

## City of Whitewater 2023 City Manager Plan

**Vision Statement:** Building upon our rich history, the City of Whitewater will continue to be a welcoming, safe, and dynamic community. We will embrace the cultural and educational opportunities that the presence of a thriving University and an increasingly diverse population offers.

We will seek to continually improve and make Whitewater strong by fostering public trust and confidence in our government. We will encourage a community characterized by a spirit of openness and fairness that encourages individuals to participate publicly and prosper personally. We will maintain a high quality of life through careful stewardship of all our many resources.

**Mission statement:** The City of Whitewater provides efficient and high-quality services which support, living, learning, playing, and working in an exceptional community.

### Focus areas:

- 1) Meet Various Staff, Departments, and Committees
  - a. Schedule tours with each department and leadership team
  - b. Attend at least once annually committee meetings for each City-led committee/board
  - c. Meet semi-annually with departments/staff to facilitate dialogue and share organizational information
- 2) Increased Communication and Teamwork – Strategic Planning
  - a. Facilitated Strategic Planning Workshops
  - b. Biennial Plan linked to Budget Document
- 3) Implement Referendum Strategy – Fire/EMS staffing
  - a. Management and staffing structure for 27/7 coverage
  - b. Onboarding, training, and management program for first 3-5 years
  - c. Hire FT Chief within 120 days
- 4) Re-Establish Economic Development Platform
  - a. Establish reporting and financial relationships between Economic Development Director, CDA, and Manager/City Council
  - b. Facilitate creation of Housing Policy and guidance for TIF Extension monies
  - c. Hire CDA Director by July, 2023
- 5) Develop Annual Training milestones for City Manager, staff, boards, and committees
  - a. All Staff: Sexual harassment, workplace misconduct, retaliation and active shooter, and others as determined by City Manager, HR Manager, Police Chief, and Cvmic
  - b. Boards and Committees: Robert’s Rules of Order, Open Meetings Law, Open Records Law, conflicts of interest as determined by City Clerk and Attorney
  - c. City Manager: 9-Course Leadership Training Module and additional training as determined by HR Manager and City Manager
    - i. Policy Development, Succession Planning, Retaining and Training, Leadership Challenge, Project Management, Negotiations for Leaders, Recruiting, Interviewing and Hiring, Performance Evaluations, Strategic Planning and Visioning
    - ii. Additional Training: Coaching and Feedback, Leadership: technical skills, soft skills, and people view, and Mentoring for Leaders
- 6) Establish a City-wide compensation and staffing structure that brings the City into alignment with its comparable Wisconsin communities and ability to pay

- a. Evaluate areas for consolidation through attrition, outsourcing, and other measures to reduce costs, where applicable
- b. Study and initiate multi-year plan to align staffing and compensation with comparable communities
- c. Establish written succession planning in applicable departments

**Strategic objectives:**

- 1) Increased productivity through clear, direct, and consistent communication.
- 2) Establish programs that create growth in the tax and employment base.
- 3) Ensure appropriate training and accountability for performance improvement.
- 4) Safeguard the taxpayer's investment in City services through transparent and forthright management practices.

**Projects:** Strategic Planning, Biennial Budget, Capital Improvement Plan, annual performance evaluations, WUSD and City of Whitewater WAFC agreement, recruitment of CDA Director.

**Current situation:** Recently approved referendum for Fire and EMS. Slow economic growth. Recruitment challenges. No current strategic/operational plan. Many projects, policies, and planning documents left unfinished by former City Manager. Solid development assets (land, CDA, etc.). Many above averages and several exceptional performers in various departments. Operating budgets are tight. Documentation and accountability suboptimal in previous years.

**Future perspective:** Immediate concerns are the projected decrease in MPS payments, projected to result in a loss of \$250,000+/- annually to the general fund and the negative impact of higher interest rates on the City's ability to borrow (e.g. if we borrow \$1M per year and \$250K is interest payments, we spend \$750K on capital. Now interest is more like \$350K, which results in \$650K to spend, or less effective purchasing power. Numbers are illustrative).

Medium term, the City and WUSD need to come to an agreement regarding the WAFC and its operations and funding. Also, the City needs a strategy and direction for creating sustainable increases in tax base and employment using existing resources, namely affordable housing monies and City-owned parcels that are backed by live tax increment financing districts.

Long-term, staff and I need clear direction from the City Council regarding how to manage constrained budgets and inflating costs. There is a high likelihood that the organization will need to reduce its total number of employees within the next 24 to 48 months if serious steps are not taken to shore up declining revenues and/or consider other revenue generating options. Also long term, the City has large capital needs for DPW, and large repairs for buildings at City Hall, WAFC, and other City-owned buildings across the City.

**We have plenty of time. We need to be proactive and collaborative. By the end of year one, we will have a strategic plan, an economic development platform, and a biennial budget that ensures we have a financial plan moving forward.**