



**OFFICIAL NOTICE & AGENDA**  
REGULAR MEETING

**MEETING:** Committee of the Whole  
**DATE/TIME:** Tuesday, June 23, 2026, at 6:30 PM  
**LOCATION:** Wausau City Hall — Council Chambers  
407 Grant Street, Wausau WI, 54403

**MEMBERS:**  
Carol Lukens                      Matt Hoenecke  
Michael Martens                 Sarah Watson  
Terry Kilian                        Vicki Tierney  
Tom Neal                            Lou Larson  
Andrew Wiskowski               Bruce Trueblood  
Kristin Slonski

- 1 Call to order by the presiding officer.**
- 2 Reading of the City of Wausau Public Comment Statement.**
- 3 Comments and suggestions from preregistered citizens.**
- 4 Presentations.**
  - a. Presentation by Wausau City Attorney's office on the role of the alder, open meetings law and Robert's Rules of Order, open records, and ethics and conflicts of interest.
- 5 Discussion.**
  - a. Council members' goals and visions pertaining to Strategic Priorities identified in the adopted City of Wausau Five-Year Strategic Plan (2022-2027)
    1. Thriving Economy
    2. Innovative Public Services
    3. Cohesive and Connected Culture
    4. Fun and Vibrant Community
    5. Strong Regional Alliances
  - b. Council members' additional priorities that are absent from the City of Wausau Five-Year Strategic Plan (2022-2027), along with goals and visions for those additional priorities.
- 6 Discussion and Possible Action.**
  - a. Identification of the top 3 priorities for the 2026-2028 term of the Wausau Common Council.
- 7 Adjournment.**

Terry Kilian, Council President

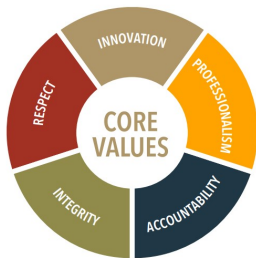
**NOTICE POSTED AT CITY HALL (407 GRANT STREET) AND  
TRANSMITTED TO THE OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED NEWSPAPER**

DATE: June 17, 2026  
TIME: 4:00pm  
POSTED BY: Michelle Van Krey



This meeting can be viewed on YouTube and Channel 981 on Cable TV

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the City of Wausau will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs or activities. If you need assistance or reasonable accommodations in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the ADA Coordinator at (715) 261-6622 or [ADAServices@wausauwi.gov](mailto:ADAServices@wausauwi.gov) to discuss your accessibility needs. We ask your request be provided a minimum of 72 hours before the scheduled event or meeting. If a request is made less than 72 hours before the event the City of Wausau will make a good faith effort to accommodate your request.



City of Wausau  
(715) 261-6500 | [clerk@wausauwi.gov](mailto:clerk@wausauwi.gov)  
[wausauwi.gov](http://wausauwi.gov)





\*\*\* All present are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with our City's Core Values \*\*\*

## OFFICIAL NOTICE AND AGENDA

Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Wausau, Wisconsin will hold a regular or special meeting on the date, time and location shown below.

Meeting of the:	<b>COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - COUNCIL RETREAT</b>
Date/Time:	<b>Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 5:00 PM</b>
Location:	<b>City Hall (407 Grant Street, Wausau WI 54403) - Cafeteria</b>
Members:	Carol Lukens, Michael Martens, Terry Kilian, Tom Neal, Gary Gisselman, Becky McElhaney, Lisa Rasmussen, Sarah Watson, Vicki Tierney, Lou Larson, Chad Henke

AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION (No action will be taken)

### Call to Order

Welcome and dinner.

Legal Reminders for Public Officials - Brief recap of open records, open meetings, quorums and social media cautions provided by City Attorney Anne Jacobson.

Discussion of local issues and prioritization and goal setting regarding same.

Adjournment

Signed by Lisa Rasmussen, Council President

**This Notice was posted at City Hall and transmitted to the Daily Herald newsroom on 05/10/2024 @ 4:00 PM Questions regarding this agenda may be directed to the City Clerk.**

*In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the City of Wausau will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs or activities. If you need assistance or reasonable accommodations in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the City's ADA Coordinator at (715) 261-6620 or email [clerk@ci.wausau.wi.us](mailto:clerk@ci.wausau.wi.us) at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting or event to request an accommodation.*

Council Retreat 5-16-24

Members in attendance: Tierney, Kilian, Gisselman, Watson, Larson, Rasmussen, Neal, Lukens, Mayor Diny, Attorney Jacobson

Absent Excused: Henke, McElhaney, Martens

Call to order 5:00 by Rasmussen

Dinner & Legal Reminders: Attorney Jacobson presented about open meetings, open records, quorums and records requests and retention. Discussion followed of what constitutes a record, a meeting and a quorum. Additional resources will be sent to members' emails for their independent review. Rasmussen will request League handbooks for three members who need them via the clerk.

Rasmussen handed out a list of which department handles which issues so alders have a resource for where to begin when contacted by residents about certain things that come up often.

Rasmussen referenced 2022-2027 strategic plan book. Jean in the Mayor's office will be emailing everyone a copy in pdf format to review so we keep it in mind as we do our policy and budget work.

Planning and Issues Discussion: Members took turns brainstorming a list of issues they have noted that their neighborhoods are concerned about. Items were added to the list on behalf of Henke & McElhaney who emailed their items for the list to Rasmussen ahead of the meeting. Discussion was had on each item from a local perspective. Discussed residents' concerns about the issues surrounding costs, ability to pay, economic conditions and trends. Members talked about conversations they had with people during the campaign season and with neighborhood groups.

Gisselman exited meeting

Brainstorm list included: Road conditions, taxes/budgets, water rates/PILOT payment (how?), affordable housing, homelessness, spending/debt, keeping and attracting youth and young professionals, attracting and retaining talent, development/redevelopment, environmental remediation, nuisance properties/animals, getting progress on the mall site, adding public employee child care benefit as a recruiting tool.

Watson suggested creating video or infographics for the public to help explain assessment, water rate development, TID's, taxes and tax bills. Group agreed more simplified ways to help people understand complex issues would be helpful.

Lukens mentioned residents' interest in monthly water bills vs quarterly. Rasmussen shared info she got from Public Works Director and the Finance Director on that, indicating she was told until they have all customers changed over to one type of meter, it's not possible to have a way to easily read and bill all monthly. Progress has been slow and water dept is changing over meters as part of their workflow but they have to work it in with the rest of their work assignments. Rasmussen believes there may be as many as half of the meters left to go before this is done based on her recent discussion with staff. Customers can pay in between bills which equates to monthly, but we have not good way yet to create a monthly statement for people.

Watson exited meeting

Members marked on flip charts which three items they wanted to work on most from the brainstorm list. Items that scored highest are: 1. Affordable housing 2. Homelessness 3. Development/Redevelopment Growth

Group recognized that we have to keep an eye on all these issues as the opportunity arises, but we'd like to prioritize the top three in our committee and group work this term.

Discussion was had about 2025 budget. Group agreed that with the revaluation, that to get mil rate to an acceptable place, the finance workshops in October will be key. This will be a year where we will have to reel in requests for added staff beyond the positions we already have, reel in new capital spending that is not at critical need and reel in supplemental spending requests for new spending where need is not critical. CIP committee and finance committee will have to make some tough decisions in ranking and selecting what to fund and take a conservative approach to what projects we move forward given the possible impact of the revaluation on taxpayers.

Discussion was had about the water rates and PILOT. Rasmussen stated Finance committee last term committed to studying the PILOT and the impact of phased reduction of the amount paid by the utility. Public Works Director and Finance Director indicated that the needed information for the beginning of that analysis should be available in August. Rasmussen will circle back to them and Finance Chair Martens to verify they will place that discussion on the agenda for August.

Discussion was had about Affordable housing, how those are funded and tax credit they need to be able to do this work, "missing middle" concept and shortage of housing at all levels.

Mayor Diny mentioned regressive nature of the revaluation tax burden and it's impact on lower income taxpayers. Also mentioned PILOT capturing revenue from non taxpayers that use services but pay no taxes toward any of it. There are more water customers than property taxpayers. There is some concern that reduction in PILOT gives a pass to tax exempt entities and further places burden on property taxpayers where there is a hole in the general fund budget that the PILOT was funding. Yet to be seen if there are enough cuts to offset that burden, but doing it too fast or too soon, could negatively impact our efforts to cut mil rate also during a tough budget year. Diny feels we may need to get that mil rate to about \$8.50 from \$10.89 now to make a dent people can tolerate. Unclear until late October where we will fall on that, as the budget has many moving parts that don't line up til manufacturing valuation and HR benefit costs are known. Diny also mentioned we cannot control the actions of the schools, county or NTC, in trying to prevent increases, we can only control our own spending. Tierney mentioned she and her husband knocked on 1200 doors during the campaign, and spending was a concern of many she spoke to.

Discussion was had about attracting young professionals, workforce and talent. Neal discussed the need to expand the tax base to thin out the tax burden for residents. Advised people need a reason to move here. What is in Wausau for me and my family? That question will be on their minds when they decide where to live and work, maybe even more so than the water and road concerns many have here now.

Larson pointed out the city has made real strides on roads and has recently purchased equipment and added more ARPA funding recently to make headway on roads going forward.

Mayor Diny pointed out he is on a committee working to save UWSP at Wausau. Group agreed that was a huge asset to the community if we can collaborate to keep it here, although

enrollment is declining at a rate that is making that difficult. Losing that offering is one more challenge in attracting or retaining youth. Tierney and Neal talked about their kids not returning to live and work in Wausau and that it is an example of what is happening.

Reviewed as a group the top three items selected as the main issues we want to try to target. Rasmussen advised we don't have to solve entirely, but we should be able to say next summer that we have moved the needle or made progress on some of those items as we go if our work is successful.

Discussed upcoming committee of the whole about homelessness. Rasmussen stated she has met with Diny and they have discussed possibly splitting it to two meetings vs one 5 hour meeting given the amount of info requested. One to take stock of the current local work in progress and state of things now, so we can get a good read on what is happening now. Second, to identify the path forward and a strategy for what happens next for progress, so we can get a plan together for some action steps.

Discussed housing projects happening currently and impact of the affordable projects in the works and the impact they will bring. Group agreed they can't come soon enough. Need is only getting worse. Lukens mentioned housing study results about the number of units at all levels that are needed in the next year and how under built we are now even though it seems we have so many market rate units going up. Diny discussed impact of taxes on rent. Mentioned we must control taxes where we can or rent will only increase and impact will be worse on those who can least afford it.

Rasmussen indicated she would summarize the discussion from tonight and share it with the members, including those who could not be with us.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm



## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Introductory Section

# COMMON COUNCIL

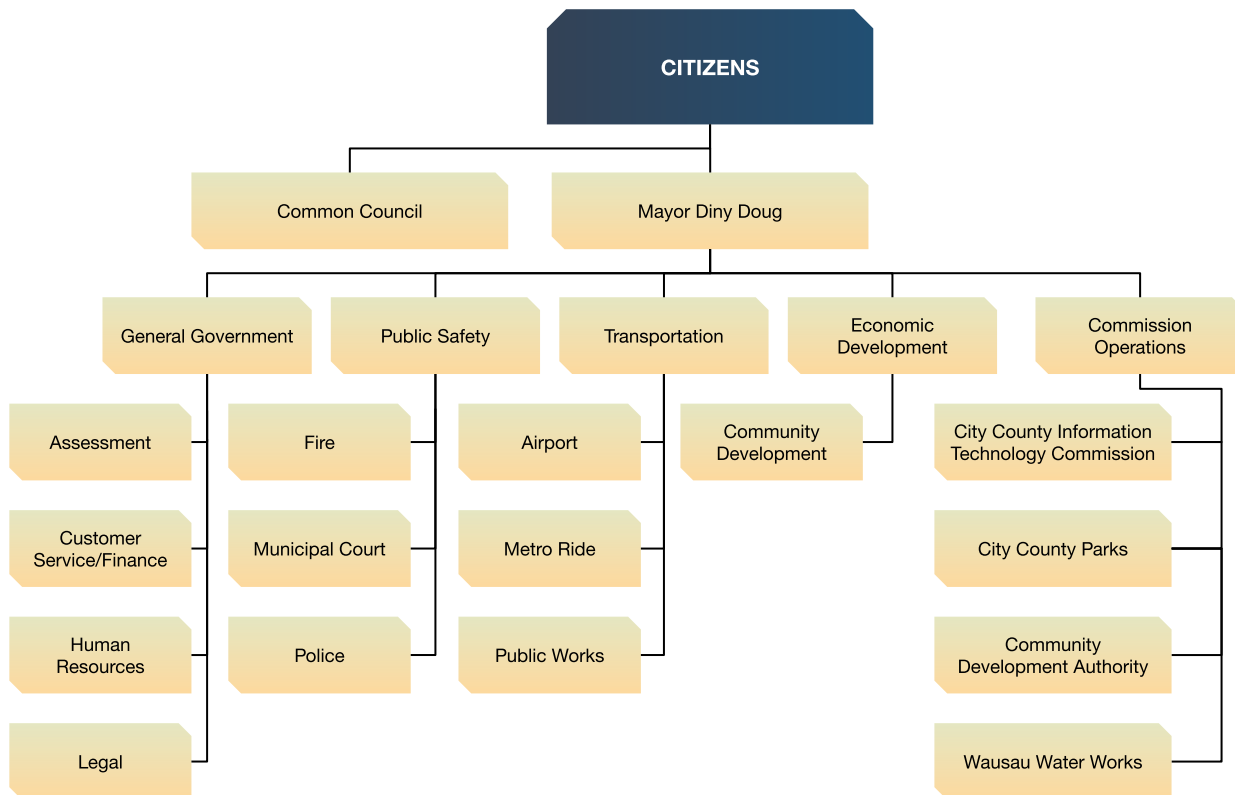
**MISSION:**

To act for the good order and in the best interest of the City and for the health, safety and welfare of the public.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Common Council of the City consists of eleven (11) Alderpersons. The Alderpersons manage and control the City properties, finances and public services. The Council has the power to license, regulate, borrow money and levy taxes. The Council is the policy-making or legislative part of the City. Most publication of legal notices costs, filing fees for deeds and certificates, and professional service fees are paid from the Council organization group of accounts. The salaries, fringes and expenses of the Alderpersons are also charged to the council accounts.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:**



## MAYOR'S OFFICE

### MISSION:

Provide services efficiently and effectively to enhance Wausau’s living environment and foster civic pride, making our city a great place to live, raise a family, and start or grow a business.

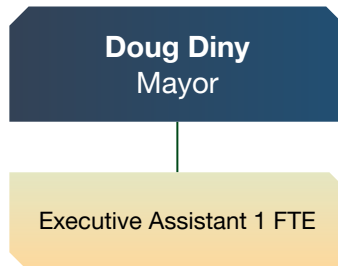
### DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

The mayor is the City’s Chief Executive Officer. Duties include:

- Overseeing and administering city operations, boards, commissions, and independent officers.
- Presiding over Common Council meetings and supervising all city officers and employees.
- Representing the city at public events and managing public relations and communications.
- Ensuring compliance with state statutes that govern municipal operations—such as the City Charter, municipal borrowing and taxation laws, elections, public health, traffic, open-meetings requirements, police and fire regulations, public works, airport, zoning, housing, redevelopment, water and sewer utilities, and planning.

The mayor develops initiatives that support Wausau’s growth and guides the City’s strategic plan, which directs the work of the entire administration and the department heads who report directly to the mayor.

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:



### STAFFING LEVELS:

	Adopted		Adopted							
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Total	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00

# CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT

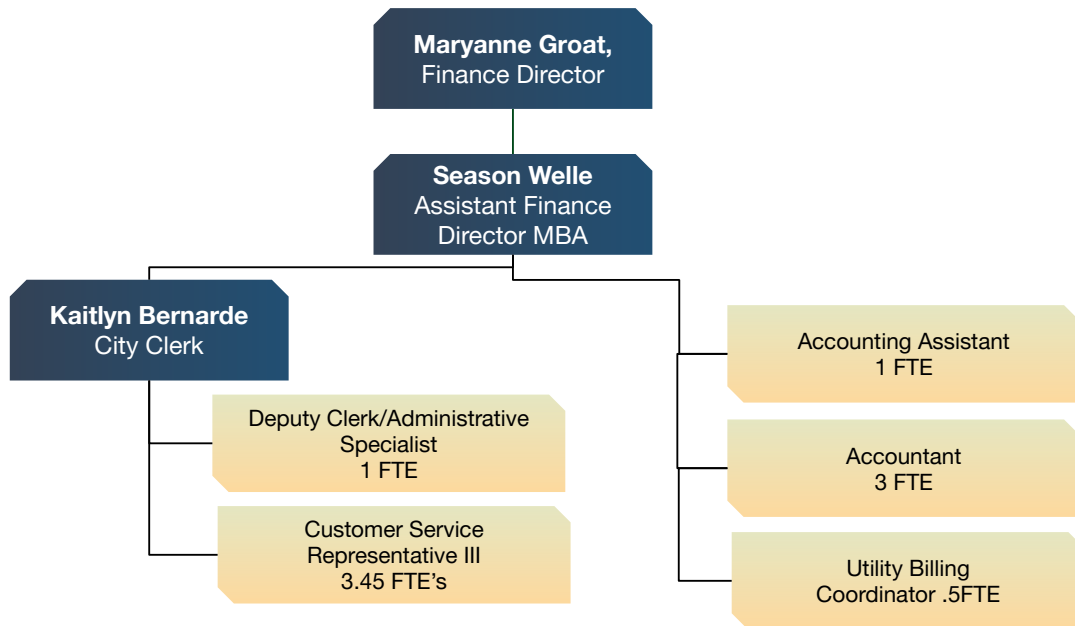
**MISSION:**

To provide service in an honest and straightforward manner and treat each customer with integrity and respect.

**DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The customer service department has a wide variety of responsibilities and is a melding of finance, clerk, treasurer, and utility accounting functions. The department changed its name from Finance Department to Customer Service in order to focus on the primary mission and emphasize a common cause. The department is responsible for the management of the City’s accounting, payroll, and financial records including utility billing. All financial and fiscal affairs of the City are formulated, prepared and executed under the direction of the Finance Director. The department prepares the annual budget and annual financial statements, manages the City’s risk insurance coverage, debt, and investments and cash collections. The department also encompasses all City Clerk functions including elections, council records and licensing.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:**



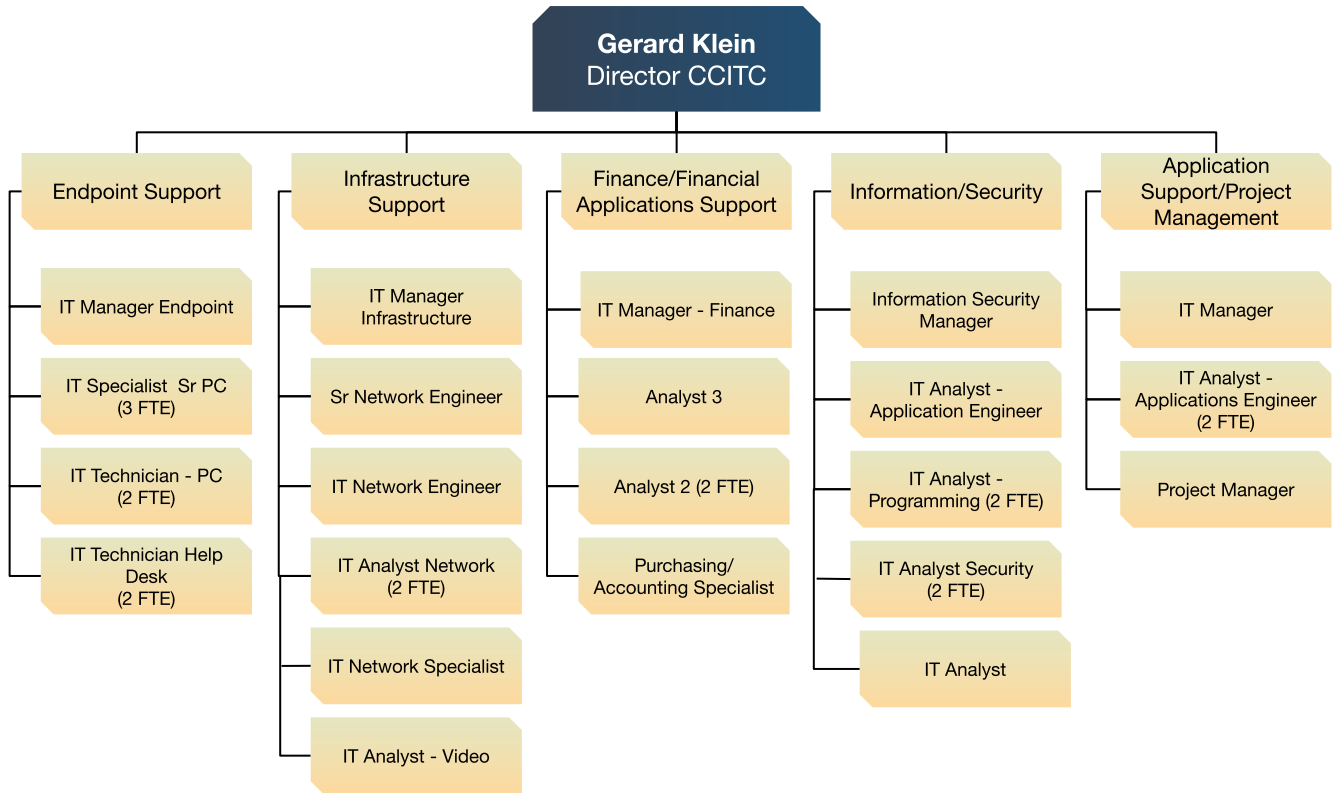
**STAFFING LEVELS:**

	Adopted					Adopted				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Total	11.95	12.45	12.45	12.45	12.45	12.45	11.84	11.84	11.84	11.84

Customer Service Representatives and utility accounting staff costs are direct billed to the Utility and other funds

CITY COUNTY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:



STAFFING LEVELS:

	Adopted				Adopted						
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2015
Total	31.00	32.00	32.00	30.75	30.75	30.75	30.75	30.75	31.12	30.12	30.12

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

**Network Security** – City-County IT continues to focus on ensuring our network is as secure as possible through staff education efforts and minimizing external threats. During 2025, CCITC implemented new security changes such as encryption of content sent externally and new methods to securely reset passwords. Cyber security initiatives are a key part of our strategic plan and annual work plan.

**Office 365 Licensing Changes** –We lowered some of our Microsoft license costs by being more granular with which level of Microsoft license is provided to each person. Some staff that are infrequent software users now are only licensed for web based application access.

**Workday ERP Implementation** – Significant staff resources were allocated to the second phase of the Workday ERP implementation project. We advanced new functionality with more integrations to other systems. In 2025 we focused on budgeting, reporting and learning management.

**Keeping up with required Microsoft and Cisco upgrades**–We continued to work with 3rd party vendors to upgrade and migrate to newer, fully supported server versions.

# ASSESSMENT DEPARTMENT

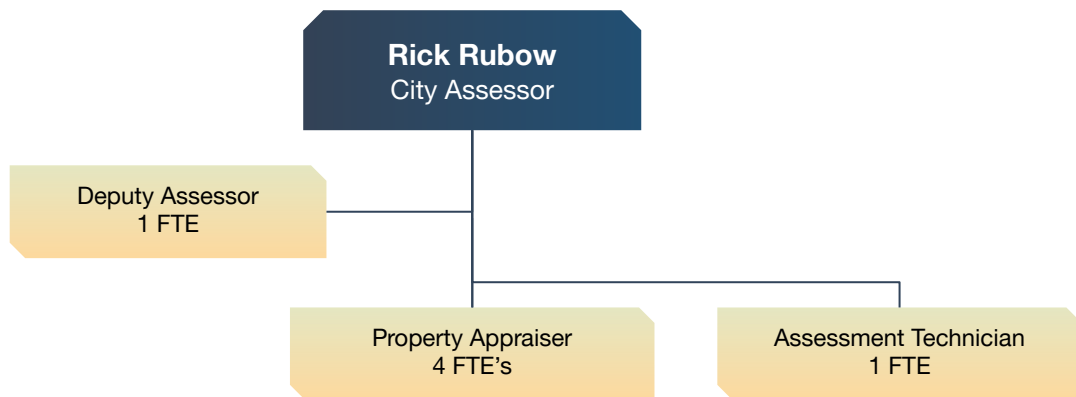
**MISSION:**

The Mission of the Assessment Department is to fairly and equitably value all real and personal property in the City of Wausau and the City of Schofield by following Wisconsin State Statutes (predominantly Chapter 70), the Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual (WI Stats 73.03), the Wisconsin Constitution Article VIII, and USPAP (Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices) requirements to deliver a high quality annual assessment roll along with providing property information which is used by the entire City for mapping, housing and licensing projects, and analytical analysis. The City and other taxing authorities operating budgets are predominantly dependent on annual assessments which bring in the generated tax revenues.

**DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Assessment Department function is to discover, list and value all taxable real property at 100% of its Market Value. The Assessment Department has the statutory duty to value all taxable real property, except manufacturing property, in the City of Wausau for ad valorem tax purposes while maintaining a level of assessment within ten percent of the statutory required “Full Market Value” (WI Statutes 70.32). The Wisconsin Department of Revenue establishes the annual assessment of all manufacturing real and personal property in the State.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:**



**STAFFING LEVELS:**

	Adopted				Adopted							
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2015	
Total	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	

# CITY ATTORNEY

## OUR MISSION:

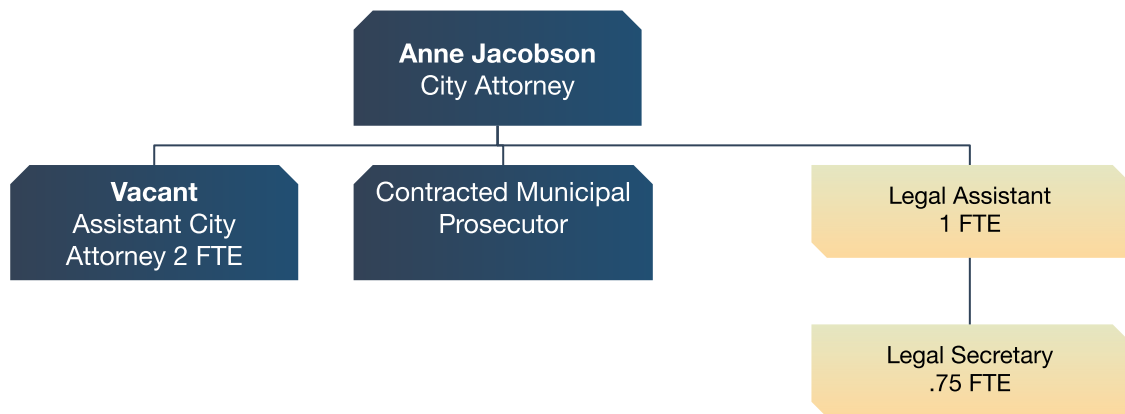
The mission of the City of Wausau City Attorney’s Office is to protect the legal interests of the city by providing quality, timely, and impartial legal services to the Common Council, its standing committees, and city boards and commissions, as well as its departments and staff.

## DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

The City Attorney’s office serves as in-house legal counsel to the City of Wausau, as a municipal corporation, represented in person by eleven alders and a Mayor, elected to office. The staff consists of three full-time attorney positions, a full-time legal assistant, a .75 time legal secretary, and a contracted municipal prosecutor. The office staff handles all legal aspects of municipal representation for the City of Wausau, providing representation and legal advice to its elected and appointed officials, many departments and divisions, and over 30 commissions, committees and boards. The City Attorney staffs the Common Council meetings and serves as the parliamentarian. The City Attorney is a member of the Board of Public Works, and advises the Board of Review, Community Development Authority, Ethics Board, Police and Fire Commission, Room Tax Commission, Transit Commission, and Wausau Water Works, in matters relating to items appearing on their agendas for consideration.

Through research, analysis, document preparation and review, and formal opinion, the staff provides interpretation of policy or law in a variety of matters, including real property transactions, contracting, debt collection, ordinance creation or amendment, administration of claims, employment relations, litigation, open records and open meetings law compliance, evictions, and municipal court and circuit court prosecution of municipal ordinance violations.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:



# HUMAN RESOURCES

**ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVE:**

We provide customer-driven, service-oriented programs and services to support the City in staffing a highly productive and well-qualified workforce.

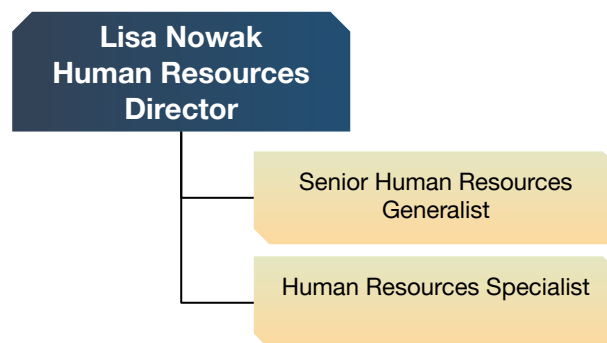
**MISSION:**

To recruit, retain, and empower a diverse, high-performing workforce through data-driven HR excellence, collaborative leadership, and a cohesive culture that drives organizational success while providing exceptional service to the community.

**DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Human Resources Department is responsible for attracting, developing, and retaining a high-performing workforce to support organizational goals. In preparing its budget, the department must align resources with the City’s strategic priorities by funding programs that enhance recruitment, employee engagement, workforce planning, and leadership development. Staffing needs should be evaluated through data-driven analysis of current and future workforce trends, with consideration given to succession planning, anticipated retirements, and skill gaps. Fiscal accountability requires the department to present realistic cost projections for salaries, benefits, training, and technology, while monitoring expenditures against approved budgets throughout the year. HR must also plan for investments in systems and tools that modernize processes, improve service delivery, and strengthen compliance with employment laws and collective bargaining agreements. Budget requests are driven by measurable performance indicators—such as time-to-fill vacancies, employee retention rates, and training outcomes—to ensure transparency and demonstrate return on investment. Collaboration with other departments is essential to assess organizational needs and to implement policies, programs, and initiatives that improve employee relations, safety, and overall organizational effectiveness.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:**



**STAFFING LEVELS:**

FTE's	Adopted					Adopted						
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2015	
Total	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	

# MUNICIPAL COURT

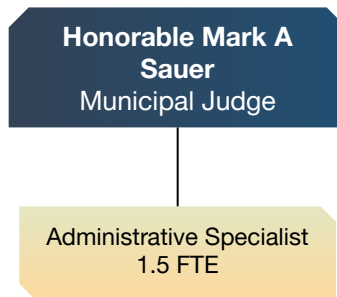
**MISSION:**

To adjudicate ordinance and traffic violation cases impartially and ensure the legal rights of individuals are safeguarded while the public interest is protected.

**DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Municipal Court processes City traffic and ordinance violations. The department maintains all records via the computer system, submits conviction reports to the motor vehicle department, and monitors both past and present fines due. Driver’s license suspensions and registration suspensions and tax intercepts are made from this office for fines not paid. Municipal Court is solely responsible for the state report which is a breakdown of all money collected monthly by the City. The court oversees the peer court program for juvenile violators.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:**



**STAFFING LEVELS:**

	Adopted					Adopted				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Total	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.50	1.50	1.50

# FIRE DEPARTMENT

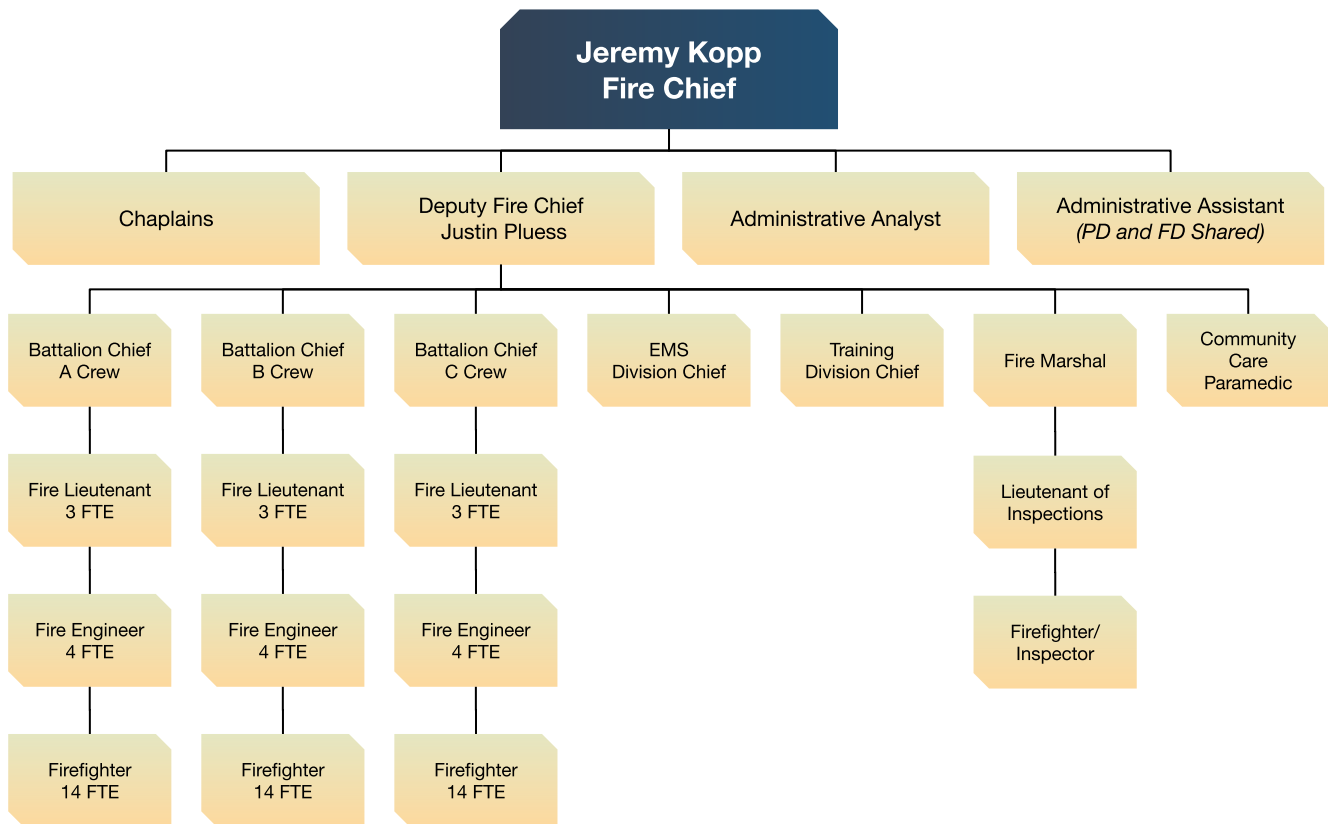
**MISSION:**

To provide rapid, professional, emergency services to protect and enhance our community.

**DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The fire department is responsible for developing, coordinating, planning, implementing, and administering all aspects of fire protection, emergency medical services, and technical rescue response for the City of Wausau and contracted areas. The operational responsibilities include fire suppression, emergency medical services, fire prevention education, code enforcement, administration, rescue, training, fire/arson investigation, and building/equipment maintenance. The main function of the fire department is to protect and enhance our community by providing emergency response services, public education, and code enforcement.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:**

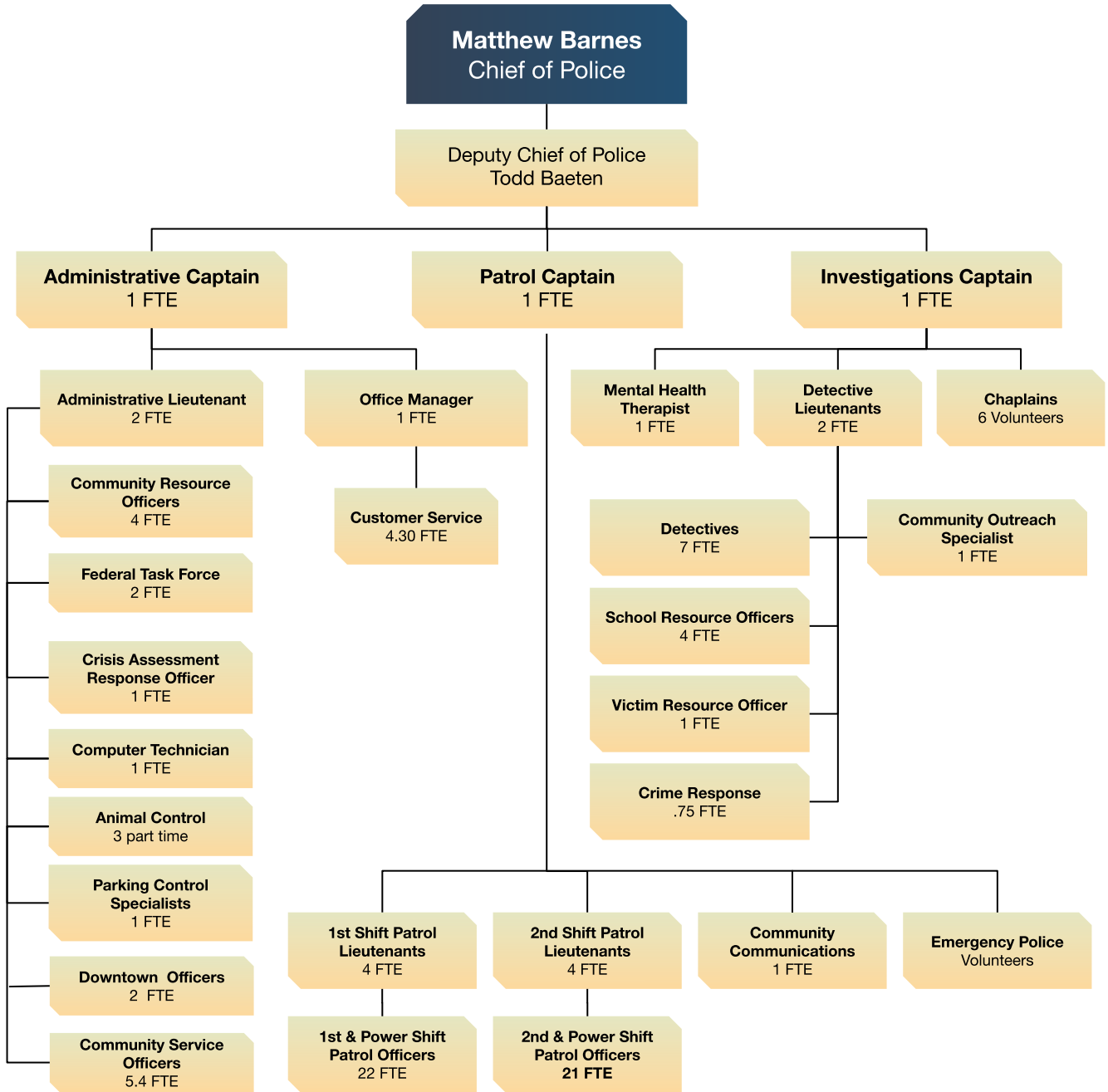


**STAFFING LEVELS:**

	Adopted			Adopted							
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2015
Total	75.40	75.40	74.40	74.00	62.00	62.00	62.00	61.00	61.00	60.00	60.00

POLICE DEPARTMENT

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:**



**STAFFING LEVELS:**

	Adopted		Adopted								
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2015
Total	92.05	94.05	92.10	91.50	90.25	90.25	89.80	87.00	87.00	84.00	84.00

# PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

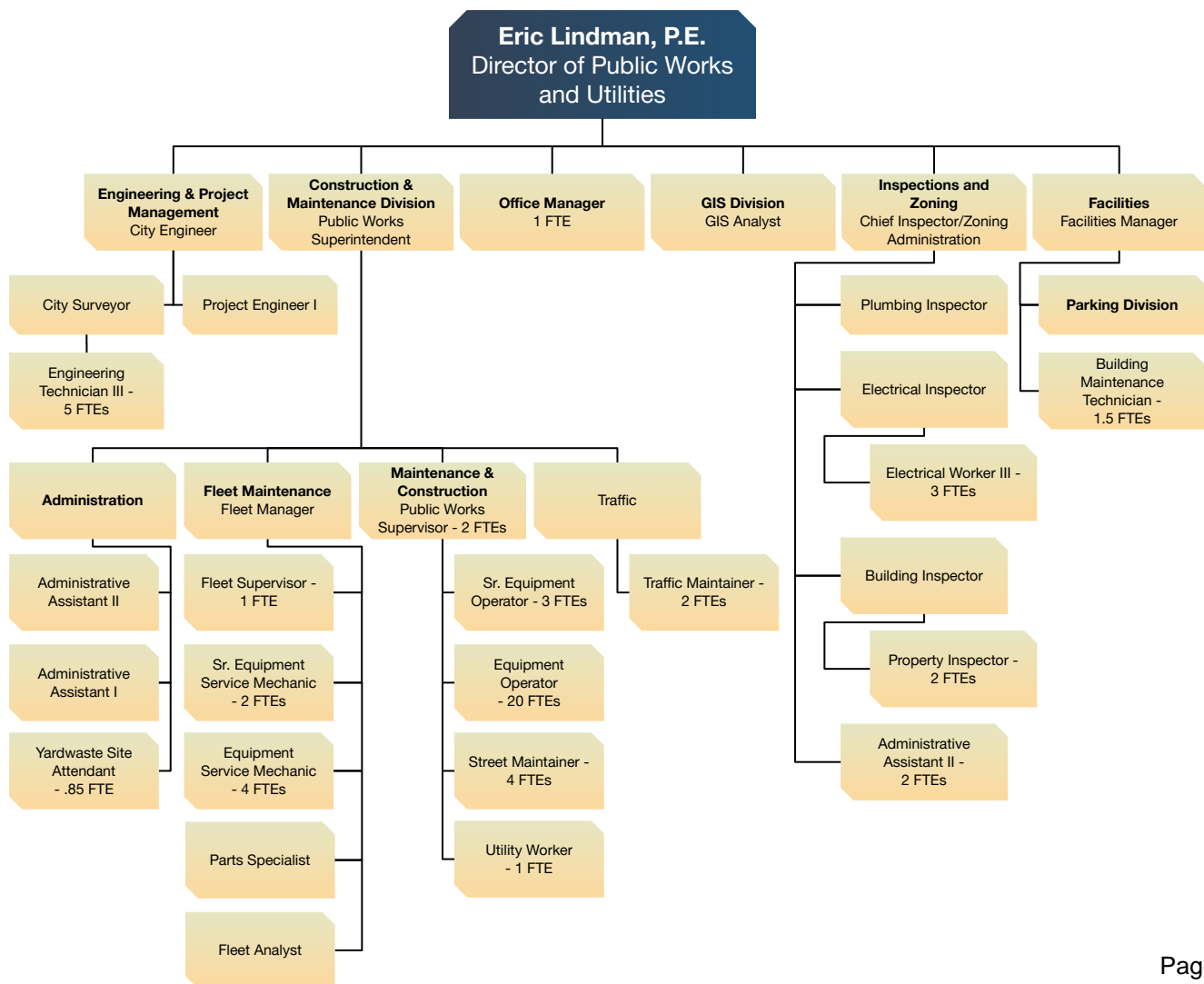
## MISSION:

To effectively and efficiently deliver engineering and project management services, land use planning, GIS-based mapping, parking facility operations, and routine public works services to the citizens of Wausau; respond to uncontrollable natural events such as snowstorms, windstorms, or flooding conditions with trained personnel; and provide effective and fair enforcement of zoning, building and housing codes.

## DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

This organization is responsible for designing and providing construction administration for City-wide infrastructure; the overall maintenance of the City's infrastructure including snow plowing and snow removal, leaf pick-up, street sweeping, weed control, traffic line painting, maintenance of storm sewers and sidewalks, as well as maintenance of bridges and culverts; operating and maintaining parking ramps and lots; and ensuring construction code compliance, property maintenance, floodplain management, zoning, and CSM and subdivision review.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

**STAFFING LEVELS:**

FTE's	Adopted					Adopted				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Total	70.50	70.50	70.50	69.00	69.00	69.00	69.00	68.50	68.50	68.50

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

**Engineering/Project Management**

- > Designed, constructed and administered approximately \$5 million in sanitary sewer and water main installation and emergency repair work.
- > Completed design, construction and administration of \$7.5 million in street improvement projects.
- > Designed, managed and administered approximately \$250,000 in the 2025 sidewalk project.
- > Designed, managed and administered approximately \$650,000 in concrete pavement rehabilitation.
- > Designed, managed and administered approximately \$1.0 million in asphalt overlay projects.
- > Managed and administered \$100,000 pavement marking project.
- > Compiled with the Phase 2 Stormwater Permit requirements by updating ordinances, inspecting detention ponds and sampling storm water at outfalls. Also, coordinated an Education Outreach Program. Managed the Illicit Discharge Ordinance.
- > Managed the City storm sewer system which includes piping, outfalls and resident drainage concerns.
- > Assisted residents with sidewalk, roadway and storm water drainage issues.
- > Inspected snow removal complaints.
- > Performed traffic counts and traffic studies and speed analysis on various streets in the City.
- > Coordinated building maintenance and structural repairs of City-owned parking ramps.
- > Provided staff assistance to the Infrastructure and Facilities Committee.
- > Provided coordination with WDOT on upcoming Connecting Highway projects such as Grand Avenue and East Wausau Avenue.
- > Permitting and inspection of all excavation permits.
- > Provided coordination of streets and infrastructure for mall area redevelopment.
- > Assisted electrical department with construction and maintenance of traffic control signals.
- > Supported Community Development on projects including 700 Grand Avenue and riverfront development.

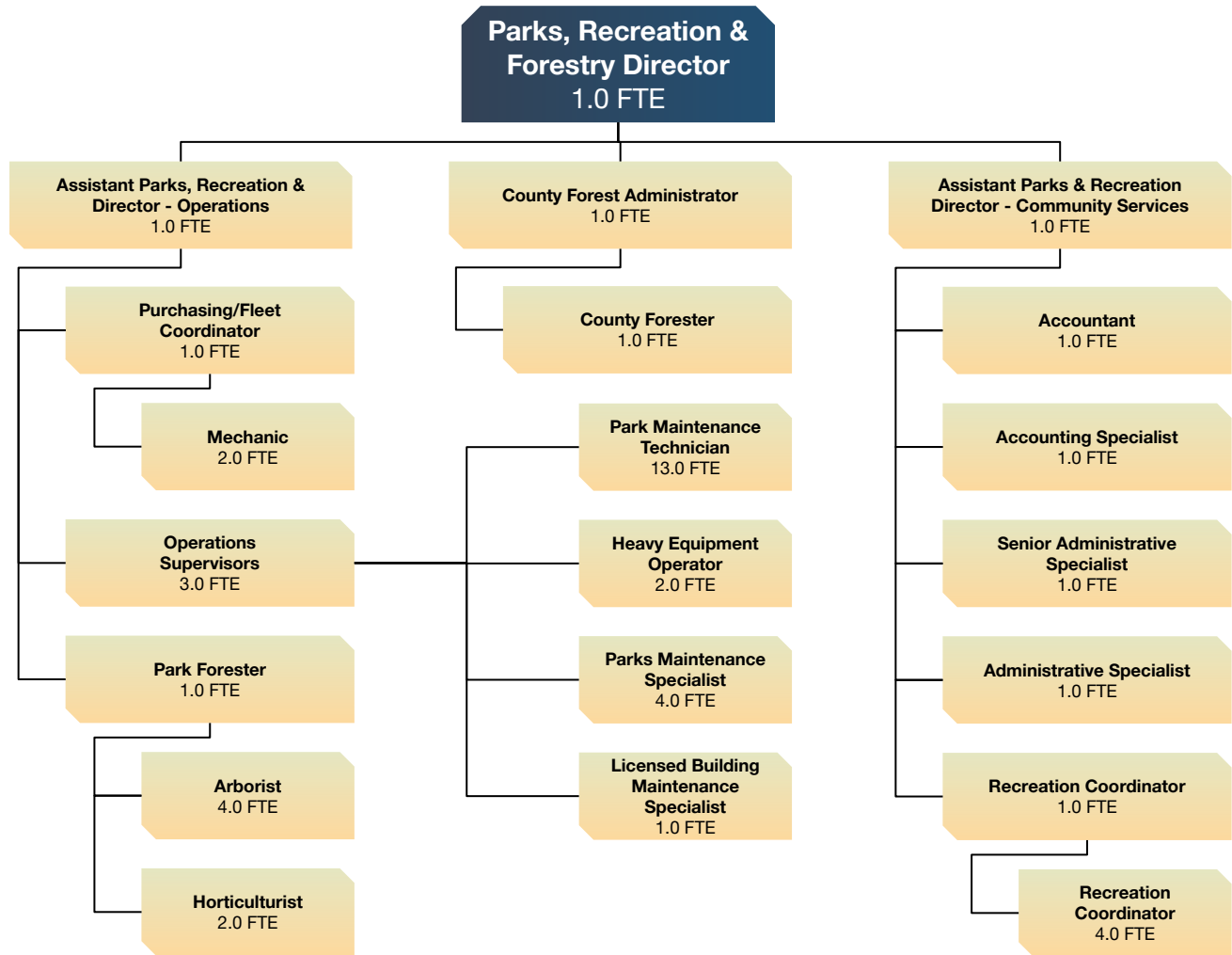
**GIS Division**

- > Manage and administer Patriot CAMA updates. This includes the creation of spatial views and map services utilized by the Assessment Department.
- > Assisted Clark Dietz and Community Infrastructure Partners with maps and data for the LSL replacement.
- > Managed, updated and administered the ArcGIS Server, ArcGIS Portal, ArcGIS Data Store, ArcGIS Web Adaptor, ArcGIS Monitor, and Enterprise Geodatabase server. This included patches for servers, software upgrades and compression of the Geodatabases.

PARK, RECREATION AND FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

General Fund

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:**



**STAFFING LEVELS:**

	City Effort	Adopted										
		2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Total	20.19	44.00	44.00	44.00	44.00	44.00	43.75	43.60	43.60	44.00	43.00	

**DEPARTMENT RESULTS AND STATISTICS:**

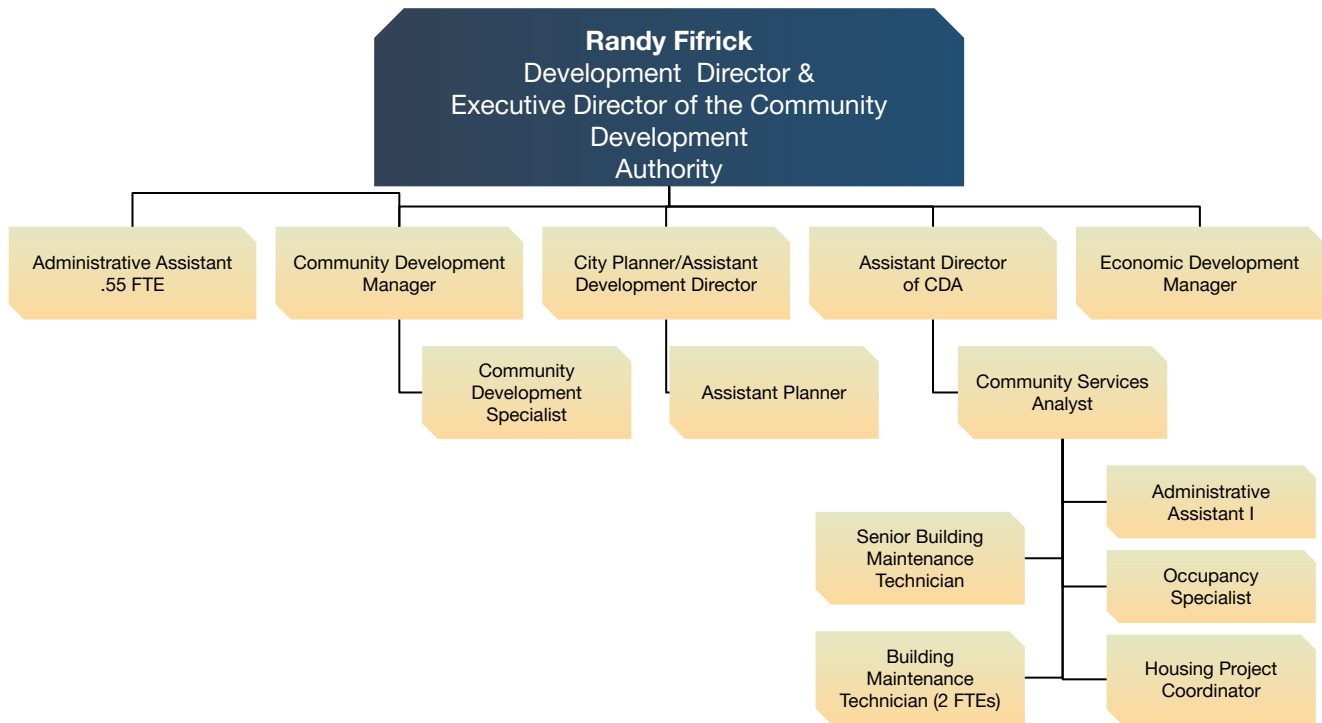
37 Parks, 350 Acres, 26,000 Street Trees, 16 Tennis Courts,

13 Pickleball Courts, 15 Sports Fields, 3 Sledding Hills, 1 Recreational Ice Rink, 6 Basketball Courts,

3 Outdoor Swimming Pools, 4 Boat Landings, 1 Skateboard Park, 4 Shelter Buildings, 11 Open Air Shelters, 1 Snow Tubing Facility, 1 Community Square, 1 Handicapped Accessible Kayak and Canoe Launch, 7.35 Miles of River Edge Trail, 1 Wharf with Finger Docks and Kayak Launches, 1 Inclusive Playground (JoJo's Jungle), and 3 Playgrounds with Poured in Place Safety Surfacing.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:**



**STAFFING LEVELS:**

	Adopted					Adopted				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Total	14.55	14.55	14.55	14.00	14.00	14.00	14.00	14.00	14.00	13.75

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

The Community, Planning and Economic Development Department strives to provide a wide array of programs and services for City of Wausau residents.

- > **Economic Development** - Expected completion of the Foundry on 3rd in November 2025.
- > Expected completion of Westside Commons in November 2025.
- > Riverlife south planning option with Wangard for multifamily residential development executed.
- > Released request for interest for the redevelopment of the north 2nd Street parcels.
- > Worked with developers on market rate and affordable infill housing projects.
- > Continued partnership to rebrand the EEC to the Wausau Business Incubator.
- > Continued partnership with MCDEVCO to facilitate gap financing needs of businesses.
- > **Planning** - Lead efforts to expand multi-use trails, including obtaining easements, securing funding, and assisting in design.
- > **Community Development** - Partnered with the Community Development Authority to purchase and redevelop 405 S 8th Avenue into a 5-6 unit affordable housing apartment complex.

# WAUSAU WATER WORKS

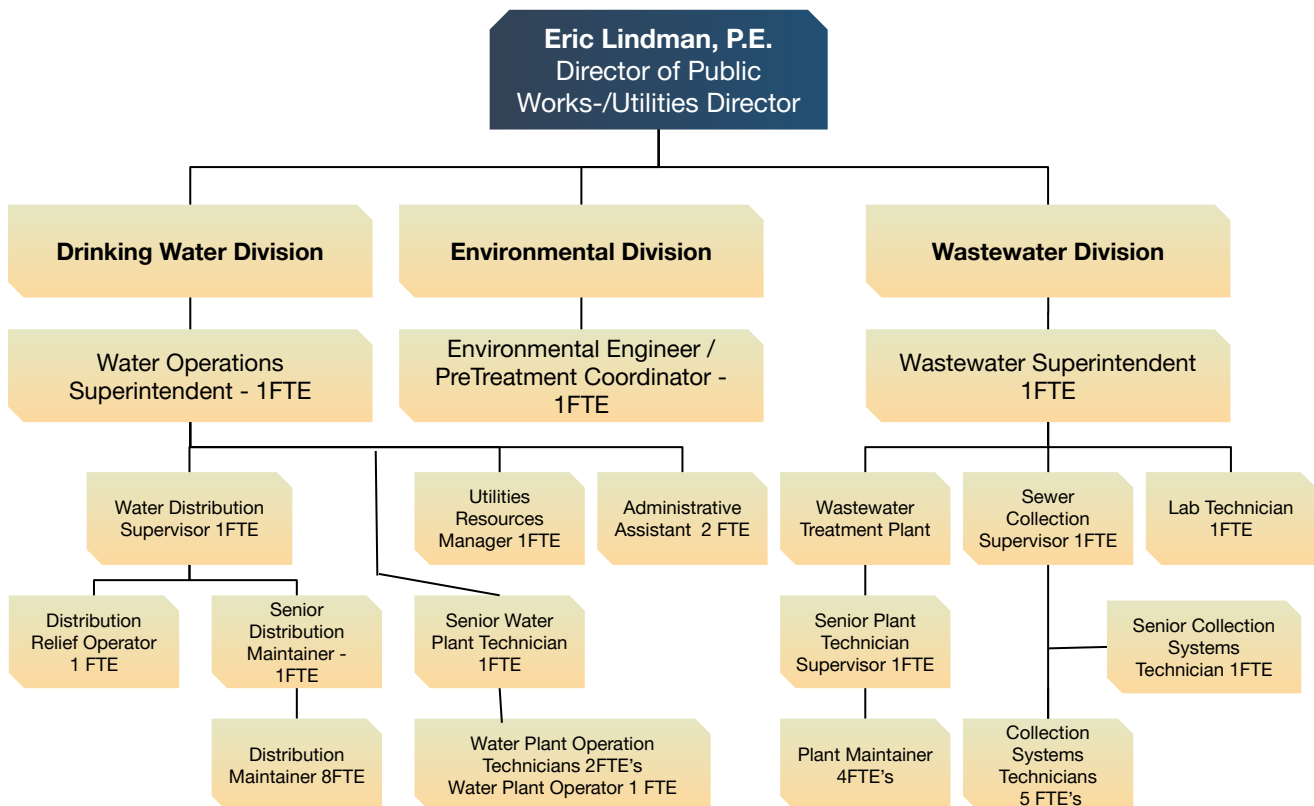
**MISSION:**

To provide superior quality, uninterrupted water service and return clean water to the environment at all times.

**DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Drinking Water Division is primarily responsible for water supply, treatment and distribution. The Utility consists of six supply wells, a central treatment plant designed to treat an excess of 9 million gallons per day and approximately 250 miles of mains used to convey safe drinking water to nearly 17,000 users. Wausau Water Works also provides the water supply for fire protection for the city and currently has more than 1,800 hydrants available for firefighting. All users are metered and billed quarterly for water and sewer service. The Drinking Water Division is governed administratively by Wisconsin Public Service Commission and the drinking water quality is regulated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The Wastewater Division is responsible for conveyance and treatment of wastewater for the City of Wausau. The Wastewater Division consists of 233 miles of sewer mains with manholes for access to clean and inspect. There are 25 sewage lift stations which assist in conveyance of sewage when gravity service is not possible and an 8.2 million gallon per day treatment facility which enhances water quality prior to discharge to the Wisconsin River. The treatment plant performance is governed by a Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit and Federal Pretreatment Regulations.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:**

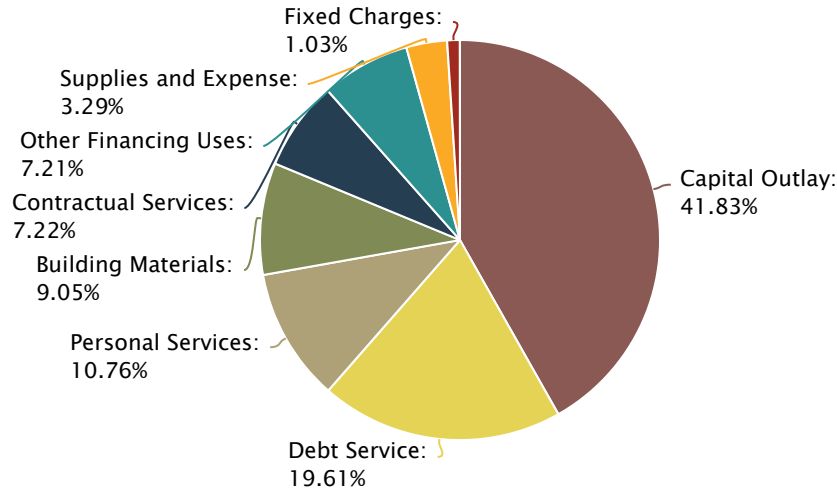


WAUSAU WATER WORKS

**STAFFING LEVELS:**

	Adopted					Adopted				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Total	36.00	36.00	33.00	31.00	31.00	31.00	29.50	28.50	28.50	27.50

**DRINKING WATER DIVISION:**



**BUDGET SUMMARY**

	2024 Actual	2025			2026		
		Adopted Budget	Modified Budget	Estimated Actual	Department Request	Executive Recommended	Adopted
Personal Services	\$ 1,643,350	\$ 1,915,095	\$ 1,915,092	\$ 1,868,354	\$ 2,374,479	\$ 2,374,157	\$ 2,374,157
Contractual Services	1,455,155	1,949,150	1,949,150	1,570,878	1,593,450	1,593,450	1,593,450
Supplies and Expense	375,313	1,261,100	1,261,100	858,744	725,550	725,550	725,550
Building Materials	782,172	2,291,050	2,291,050	1,549,624	1,997,050	1,997,050	1,997,050
Fixed Charges	228,054	254,100	254,100	196,558	226,100	226,100	226,100
Debt Service	21,977,746	4,045,127	4,045,127	4,217,489	4,326,273	4,326,273	4,326,273
Grants, Contributions, Indemnities and Other	764	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Outlay	15,379,554	4,130,000	4,130,000	3,378,801	23,370,913	9,224,673	9,224,673
Other Financing Uses	1,590,000	1,590,000	1,590,000	1,590,000	1,590,000	1,590,000	1,590,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 43,432,108</b>	<b>\$ 17,435,622</b>	<b>\$ 17,435,619</b>	<b>\$ 15,230,448</b>	<b>\$ 36,203,815</b>	<b>\$ 22,057,253</b>	<b>\$ 22,057,253</b>
Intergovernmental Revenues	\$ 6,726,581	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 13,394,269	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
Public Charges for Services	33,106,863	12,899,565	12,899,565	12,692,249	12,714,400	12,714,400	12,714,400
Miscellaneous Revenue	532,020	128,000	128,000	130,216	128,000	128,000	128,000
Other Financing Sources	11,971,644	3,760,000	3,760,000	2,530,185	10,196,643	8,444,673	8,444,673
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 52,337,108</b>	<b>\$ 17,787,565</b>	<b>\$ 17,787,565</b>	<b>\$ 15,852,650</b>	<b>\$ 36,433,312</b>	<b>\$ 22,287,073</b>	<b>\$ 22,287,073</b>

Enterprise Funds

# METRO RIDE FUND

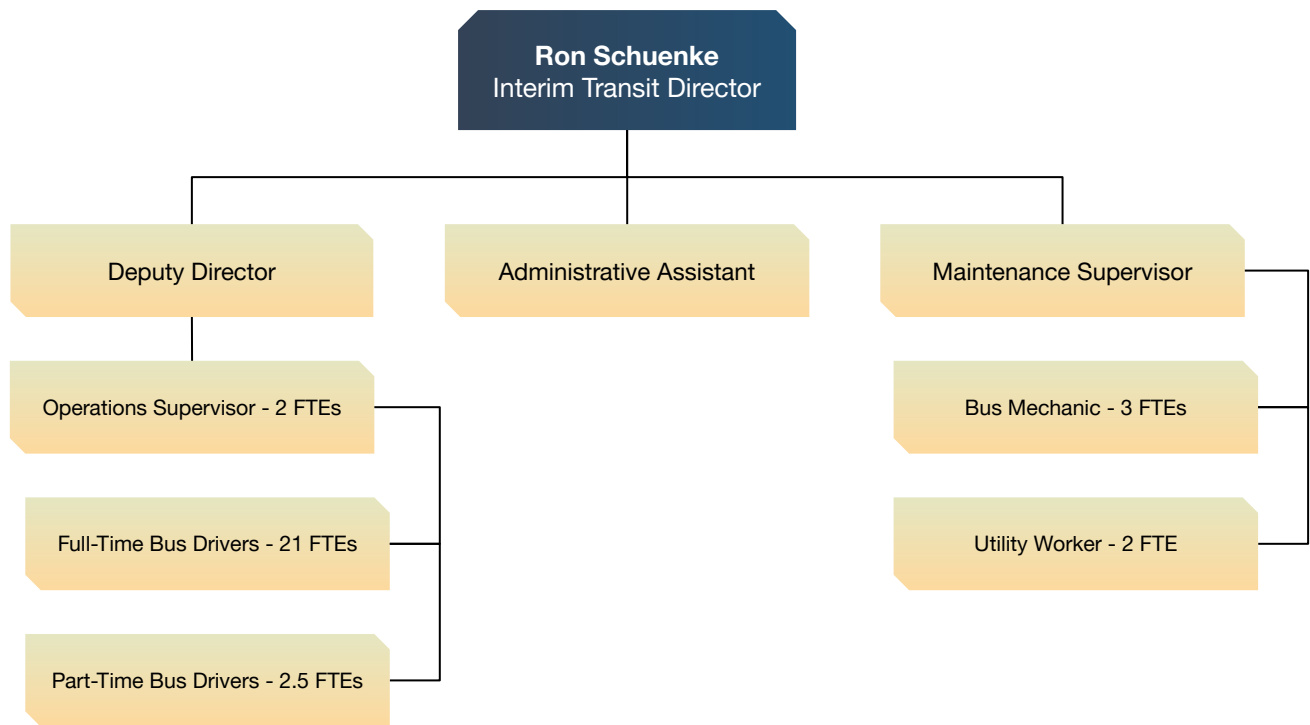
**MISSION:**

Metro Ride provides citizens with access to the community by providing timely, dependable, “people-oriented” public transit services. High value, safe transit service benefits the community through significant cost savings for the user and decreased public expenditures for more costly alternatives.

**DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

This organization is responsible for planning and administering transit services in the community. Services provided include fixed-route bus service and ADA paratransit service for the disabled. All services are open and available to the general public. Metro Ride is responsible for submitting applications for federal and state grant funds and for maintaining compliance with federal and state transit program requirements.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:**



**STAFFING LEVELS:**

	Adopted					Adopted				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Total	34.50	34.50	34.50	34.50	34.50	34.50	34.50	34.50	31.50	31.50

## FINANCIAL POLICIES

### BUDGETARY AND FINANCIAL POLICY

The following policies guide the development of the City annual budget and help manage the financial pressures due to growing demands on city resources and services, while preserving the long-term fiscal stability.

#### Budget Communication

Public involvement shall be encouraged in the annual budget process to ensure that the budget aligns with citizen priorities and to promote a well-informed community. An annual budget calendar will be adopted by the Finance Committee to communicate the process and timelines involved.

#### Budget Priorities

The City Council shall develop and pass a formal statement of budget priorities at the beginning of each annual budget cycle. The City's annual budget will be developed in accordance with the policies and priorities set forth in the comprehensive plan, the five year strategic financial plan, city council goals, the needs of the community and federal and state laws.

#### Budget Process

1. Annually, the Common Council acting as a Committee of the Whole will convene, at their first meeting in March to develop a formal statement of budget priorities for the ensuing year.
2. The Mayor will develop budget directives reflecting the priorities established which will guide departments with the development of their budgets.
3. Department directors have primary responsibility for preparing their budgets in compliance with budget directives.
4. The Mayor will review the departmental budget requests to determine whether they fulfill the budget priorities.
5. The Mayor and staff will develop a proposed budget and submit it to the Finance Committee for consideration at the first meeting in October.
6. The Finance Committee will review the budget and make recommendations to the Common Council for approval.
7. A public hearing in compliance with Wisconsin State Statutes will be conducted to obtain final input on the budget prior to Council consideration.

#### Basis of Budgeting

The City's budget shall be prepared on a modified accrual basis of accounting. Budgets shall be adopted for all funds except trust and agency funds.

#### Budget Document

The budget document is an important device for communicating the City's budget priorities and policy decisions. The budget shall be a detailed comprehensive document that outlines council priorities, and provides adequate detail on departmental responsibilities, mission, organizational structure, goals and objectives and financial information. The budget document shall also include a narrative summarizing the major budget issues, a summary of personnel changes and staffing levels, historical information on





It's where you belong!



Five-Year Strategic Plan | 2022-2027



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# MAYOR'S MESSAGE



I am proud to present the City of Wausau Five-Year Strategic Plan for 2022-2027. This plan is an aspirational endeavor for the future of Wausau and an essential look at understanding who we are, who we want to be and how to get there. Its success depends on all of us working together - City Council, City staff, and our residents and businesses - to implement the plan, report and evaluate its progress and make adjustments to continue moving the City of Wausau forward.

This Strategic Plan is the result of a collaborative process that engaged our community. We invited you, our residents and businesses, to let us know how we are doing, to share your ideas and to envision the future of Wausau. We reached out to a wide array of community stakeholders and organizations, as well as our own advisory boards and commissions and city staff. Through our collective efforts we fine-tuned our mission and core values, created a vision and set strategic goals and objectives for the City of Wausau.

I would like to thank the Strategic Planning Steering committee for their support and leadership in this process and members of the City's leadership team for their thoughtful and conscientious contributions to this planning.

Our City Council and staff are determined, dedicated and ready to put this plan into action while keeping our residents' input and direction at the center of the decision-making process. This is an exciting time for Wausau as we build upon our successes and, together, lead our community to an even better future.

Katie Rosenberg

Mayor

# MISSION | VISION | MOTTO

## Mission Statement

Enhance our community's quality of life and foster a sense of belonging for generations to come.

## Vision Statement

Wausau is a fun, vibrant, and highly connected community providing diverse and accessible social, arts, cultural and outdoor recreational experiences and a thriving economy where everyone has the opportunity to achieve success and happiness.

## Motto/Tag Line

Welcome Home to Wausau...  
It's where you belong

# CORE VALUES



## Professionalism

We are solution-oriented and work collaboratively to deliver service at the highest standards every time, in every situation.

## Accountability

We accept responsibility and take ownership for our actions.

## Integrity

We act ethically, honestly, and lead by example by having our actions reflect our word.

## Respect

We strive to seek understanding and treat everyone equitably and with compassion.

## Innovation

We consciously strive to be thought-leaders and creative in seeking opportunities to improve our service delivery

# THRIVING ECONOMY

## Strategic Goal

Develop strategies and services to support existing business and workers and attract and retain a skilled workforce and innovative businesses.

## Current State

Like many communities across the U.S. businesses are still trying to determine how to fit into the post-COVID economy. Rising inflation and supply chain issues are affecting every aspect of life for residents and businesses. At the same time, Wausau is experiencing record levels of new construction that will have a positive impact on the City's revenue. The City has continued its strategic focus on diversifying the housing options available in the community, expanding manufacturing jobs in the Wausau business campus, and partnering with Marathon County Development Corporation (MCDEVCO) to facilitate gap financing needed by businesses.

## Future State

Wausau works in concert with businesses and other governments in the region to form a cooperative ecosystem in which mutually reinforcing government and private sector activities contribute to a vibrant community by leveraging the city's strengths in the competitive industry sectors. Wausau has a reputation as an outstanding place to do business, powered by a community-reflecting workforce that is well-supported with diversified housing choices, affordable homeownership opportunities and services that allow workers to fully participate in their career or job of choice and advance their prosperity and standard of living. Wausau's pro-business brand and reputation for entrepreneurship is a magnet for innovation. Wausau employers have access to a skilled and developed workforce and workers have access to meaningful and well-paying career pathways.



## Objectives

1. Optimize tax revenue investment to contribute to our thriving economy.
2. Develop human resources to maintain a quality workforce.
3. Highlight our strengths such as health care, agriculture, local businesses and tourism to build community pride and recognition of community assets.
4. Partner to create wraparound services (childcare, transportation, etc.) for workforce development.
5. Continue to collaborate with businesses to create new housing and improve existing housing stock.

## Performance Measures

- Increase in number and type of workforce supports
- Increase in median household income
- % increase in housing units created
- % increase in housing units improved
- % increase in residents who agree the City is doing a good job in helping to create a thriving business environment and economy (community survey – establish baseline and trend over time)



# INNOVATIVE PUBLIC SERVICES

## Strategic Goal

Create and implement practices, policies and procedures to enhance and optimize public services for our community.

## Current State

In recent years the City has placed a premium on innovation, with department leadership empowering employees to look for ways to improve and modernize the processes and systems used to provide services and programming to the community. Even with this positive thrust the City is still recovering from the Great Recession of 2008 and is now grappling with the impacts of the Great Resignation and the massive re-location that occurred during the pandemic. The City is challenged with finding adequate staffing to fill vacancies and retaining skilled employees in an increasing competitive job market.

## Future State

The City delivers exceptional service by working to understand the challenges facing customers, residents and the community and incorporating sustainability and resiliency into the core functions of all City departments. City staff are innovative problem-solvers and continuously improve their work processes and practices so City departments can respond rapidly to changing customer needs and demands. The City provides an environment where employees feel engaged and encouraged and have opportunities for growth. Staff and managers have effective tools and templates to work efficiently and operating processes and procedures are designed to focus on what customer's value so the City delivers the right services when and where needed. As part of the City's efforts to maintain its workforce the City has created a focus on professional development that increases the engagement of employees at all levels and results in employees who stay with the City, preserving institutional knowledge.



## Objectives

1. Implement creative strategies for service delivery to meet the needs and expectations of our changing community.
2. Attract and retain an excellent City workforce to maintain and increase public service.
3. Maintain and enhance City support at public activities/events so that those events remain safe and efficient.
4. Invest in solutions to ensure environmental sustainability and commitment to environmental justice for generations to come.
5. Streamline City processes so new and/or existing businesses operating in Wausau have a set of clear expectations.

## Performance Measures

- % increase in businesses who feel the quality of services provided to businesses by the City meets or exceeds their expectations (business survey - establish baseline and trend over time)
- Employee retention rate (tracked annually and trended over time)
- % increase in residents who feel safe and welcomed at community events (community survey - establish baseline and trend over time)
- % increase in residents who agree the City is doing a good job of creating a healthy natural environment that sustains the community for current and future generations (establish baseline and trend over time)
- Identify sustainability and environmental justice goals and develop a plan to achieve them (for example: reduction in City facility energy usage, landfill diversion rate, water usage per capita)



# COHESIVE AND CONNECTED CULTURE

## Strategic Goal

Foster a community culture that embraces diversity and inclusivity so that all who live in and visit Wausau feel welcomed.

## Current State

After Wausau and Marathon County made national headlines in May of 2021 when the County Board voted down a resolution embracing diversity, the City has embraced a leadership role in tirelessly promoting Wausau as a “community for all.” The City Council passed the “We Are Wausau” resolution to acknowledge that people’s differences are not consistently respected and to express the determination to move above and beyond all forms of bias and exclusion. With this resolution the City acknowledged there are policies and practices that have created barriers that disproportionately affect refugees and other marginalized segments of the community and that more work is needed to counteract racism and create more opportunity for community members who are under-served or adversely affected by practices that are not equitable.

## Future State

Wausau’s communications and community engagement activities and events are welcoming, accessible and culturally responsive. Community members feel welcomed and heard and the City uses the input and feedback we receive from the community’s diverse voices in our planning and decision-making. City programs and services protect Wausau’s vulnerable residents, populations and neighborhoods and a mix of amenities is available that are inviting and interesting to all communities that call Wausau home.



## Objectives

1. Create a capable, accessible, and reliable communication system in the community to foster transparency and involvement.
2. Market the fun and vibrant social, cultural, and natural recreation opportunities in our community so that people feel a sense of belonging.
3. Create and support innovative programs to better connect newcomers to Wausau and their community.
4. Create innovative shared services with our partner communities resulting in greater regional success and efficiency.

## Performance Measures

- Satisfaction of Wausau newcomers with their life in the community (survey on arrival and one year later)
- A multi-channel system for communicating with the community is in place
- A marketing strategy to promote social, cultural and recreational opportunities has been created and implemented
- % increase in resident satisfaction with City communication and engagement (community survey - establish baseline and trend over time)
- % increase in residents overall trust in City government (community survey - establish baseline and trend over time)
- % increase in residents satisfaction with City-sponsored events and activities (community survey - establish baseline and trend over time)



# FUN AND VIBRANT COMMUNITY

## Strategic Goal

Cultivate and promote the social, cultural, arts and natural recreation opportunities in our community.

## Current State

The City continues to support a rich array of programming and recreational opportunities throughout the community, including over 350 acres of park lands and trails, sponsorship of events in the River District and use of the city's room tax revenue and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support events and programming provided by Wausau's community-based organizations. Historic landmarks, the arts and art-related events are key cultural resources for Wausau with performing arts, galleries, museums and public art all serving as a hub for people in Central Wisconsin to enjoy. The City and its residents are interested in creating more opportunities to nurture a stronger and more cohesive community, embracing diversity and social interaction and ensuring that a physical and cultural environment with ample gathering places and community-wide events exists to foster these qualities. The City is committed to the goal of continually improving downtown by promoting it as a tourist destination, a neighborhood for urban residents and a center of commercial activity. Recent improvements in streetscapes, walkability and parking availability will meet the needs of downtown residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

## Future State

Wausau is a cohesive and connected community that considers all cultural, racial and socio-economic factors in order to provide access and opportunities to diverse residents and businesses. The city is a lively, inviting and welcoming destination for residents and visitors alike. Downtown is characterized by attractive buildings and a vibrant street life with interesting places to shop, dine, connect and recreate. These amenities are intentionally inviting to all of Wausau's various communities. Downtown is a place that offers diverse housing options and fosters creative, flexible work environments, business innovation and the arts. Wausau's well-maintained and improved parks and open spaces provide accessible opportunities for everyone in the community to enjoy trails, parks and an active, healthy lifestyle.



## Objectives

1. Cultivate continued opportunities for growth in recreation and quality of life offerings from the City to foster economic diversity and community inclusivity.
2. Support diverse community activities that attract participation and understanding of Wausau's history, recreational activities and culture.
3. Deliberately encourage and incentivize the mall redevelopment so that a vibrant downtown is created.
4. Create a destination development plan so that room tax is optimized and the City draws tourists and new residents.
5. Deliberately develop the Riverlife area to better connect the community.

## Performance Measures

- % increase in residents who feel welcomed and included in the community (community survey – establish baseline and trend over time)
- Continue to develop the River Edge Trail and complete the West Side Trail in 5 years
- Re-examine the City's special event permits and policies to establish the needed amount of support and a set of criteria for types of events
- Use the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) to evaluate the City's 37 parks for offerings of economic diversity and community inclusivity. (Progress: Evaluate 3-4 parks per year)



# STRONG REGIONAL ALLIANCES

## Strategic Goal

Organize and lead a regional collaboration with local municipalities to create a common message and destination plan for Wausau and the region.

## Current State

While there is renewed interest and effort to collaborate on tourism and mental health services across municipalities within Marathon County, regional communication and collaboration has been poor historically. Communities within the County have competed against each other for businesses and they market themselves individually rather than as an entire region, and there is no cohesive approach to economic development and marketing. Residents in Wausau are demanding increased transit from MetroRide, and it has been difficult to achieve the level of cooperation that would allow expansion of bus routes and schedules within Wausau and the towns immediately outside the city's boundaries.

## Future State

Wausau has strengthened and expanded its cooperative activities with all governments in the region, resulting in an open spirit of cooperation with other cities and the county, increased levels of service to Wausau residents and a cooperative approach to expanding, retaining, and recruiting new businesses and industries to the area. MetroRide services are expanded, serving the needs of Wausau and the surrounding towns and villages. The communities in the region work together to promote sustainable practices that protect our natural environment to ensure a sustainable legacy for future generations and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Residents regard the natural environment as one of Wausau's most valuable and defining characteristics and visitors enjoy the ease of access and proximity to natural areas and the community's many recreational opportunities.



## Objectives

1. Create and lead a municipal regional coalition so that resources are optimized.
2. Explore the development of regional collaboration so a regional identity is established and a common, shared vision and message is established and used.
3. Host waterfront activities such as parties and events to showcase regional unity through a natural resource.
4. Support and lead in green and eco-friendly efforts and initiatives for a cleaner, healthier, and sustainable environment.
5. Develop a plan for economic alignment for the region to build a skilled and available workforce.

## Performance Measures

- Number and type of regional initiatives and partnerships with shared resources
- Regional branding and identity plan is completed and implementation progress is measured
- Increase in waterfront activities offered



# AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLAN

## Letter from the Mayor

Wausau has embarked on a community-wide journey to make our city an even better place for residents of all ages and abilities. As the population of 65 years or older continues to increase in our region, we want to ensure that our community's older adults remain in their neighborhoods, living independently and with access to services, amenities and opportunities for community engagement. We are in the process of assessing our community, engaging with residents across the city and in our neighborhoods to learn more about their daily concerns and challenges. As we learn more, we will update our citywide Strategic Plan, as well as this companion Age-Friendly Community Plan to reflect the new information we receive. In the meantime, we intend to pursue age-friendly strategies within the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. These age-friendly components are captured here in this companion plan.

Our work going forward includes engaging with our city departments in incorporating an aging lens into all of our daily planning, programming and services. We will look at our public spaces, buildings and parks to ensure they are meeting the needs of everyone. We will look at our restaurants, shops, museums and other entertainment venues to pave the way for inclusive entertainment. Working with employers, we will empower our older workers, strengthening the entire workforce by creating intentional cross-generational connections and mentorship. I invite you to join us as an advocate, ambassador or volunteer. Together, we will continue working with our community's older adults to honor and respect them and help to ensure for them an active, safe and healthy lifestyle.

Sincerely,

Katie Rosenberg



## Introduction to Age-Friendly Communities

As the U.S. population ages and people stay healthy and active longer, communities must adapt. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Network of Age-Friendly Communities helps participating communities become great places for all ages by adopting such features as safe, walkable streets; better housing and transportation options; access to key services; and opportunities for residents to participate in community activities. Well-designed, livable communities promote health and sustain economic growth, and they make for happier, healthier residents – of all ages.

AARP has identified 8 Domains of Livability – features that impact the well-being of older adults – that help make communities more livable for people of all ages. The following are the 8 Domains of Livability and their descriptions:

1. **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:** People need public places to gather – indoors and out. Green spaces, seating and accessible buildings (elevators, zero-step entrances, staircases with railings) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages.
2. **Transportation:** Driving shouldn't be the only way to get around. Pedestrians need sidewalks and safe, crossable streets. Dedicated bicycle lanes benefit non-drivers and drivers alike. Public transit options can range from the large-scale (trains, buses, light rail) to the small (taxis, shuttles or ride share services).
3. **Housing:** AARP surveys consistently find that the vast majority of older adults want to reside in their current home or community for as long as possible. Doing so is possible if a home is designed or modified for aging in place or if a community has housing options that are suitable for differing incomes, ages and life stages.
4. **Social Participation:** Regardless of a person's age, loneliness is often as debilitating a health condition as having a chronic illness or disease. Sadness and isolation can be combated by having opportunities to socialize and the availability of accessible, affordable and fun social activities.
5. **Respect and Social Inclusion:** Everyone wants to feel valued. Intergenerational gatherings and activities are a great way for young and older people to learn from one another, honor what each has to offer and, at the same time, feel good about themselves.
6. **Work and Civic Engagement:** Work does not need to be an all or nothing experience. An age-friendly community encourages older people to be actively engaged in community life and has opportunities for residents to work for pay or volunteer their skills.
7. **Communication and Information:** We now communicate in ways few could have imagined a decade ago. Age-friendly communities recognize that information needs to be shared through a variety of methods since not everyone is tech-savvy, and not everyone has a smartphone or home-based access to the internet.
8. **Community and Health Services:** At some point, every person of every age gets hurt, becomes ill or simply needs some help. While it is important that assistance and care be available nearby, it is essential that residents are able to access and afford the services required.

# AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLAN

## Wausau's Age-Friendly Profile

The population over 65 years of age is typically entering retirement and requires services like accessibility to healthcare, senior facilities, universal housing and a variety of transportation options to access services and programs. Wausau's population of 65 years or older increased from 15% of the total population in 2010 to 17% in 2020. While that is not significant growth, Marathon County's population of 65 years or older has increased by 30% over the last three decades and Wisconsin experienced a similar trend of 25% over 30 years. Although Wausau does not match the county and state trends in growth of this population cohort, the city has a higher percentage of population over 65 years of age than the rest of the region or the state. As members of the baby boomer generation continue to retire at a rapid pace, the need for an age-friendly approach to community living will be more important than ever.

## Age-Friendly Community Vision and Values

### Vision

In Wausau all residents can remain and thrive as they age and be a powerful resource in making our city a better, stronger, more inclusive community for everyone. Age-friendly means a place that is vibrant and livable for all ages, where daily life is healthy, safe and comfortable, people are well connected via transportation options, communication methods and plentiful social activities, and the community is enriched by the creation of intergenerational relationships.

### Values

- Everyone is respected and included, regardless of cultural or religious background, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, ability, socioeconomic status or geographic location.
- Age- and ability-friendly business development will have a positive effect on the community's economy.
- Residents of all ages, abilities, races or ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses are involved in deciding priorities, shaping actions and bringing about change.
- Age-friendly environments and communities benefit all age groups.
- We will utilize, whenever possible, existing services and capacity and new services will be created only when needed services are not available.

## Age-Friendly Action Plan

The City will focus its initial efforts in the following Age-Friendly Domains:

### Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- Complete the expansion of the city's RiverWalk trail along the Wisconsin River in a manner that is totally accessible.

### Transportation

- Support and advocate through the City's Bike and Pedestrian Committee alternative transportation with a heavy emphasis on bike paths and lanes and sidewalk improvements.
- Implement the City's Economic Development Committee resolution for more off-road trails and paths by applying for a transportation grant to implement these improvements.

### Housing

- Expand living options for seniors by converting Riverside Terrace - an assisted living facility without a waiting list and full occupancy - to elder living where residents can hire their own in-home health providers.

### Social Participation

- Continue to support The Landing senior center at the Wausau Woodson YMCA and other senior-focused services and amenities.
- Continue to support and connect the activities of the Aging and Disability Resource Connection, Optimists, Rotary, Elks, Golden Kiwanis and other service clubs that play a central role in connecting and engaging seniors in social activities.
- Increase intergenerational classes and activities, particularly those that connect seniors with youth.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Strategic Planning Steering Committee

- Katie Rosenberg, Mayor
- Benjamin Bliven, Police Chief
- Liz Brodek, Development Director
- Ken Day, Community member
- Jean Frankel, Executive Assistance to the Mayor
- Leah Giordano, Library Director, Marathon County
- Mary Anne Groat, Finance Director
- Luis Melendez, Business Owner
- Tim Van de Yacht, Community Member
- Sarah Watson, Alderperson, 8th District
- Meilyn Xiong, Business Owner

## BerryDunn Consulting Team

- Jonathon Grace, Principal
- Michelle Kennedy, Project Manager
- Charline Kirongozi, Facilitator

## Faithful Consulting

- Yengyee Lor, President

