

Willmar Municipal Utilities

Position Title: General Manager

Department: Administration

Immediate Supervisor's Title: Municipal Utilities Commission

Job Summary

Serves as chief administrative officer performing professional, managerial and leadership work to carry out the day-to-day responsibilities of the Utility's programs, operations, and services. Reports to seven-member Commission appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. Develops effective working relationships with the City of Willmar, partners, and other agencies. Oversees the operations of all Utility departments under the authority of the systems and structures in place to promote the efficient and effective delivery of all utility services. Participates in Commission meetings and meetings of various committees; executes Commission directives and policies; initiates and provides leadership to strategic business planning; budget development and administration; safety programs; human resources and personnel administration activities; and ensures compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Organizational Relationships

Communicates with:

Internally - All department heads and Utility employees, City staff and council members, various committee members, and the Utility's attorneys.

Externally - County officials, other utility managers, numerous state agencies, state, and federal legislators, MMUA staff, APPA staff, MRES, other state and national associations, financial and other contracted consultants, numerous suppliers/vendors, numerous business and community organizations, media, Utility customers and City residents.

Supervises with full authority: All Utility employees, directly or indirectly.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership: Develop and implement strategic plans to achieve operational excellence, financial sustainability, and regulatory compliance.

- Demonstrates involvement in, and attends meetings and conferences for APPA, MMUA, MRES, and other state and national organizations.
- Directs and participates in the development of short and long-range plans and policies for the Utility.

- Gathers, interprets, and prepares data for studies, reports and recommendations for the Commission consideration and approval.
- Engages Commission and leadership staff in annual workshop to review annual goals and update strategic plan.

Operational Oversight: Direct all activities related to the generation, transmission, distribution of electricity and the sourcing, treatment, and distribution of water.

- Provides leadership and direction for the Utility operations, working directly with the staff through the adopted structures and assignments.
- Establishes and maintains an effective system of communications throughout the Utility to ensure an understanding of the Utility's long-term direction and support the consistent application of policies and procedures.

Financial Management: Oversee the financial health of the WMU, including preparing and managing the annual budget, monitoring financial performance, and ensuring cost-effective operations.

- Develops and presents proposed operating and capital expenditure budgets for review and approval by the Commission.
- Reviews and monitors utility revenues and expenditures to assure sound fiscal control of operations and oversees the Utility's cost control activities.
- Provides the Commission with regular reports on financial conditions and current and future utility operating and capital needs.
- Oversees the power supply contracts and maintains relationships with power supply vendors.

Personnel Management: Lead and manage a diverse team of professionals, fostering a collaborative work environment, promoting professional development, and overseeing safety programs to ensure a safe working environment.

- Hires and removes department heads and all subordinate staff, establishes job descriptions, assigns work, and sets clear expectations for department heads, assesses their performance, and holds them accountable for results.
- Plans for the development of personnel resources across Utility operations and maintains programs to encourage employee development.
- Directs the development and consistent administration of equitable personnel policies, compensation administration policies, and employee benefit plans.

- Represents the Commission in collective bargaining, contract negotiations, contract administration, grievances, and other dealings with the bargaining unit.

Customer Service: Foster a customer-centric culture, ensuring high levels of service quality and responsiveness to customer needs and inquiries.

- Maintains an effective relationship with the customers and the public, represents the utilities in matters of city affairs, civic affairs, and state and national organizations.
- Makes presentations to councils, boards, commissions, civic groups and the general public as requested.

Community Engagement: Build positive relationships with community stakeholders, including elected officials, residents, and local businesses.

- Develops effective partnerships and works closely with city officials, including the city administrator and other members of the staff.
- Promotes timely and effective communications to the Commission, staff and to the customers and Willmar community.
- Identifies and develops communication tools and methods to inform and educate all interested parties.
- Represents the Utility with all forms of media.

Regulatory Compliance: Stay abreast of industry regulations, maintain compliance, and advocate for the utility's interests with regulatory bodies.

- Ensures that all Utility operations are in compliance with applicable local, state, federal, and other government regulations and laws, including environmental and safety regulations.
- Reviews, monitors, and participates in legislative issues impacting the Utility.

Infrastructure Planning and Maintenance: Oversee infrastructure planning, maintenance programs, and capital improvement projects to ensure reliability and efficiency.

- Analyzes operating results of the Utility and its principal components relative to established objectives and ensures that appropriate steps are taken to optimize operations and correct unsatisfactory conditions.
- Ensures the proper allocation of staff, equipment and resources needed for Utility operations and resolves any conflicts arising between departments and work teams.

Emergency Preparedness: Maintain and implement emergency response plans to mitigate risks and ensure continuity of service during emergencies and natural disasters.

Knowledge and Abilities

- Knowledge of the municipal utility business, operations, practices, and programs.
- Knowledge of municipal finance, human resources, and personnel administration.
- Knowledge of fundamentals of management and leadership principles. Ability to execute and administer these principles across the organization.
- Ability to forecast operating and capital needs; ability to organize and present the information to the Commission for their review and action.
- Ability to communicate, both orally and in writing to a diverse audience.
- Ability to interpret, communicate and execute Commission policies and directives.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective work relationships with a wide variety of groups and individuals.
- Ability to analyze complex sets of data and variables and prepare and present reports on the same.
- Ability to provide direct supervision to subordinates, combining the right mix of motivation, and professional development with accountability and performance measurement.

Qualifications

Bachelor's degree in business or public administration, engineering, or a related field required; Master's degree preferred. Eight or more years of progressive experience in utility operations, preferably with a multi-utility municipal organization, including 5 years at a management level with administrative and operating responsibilities. Position requires strong financial and business acumen in managing public or private utility operations and excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to collaborate effectively with commissioners, government agencies and stakeholders. Qualified candidates must be effective communicators and demonstrate the ability to motivate employees and manage organizational change. Experience in labor-management relations desired.

Physical Activities

Work is performed in a typical office environment with travel required as needed to carry out the duties of the position. Operates a personal or utility vehicle to observe projects, attend meetings and conduct the business of the WMU.

The job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Employee

Date

Dated: May 10, 2012

Updated: 12/28/2021

Updated: 07/15/2024