effectively with elected officials, staff, business leaders, and community stakeholders. The successful candidate will be an effective team builder with strong organizational, budgeting, project management, grant writing, strategic planning and economic development experience.

Salary range is **\$90,000-\$110,000** DOQ plus an excellent benefits package.



QUALIFICATIONS & IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

Education

A Bachelor's Degree in public administration, business administration, political science, or a related field is required. A Master's Degree is preferred but not required.

Experience

The successful candidate shall possess at least five years of progressively responsible municipal management experience or a combination of education and experience providing equivalent knowledge, skills, and abilities. Candidates with federal government, private sector, military, or other executive leadership experience will be considered if they can demonstrate accomplishments directly related to the position requirements.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate:

- Strong economic development and redevelopment experience
- Budget preparation and financial management expertise
- Capital improvement and infrastructure planning experience
- Strong zoning administration skills
- Grant writing and administration experience
- Strategic planning and organizational leadership skills
- Project management capabilities
- Effective communication and public engagement skills
- Relationship building and collaborative leadership abilities
- High ethical standards and professional integrity
- Team-oriented management philosophy and strong work ethic

Residency within the community is encouraged but not required. Confidentiality must be requested by the applicant and cannot be guaranteed for finalists. For additional information regarding the community, visit the official City of Viroqua website.



HOW TO APPLY

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

Attn: Shawn Murphy, Associate
E-mail: smurphy@public-administration.com
Phone 608-370-1663
Application Deadline: July 6, 2026

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

RECRUITMENT/SELECTION SCHEDULE

7/6/2026 - Application materials due to PAA.

Week of 7/7/2026 – Hiring Committee reviews applications – Selection of semi-finalists (6-10) to be invited for initial interviews.

Week of 7/27/2026 – Hiring Committee reviews semi-finalist candidates. Finalists (3-4) selected to be invited to Viroqua for an in-person Assessment Center. PAA begins in-depth reference reports on selected final candidates.

Week of 8/3/2026 - In-person Assessment Center with City Council, Mayor, and City Staff in Viroqua.

8/11/2026 – Viroqua City Council formally confirms appointment of new City Administrator.

9/14/2026 - Approximate start date for City Administrator (Assumes 30-day notice to current employer).