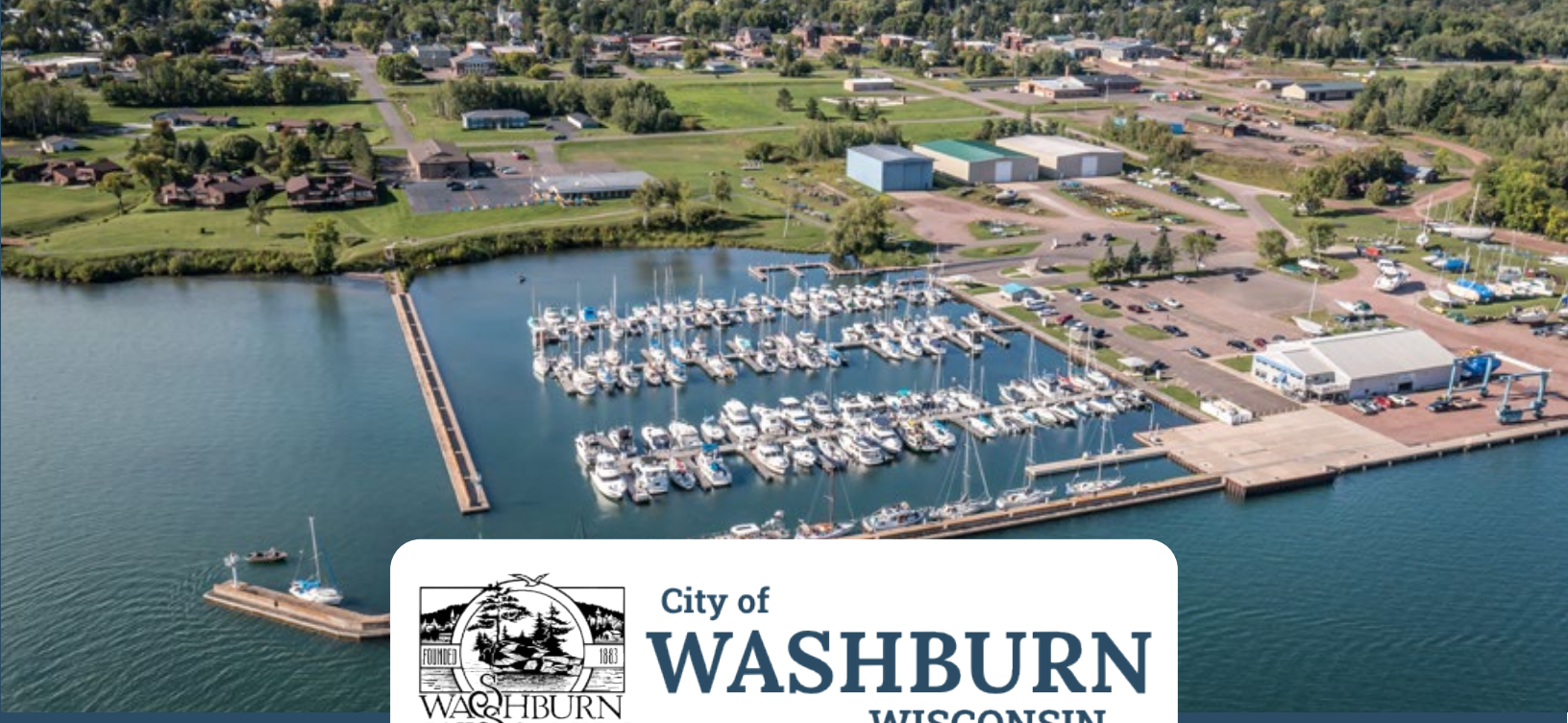

City of
WASHBURN
WISCONSIN





City Clerk & City Treasurer
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 rental and ownership, boat repair, and store for supplies and souvenirs. Washburn is 20 minutes from the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and 10 minutes 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 in 1904.

At 3.9 square miles, Washburn offers its 2,057 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 numerous big city amenities that make it an extremely attractive place to live, learn, work and play.

Washburn median household income (2026 dollars) was $62,128 with 79% living in owner-occupied dwellings with a median home value of $255,200. While Washburn's population is relatively flat, its property values have grown (48% increase in equalized value in the last five years).

Washburn is known as a recreational paradise and is also known for having a strong arts community. Along with a museum and galleries, there are retail shops, restaurants, taverns, a brand new brew pub, a taphouse, and even a martini bar.

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. Many locally owned and operated businesses have been here for multiple generations. Businesses include an independent bookseller, pharmacy, insurance agent, music store, guitar shop, hardware store, lumber yard, a foundry, and an engraving business.

The Washburn School District is the community's larger employer and is home to Washburn High School, Washburn Elementary School, Middle School, Early Learning Center and WI Virtual School. Additionally, Northwoods Technical College is in Ashland, WI (7 miles from Washburn) and UW-Superior approximately an hour away.



The Position

Washburn has a City Council form of government organized under Wisconsin State Statues Chapter 62. The Mayor (Mary Motiff) was 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), holding staggered 2-year terms.

Washburn has 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. Washburn also operates a full-service Library, Marina, stormwater, water & wastewater utilities, and 2 lakefront campgrounds.

In early 2026, Washburn completed a staffing study of the Administrative positions at City Hall and adopted a new Organization Chart that established the City Clerk and City Treasurer as separate, full-time positions. Updated position descriptions for the City Clerk (link) and City Treasurer were created and adopted.

Washburn Finances

The 2026 Washburn City Budget totals approximately $6.2M with a breakdown of budgeted expenses as follows:

General Government: $542,014
Public Safety: $1,247,464
Public Works: $696,188
Health & Human Services: $45,586
Culture, Recreation, and Education: $569,539
Conservation & Development: $35,129
Miscellaneous/Contingency: $116,350
Total General Fund: $3,252,270

Capital Fund: $614,000
Debt Service Fund: $386,663
TID #3 Fund: $198,626
Harbor Commission Fund: $350,847
Water Utility Fund: $536,600
Sewer Utility Fund: $736,000
Storm Water Utility Fund: $123,100
Total All Funds: $6,198,106

The City had a General Fund Balance of $1,666,182 on December 31, 2024 which represents a healthy 53% of the 2025 City General Fund Budget. The City applied $280,654 of that amount towards the 2026 Budget, up slightly from the $279,471 applied in the previous year.

Financial highlights from the Washburn 2025 Audit include the following:

- Total governmental fund revenues were $6,611,933; including $1,521,369 of property taxes, $977,138 of general state aid, and $3,336,788 of charges for services and operating and capital grants. Total governmental funds expenditures were $8,262,161. The City decreased the amount of prior outstanding general obligation debt by $36,227.

- Total business type activity fund revenues were $1,501,023; including $1,371,786 of user fees. Total business type activity expenditures were $1,436,371. The City decreased the amount of business type debt by $115,614.

- The City’s financial status, as reflected in total net position, decreased by $162,493. Net position of governmental activities due to operations decreased by $232,662 and business type activities (water, sewer, storm water) increased by $70,169.

The 2025 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 Lost Apostle brewery project has been completed, and that is a significant development for the downtown area. An affordable housing project has also been recently completed and is fully leased out. A small manufacturing company is relocating to Washburn this year in a newly constructed facility.

2. The first phase of a large water and sewer project was completed in 2024 and the second phase will begin in 2027. This will coincide with the reconstruction of STH 13 through downtown. Improvements will also be made to the stormwater system, and there will be additional amenities to enhance the attractiveness of the downtown area. Additional debt needs to be taken out for these projects, so the debt amount is expected to be on the high side of the comfortable limit 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 aid was increased for certain areas in 2024, it did not solve the underlying issue. Without additional revenue in the coming years, the City will be forced to make further cutbacks in operations and staff if current trends continue.



The Ideal Washburn Candidates

City Clerk

The ideal candidate should be a person with strong experience in office administration, and prior position in local government. The candidate should possess excellent communication skills; attention to detail, work cooperatively with both elected officials and other governmental entities, be well-versed in methods of record keeping and issuance and administration of licenses and permits. The City Clerk shall be primarily responsible for the administration of annual elections.

Skills and Experience

The successful candidate must demonstrate a strong background in elections administration, Human Resources and working knowledge of Municipal & Administrative Law; as well as a good communicator with integrity, innovation and ability to work harmoniously with elected officials. The ideal candidate possesses several years of progressively responsible administrative and leadership experience in a municipal organization. Candidates with Municipal Clerk Certification or the ability to obtain are preferred. 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 Associate’s Degree in public or business administration or related field. Requires 3-5 years of experience in municipal government, preferably as a deputy municipal clerk. Certification or office manager in the private sector and/or Certified Municipal Clerk designation or ability to obtain designation. Any equivalent combination of experience and training, which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Must have a valid Driver's License, or ability to obtain one. Residency in the community is encouraged but not required.

Starting salary range: $50,00-$75,000 DOQ, plus excellent benefits.



City Treasurer

This full-time, exempt position, under the general supervision of the City Administrator, is the Chief Financial Officer of the City. This position also serves the role of a deputy city clerk.The position works closely with the general public, common council, and other City staff, in carrying out responsibilities of the Department. The Treasurer is primarily responsible for tax collection, management of the City's finances, including budget development, payroll administration and serves as backup to other administrative functions.

Skills and Experience

The successful candidate must demonstrate a strong background in budget development and administration, governmental accounting and working knowledge of payroll administration; as well as a good communicator with integrity and ability to work effectively with elected officials and the general public. Ideally, the candidate should possess Municipal Treasurer Certification or the ability to obtain it. 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)

Requires an Associates Degree in Accounting, Finance or equivalent and/or ability to obtain Certified Municipal Treasurer designation from Municipal Treasurers Association of Wisconsin. 3-5 years' experience working with accounting systems in an office setting. Knowledge of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

Must have a valid Driver's License, or ability to obtain one. Residency in the community is encouraged but not required.

Starting salary range: $60,000 - $85,000 DOQ, plus excellent benefits.



Individuals holding the Clerk or Treasurer position must work as a team with all staff in the Administration Department to assure effective and efficient service delivery to the public. Must be a team player and maintain cooperative and "can do" relationships with all municipal staff. Individuals must possess oral, written communication, problem-solving skills, and leadership skills.

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 smurphy@public-admininstration.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 5 work-related references (in one PDF file) to Public Administration Associates, LLC,

Attn: Shawn Murphy, Partner
Address: 24505 250th Ave, Holcombe, WI 54745
Phone: (608) 370-1663
E-mail: smurphy@public-administration.com

Application Deadline: 3:00 p.m. October 30, 2026

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

Visit the community website at www.cityofwashburn.gov for additional information.

