

THE CITY OF SOUTH MILWAUKEE





Finance Director
South Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Position Profile

Public Administration Associates



THE COMMUNITY

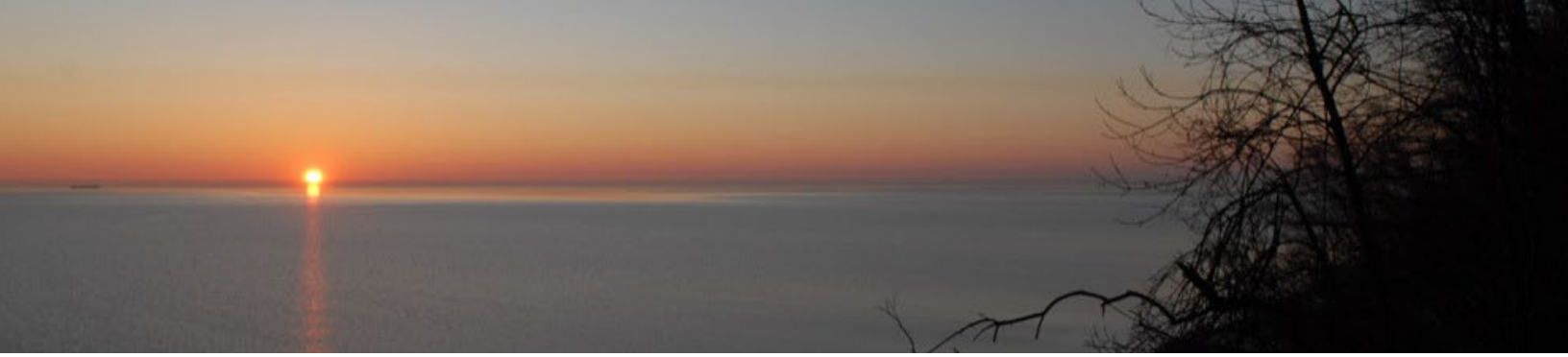
Located along the Lake Michigan shoreline just south of downtown Milwaukee, the City of South Milwaukee is a vibrant community where history, natural beauty, and a strong sense of community come together. With its welcoming neighborhoods, active downtown, beautiful parks, and convenient access to the greater Milwaukee area, South Milwaukee offers the advantages of a connected metropolitan community while maintaining the character and relationships of a close-knit city.

South Milwaukee takes pride in its community spirit, local businesses, and unique blend of urban convenience and outdoor recreation. Residents enjoy access to Lake Michigan, the scenic beauty of Grant Park, and a variety of parks, trails, and community amenities. Its established neighborhoods, local events, and active civic life contribute to a community where residents can build lasting connections and enjoy a high quality of life.

As part of the greater Milwaukee area, South Milwaukee benefits from access to regional employment, cultural attractions, and economic opportunities while preserving its own distinct identity. The City is committed to serving its residents, supporting a thriving community, and planning thoughtfully for the future.

For professionals seeking to make a meaningful contribution in local government, South Milwaukee offers the opportunity to work in a community that values both its traditions and its continued progress.

Visit the community website at https://www.southmilwaukee.gov

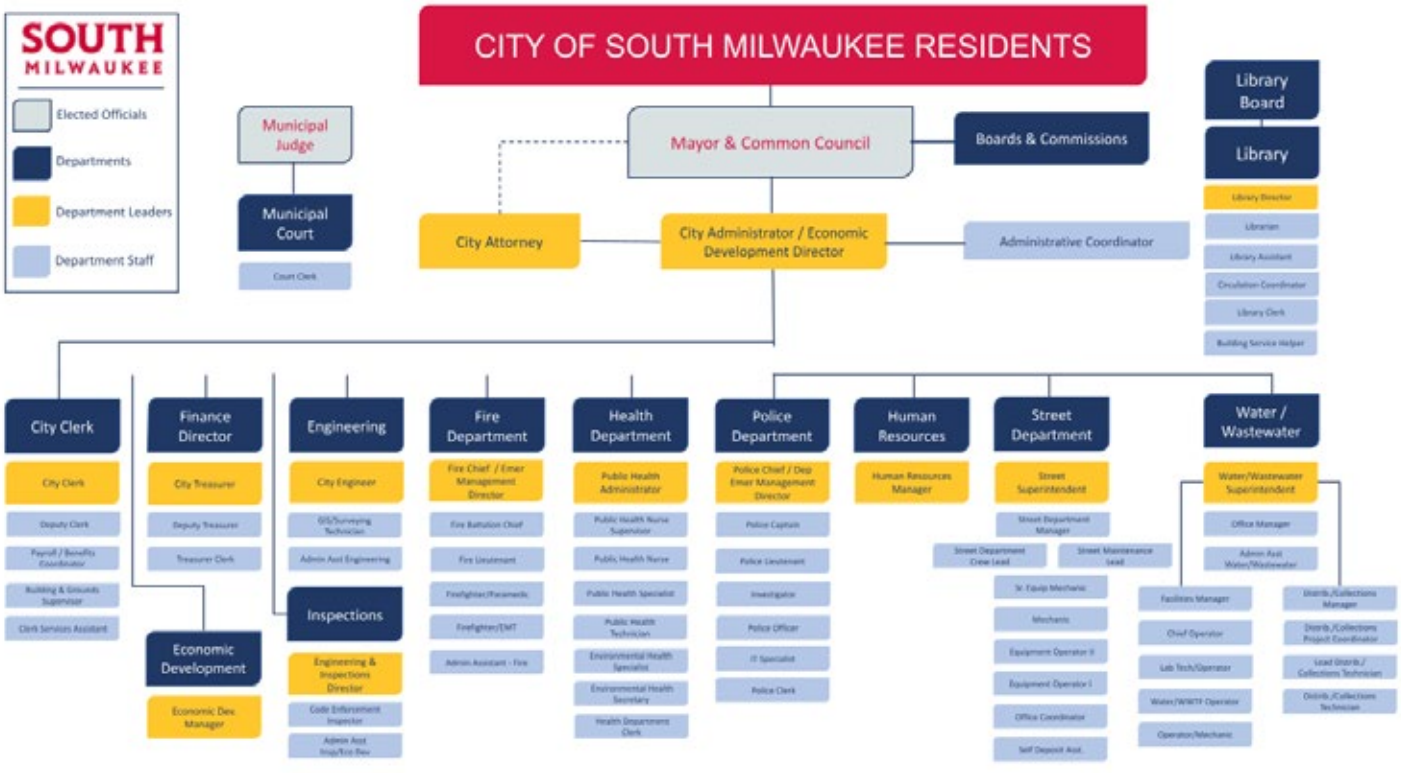


THE MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION

The City of South Milwaukee operates under a Mayor–Common Council form of government. Policy-making and legislative authority are vested in the elected Mayor and eight-member Common Council, while a full-time City Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the City and implementation of Council policies.

City services are delivered through a diverse range of departments and operations, including Administration, Finance, Clerk, Police, Fire, Health, Engineering, Inspection, Streets, Water and Wastewater, Economic Development, and the Public Library. The City also benefits from the work of numerous boards, commissions, and committees that provide oversight, expertise, and community involvement.

With more than 150 employees across its municipal operations, South Milwaukee combines a professional staff with engaged elected officials, community volunteers, and regional partnerships to provide a broad range of services to its residents. The organization is focused on responsive service, sound financial management, and thoughtful planning to support the community's continued vitality and quality of life.



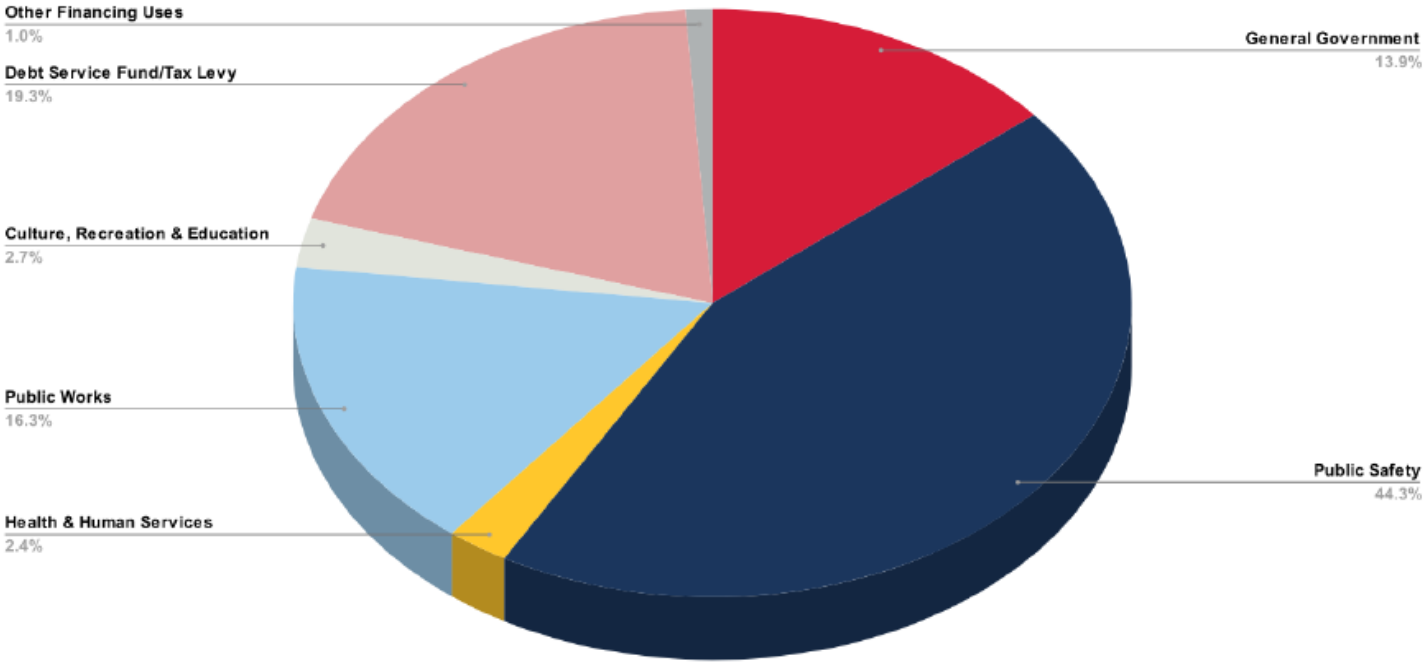


MUNICIPAL FINANCES

The City’s financial position is strong as its bond rating by Moody's Investor Service is an Aa2. This reflects the City's strong financial position, responsible spending, and moderate debt burden. The Plan Commission and Common Council continue to encourage and oversee redevelopment in the City's four active Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, while also pursuing other redevelopment opportunities. Many successful projects have been completed in TIDs 1, 2, and 3, resulting in increased property values in these areas. The City is also consistently seeking new and innovative ways to improve service delivery.

The General Fund (2026 Budget) – Total = $12,189,834

General Government-$3,405,682
Public Safety-$10,845,369
Health and Human Services - $589,976
Public Works - $3,983,105
Culture, Recreation & Education - $ 659,564
Conservation & Development - $210,183
Debt Service Fund - $4,724,650
Other Financing Uses - $1,300
Contingency Accounts - $40,000



THE POSITION

Under the general supervision of the City Administrator, the Finance Director oversees the City's financial operations and performs all functions and duties prescribed under Wisconsin State Statutes 62.09(9) and 62.09(10). The position is responsible for maintaining accurate financial records and performing complex finance, accounting, budgeting, and administrative functions in compliance with municipal code requirements, organizational procedures, and Wisconsin statutes.

As department head of the Finance Office, the Finance Director directs all Finance Office operations and supervises two (2) full-time employees and one (1) part-time employee. The position provides leadership in ensuring sound, accurate, and effective financial practices.

The Finance Director also serves as Deputy City Administrator, supporting and advising the City Administrator on a variety of City issues and policies and providing collaborative leadership in advancing the City's goals, mission, and vision.

Key Responsibilities of the Position

Financial Operations & Compliance
- Performs statutory duties of the City Treasurer/Comptroller; oversees financial transactions, cash flow, investments, banking, disbursements, tax collections, billing, debt payments, and financial records.
- Ensures compliance with applicable statutes, ordinances, policies, internal controls, and reporting requirements.

Budgeting & Financial Planning
- Leads the annual budget process and supports departments with budget development, financial analysis, forecasting, and monitoring.
- Provides financial information and recommendations to the City Administrator, Common Council, and Finance Committee.

Accounting & Reporting
- Oversees the general ledger, reconciliations, journal entries, financial reports, audits, grants, TIFs, special assessments, development agreements, and debt-related activities.

Leadership & Organizational Support
- Directs Finance Office staff and continuously evaluates and improves financial processes and procedures.
- Advises on fiscal impacts of contracts, collective bargaining, strategic initiatives, and policy decisions; participates in Council and committee meetings.
- Serves as Deputy/Acting City Administrator as assigned and performs other related duties.

Starting salary range: $107,800 - $120,000 DOQ, plus excellent benefits package which includes participation in the Wisconsin Retirement System, health/dental/vision insurance, paid time off and Wisconsin Deferred Compensation participation.



FUTURE CHALLENGES AND INITIATIVES

- Move forward with important financial initiatives, including the City's audit process and continued improvements to day-to-day financial operations.
- Provide leadership during a period of transition, supporting a relatively new administrative team and encouraging collaboration across departments.
- Continue improving and modernizing financial planning tools and processes to make budgeting more efficient and support informed decision-making.
- Explore opportunities related to Tax Increment Districts (TIDs), including potential early closures and opportunities for new revenue growth.

18 97
THE CITY OF
SOUTH
MILWAUKEE

IDEAL CANDIDATE

Education: A Bachelor's degree in Accounting, Finance, Public Administration, or a related field from an accredited college or university is required – Master's degree is preferred.

Experience: Five (5) years of progressively responsible work in municipal finance setting. Candidates should hold a WI Certified Municipal Clerk/Treasurer designation or the ability to obtain.

Skills:

- Strong knowledge of generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP, GAAFR and GASB), with an emphasis on municipal finance, accounting, budgeting, and financial reporting and forecasting.
- Knowledge of internal controls, office automation, and computerized financial applications.
- Thorough knowledge of cash management and investment practices.
- Knowledge of Federal, State, and local laws and ordinances applicable to the position.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office, LandNav, BS&A, email, and internet applications.
- Ability to independently research, compile, organize, analyze, and present financial information using appropriate software and tools.
- Ability to independently perform the statutory responsibilities and duties of the City Treasurer/Comptroller.

Personal Qualities:

- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with an approachable and collaborative style.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with city management, the Common Council, government officials, employees, contractors, developers, other agencies, and the public.
- Ability to exercise tact, discretion, and sound judgment when addressing sensitive, complex, and confidential matters.
- Ability to communicate clearly, accurately, and effectively, both verbally and in writing, including the ability to analyze and present complex financial information.
- Knowledge of sound management principles and the ability to effectively supervise, mentor, motivate, and develop staff.
- Ability to appropriately delegate responsibilities, lead coordinated efforts, and manage multiple priorities with strong organization, time management, and attention to detail.

While the City of South Milwaukee has identified preferred qualifications, it values strong candidates with relevant experience who may not meet every listed criterion. The City is open to supporting high-potential individuals through training and professional development opportunities. An ideal candidate will bring a solid foundation in accounting—particularly within a municipal context—along with a willingness to grow and develop in the role.



HOW TO APPLY

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

Attn: Sue McDade, Partner
E-mail: smcdade@public-administration.com
Phone: 608-516-9012
Application Deadline: First review of applications will take place on Friday, October 30, 2026. The final deadline for applications is November 8, 2026

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

Watch the South Milwaukee Finance Director Video Announcement:
https://youtu.be/Q1EFe0FnEXU

RECRUITMENT/SELECTION SCHEDULE

10/30/2026 – First review of applications

11/8/2026 – Final Deadline for application materials to be submitted to PAA

11/11/2026 - Review of applications – Selected semi-finalists to be invited for Zoom interviews.

11/20/2026 – Finalists selected to be invited to South Milwaukee for in-person interviews.

Early December - In-person interviews

01/04/2027 - Approximate start date for new Finance Director (Assumes 3-week notice to current employer)