



MEMO

Department

To: Finance and Personnel
From: Finance Director Van Rossum
Date: 09/02/2025
Re: 2026 People and Operations (POP) Plan Request Review and Recommendations

Background information:

As part of the City's People and Operational Plan (POP) process, each department was asked to submit details on the position requests for consideration in the 2026 budget. These requests are documented in detail within the *2026 Vision & Talent Lookbook* included with this memo.

The POP Committee, comprised of the Mayor, Council President, Finance Director, and Human Resources Director, reviewed all submissions using the framework outlined in the POP Process guide, which focuses on organizational risk, service delivery impact, alignment with strategic priorities, and overall stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

The process included several layers of review and opportunity for clarification:

1. **Initial Department Reviews** – Each department met with Finance and Human Resources to present their request, explain the rationale, and answer questions while building the case for the request.
2. **POP Committee Reviews** – The Committee then met with each department a second time to discuss the requests more broadly, again providing a chance for departments to explain needs and for committee members to ask clarification questions.
3. **POP Committee Deliberation** – Once all reviews were completed, the POP committee deliberated the requests, and the information presented to form the recommendation of priority list.
4. **Department Head Group Session** – All department heads met collectively to review the Committee's draft recommendations, providing an opportunity for citywide discussion on priorities and impacts.

5. **Follow-Up Meetings** – Final conversations were held with departments whose requests were either not recommended or where the recommendation differed from the original request, ensuring transparency and feedback throughout the process.

Through this structured process, the Committee identified a set of positions that are recommended to move forward for potential funding consideration. This list represents the most critical staffing needs as viewed through a citywide lens, recognizing that while many positions have merit, not all can be supported at once.

The idea behind prioritizing requests at this stage is to provide both Council and staff with an early view of which positions are most likely to be considered for funding. This allows conversations to begin now, rather than waiting until late October when the full draft budget is presented, so that feedback, concerns, and context can be factored earlier.

It is important to note that these recommendations are **not a directive to hire in 2026**. They are presented for planning and discussion purposes only, with final decisions reserved for Council now and later in the budget process. If there is questions, please raise them now so details can be gathered and reported back.

Strategic Plan:

The recommended positions align with the City's Strategic Plan in the following ways:

- **HR Coordinator** – Supports the "People Management Plan" by ensuring compliance, reducing reliance on outside consultants, and providing capacity for employee engagement and performance initiatives.
- **Accounting Specialist (Clerk/Finance)** – Strengthens financial stewardship and internal controls, while improving the timeliness of financial reporting and departmental support.
- **Assistant Library Director** – Enhances succession planning and operational resilience within the library, ensuring continuity of leadership and support for community enrichment.
- **Park Foreman** – Advances quality of life and "Community of Choice" goals by providing needed oversight of park facilities, aligning with significant investments in public spaces and recreation.
- **Fire Administrative Assistant** – Increases organizational efficiency and aligns with the "Restructuring with Purpose" initiative, allowing command staff to focus on leadership and community safety.

Each of these recommendations was selected because of its connection to either strategic initiatives or pressing operational risks that, if unaddressed, may hinder the City's ability to meet long-term goals.

Budget:

At this stage, these positions are identified as recommended for funding if the budget allows. The full cost estimates, including salaries and benefits, are provided in the *Vision & Talent Lookbook* which are ballpark figures. Collectively, the recommended positions represent ongoing recurring costs, primarily supported by the General Fund levy. In some cases, additional revenue offsets (such as reduced consultant use, permit fees, or ambulance revenues) may be available.

The resolution resulting in the Fire Department Restructure will be a priority expense affecting the financial resources available for personnel hiring in 2026. This will be considered during the budget rollup process prior to these new positions being funded.

The October 20th meeting will present which positions are proposed to be included in the draft 2026 budget, along with associated cost figures. This will provide Council with another opportunity for discussion and direction.

Staff Recommended Action:

Staff recommends that the Council **receive and review the Committee's recommendations as informational at this time**. No decision is required at this stage, but discussion and feedback is encouraged.

- On **October 20**, staff will present a draft budget with the proposed positions and financial details.
- Even at that point, Council will not be asked to approve; rather, it will allow for additional discussion and refinement.
- The **final decision to approve or deny specific position requests** will occur at the **November 10 proposed budget meeting**.

This staged approach ensures that Council has multiple opportunities to review, question, and evaluate staffing recommendations in the context of the overall budget before any commitments are made.



2026 People and Operations (POP) Plan Request Review and Recommendations

Understanding that each area is responsible for presenting its challenges for consideration as part of their job, the POP Committee viewed all the position requests from the city's perspective, considering its critical components and the global risks and opportunities facing the city. These types of conversations help bring an understanding to the council when deciding when to spend the money. This process is challenging all department heads with the thought that just because something is asked for and there may be money available, it doesn't mean it should be spent. Managing taxpayer funds responsibly is a shared duty among employees, departments, and council members. The below list is a prioritized recommendation from the POP Committee.

List of Recommended Requests in order of Priority

1. HR Coordinator
 - a. Risk of Compliance with all state and federal laws. Will allow for more timely responses to all personnel issues and vacation coverage. One person handling 170 and managing 220 people during the seasonal hires is inadequate.
 - b. This would impact the use of a summer internship at this time.
2. Accounting Specialist – Clerk/Finance
 - a. The risk of compliance with all state, federal, county city financial transactions.
 - b. Coverage during peak season, Tax collection, and elections. Improve internal controls with more capacity to separate duties by accounting standards. Will be able to provide more timely and actionable financial information to all departments.
 - c. In addition to mitigating the risks mentioned, there will be more time to evaluate requests for the performance of city services, programs, permitting, etc., based on data versus the wants of each department.
3. Assistant Library Director – Hire full-time
 - a. The risk of not having a true second person in command is not healthy for the current organization structure and staff. It's understood that the structure doesn't allow for clear-cut duties between department functions, but will allow for succession planning as well as for another staff member to get involved where needed, while also giving the Library Director the ability to delegate some of the decisions that all need to flow through that role.
 - b. The open part-time position should be removed from the organization chart.

4. Park Foreman Position

- a. This is a suggested variation from what was requested in the POP. The position as requested was a lead into future staffing needs in the streets and parks department.
- b. Meanwhile 2025-2030 parks plan shows many areas that are high-use and public-facing, and in need of critical planning and supervision. The city has been investing significant dollars to update these spaces that now need to be maintained to a higher standard.
- c. To handle staffing requests, this committee is suggesting a Park Foreman to have direct reports to manage the parks and be added to the org chart as a direct report to the Street Superintendent. This will significantly reduce the 34 direct reports that Street Superintendent has in the current structure.
 - i. Department Of Public Works Superintendent and Director of Public Works / City Engineer will present an Org structure change and include a more description job description for the park foreman position during the budget process

5. Part-time Admin Assistant in Fire

- a. Recognizing the extensive record-keeping required of the fire department and understanding that the current management performs those duties.
- b. Increasing from 7.5 hours to 37.5 hours is significant. The POP committee suggests a path to grow into a full-time position to be considered.
- c. Concerns
 - i. Carrel - Hiring Concerns on training part time with risk of losing them and having to retrain.
 - ii. Van Rossum – Jumping from 7.5 to full time without proving the job duties and description
 - iii. Van Rossum – A lot of change in the last 2 years within the department. More change ahead. Suggest letting things settle to assess the needs
- d. Thoughts/Alternatives
 - i. Carrel – Mentioned additional time to assess the revenue side from the department which is reviewing the rates for ambulance fees
 - ii. Mayor – Suggested an alternative could be to have Megan work one more day for a total of two per week and then see what it does to workload.
 - iii. Moore – To update job description for this position as to what it will be like.

The following position requests were reviewed as part of the 2026 budget process. However, due to funding constraints, timing, or the need for additional information and resources, these positions are not recommended for inclusion in the 2026 POP additions. In some cases, previous requests, operational changes, alternative strategies, or potential grant funding may address the needs identified at this time.

List of Requests not being recommended at this time

1. Social Media Specialist

- a. The committee agrees that the City's social media presence would benefit from increased activity across platforms, with particular emphasis on expanding the use of video content.
- b. The committee's preference is to further develop internal communications processes before expanding department staffing. Other departments can contribute to content creation and posting in the interim. Once a structured system is in place and proven effective, the committee recommends reconsidering the addition of Social Media Specialist support in the future.

2. DPW Office Aid

- a. The committee believes this area can address the stated concerns and risks with current personnel on staff while focusing on change management. A realignment of these staff duties, functions, and expectations is the suggested solution to resolve this stated concern.
- b. In addition to this, the area acquired an intern to help the area with similar stated concerns a short while ago.

3. Building inspector position

- a. The committee understands that the desire to add a building inspector is multifaceted. It would allow for a lighter workload among current staff. It would also allow for some outsourced functions to be brought back in-house to eliminate costs. Finally, it will give the city a succession plan for a department of one acting employee.
- b. Not denying the risk and opportunity, the committee believes there are solutions now that can help mitigate the stated risk/concerns with this request at this time.
- c. The committee would like to monitor the performance of the construction industry in both residential and commercial sectors over the next two years. The City is also limited until additional infrastructure investments are made.

Once the Comprehensive Plan is updated, the city will have a clearer understanding of the timing and location of potential growth areas. The committee recommends waiting until the next major annexation is needed and until current staff complete the necessary certification to perform the currently outsourced function. To free up capacity in the meantime, the committee suggests considering outsourcing a portion of the inspection workload to allow staff time to obtain certification.

- d. The committee recommends revisiting this item for further consideration.

4. Convert Library Historian from PT to FT

- a. The Committee felt the other request (Assistant director) from the library was more critical and risk prevention than this one.
- b. The position of full-time assistant library director in 2026 will allow time to assess staffing needs for the future.
- c. Furthermore, there is a lot unknown about what is going to happen to the library space being occupied. The committee believes that the level of service that we are currently providing is met by the current staffing being recommended for the 2026 budget.



Building Our Team for Tomorrow

The 2026 Vision & Talent Lookbook

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People and Operational Plan Position Requests for 2026 Budget

Each department has identified elevated needs as we look to the future. In response, several have submitted position requests for the 2026 budget aimed at addressing specific challenges or gaps within their operations. To ensure a clear and consistent comparison, each request has been formatted using the same two-page summary template, outlining the rationale, impact, and alignment with strategic goals.

The goal of this process is to prioritize these requests in advance of the 2026 budget development cycle. Doing so allows us to match the most critical needs with available funding and ensures that decisions are made strategically rather than reactively.

Ultimately, this tool serves as a planning and discussion framework, one that supports long-term thinking, encourages alignment with the City of Kaukauna's strategic vision, and helps shape a team structure that best serves the community both now and into the future. Each area has support material for the items on the list of considerations. If you'd like additional information on any of the requests the department requesting such a position is able to provide more information.



People & Operational Plan 2026 Budget Request

Department: Library
Submitted By: Ashley Thiem-Menning
Date: July 21, 2025
Position Title/Request: Assistant Director

Background & Justification:

In 2022, the Assistant Director resigned. Their exit interview cited unsustainable workload as a key reason—handling Assistant Director duties, overseeing Youth Services (without a Youth Services Librarian), and assisting with Communications needs. At the time, only two librarians—both in administrative roles—were also covering responsibilities of Youth and Adult Services, creating strain.

The Library Board reallocated the position's salary to hire a Youth Services Librarian and convert a part-time Communications role to full-time. This alleviated concerns regarding workload to move toward the reinstatement of the Assistant Director, as solely Assistant Director.

The position remains listed in the current budget books unfilled. As the Library moves forward with its long-range staffing plan, the Director remains the sole supervisor for a staff of more than 20. In contrast, other City departments—such as Police, Fire, and DPW—have multiple supervisory roles. Without an Assistant Director, no other staff can make administrative decisions when the Director is unavailable, despite the Library operating 61 hours per week and serving an average of 109,000 annual visitors.

Strategic Alignment:

This position enhances the Library's ability to deliver responsive programs, services, and outreach. It also supports community connection—Library door count is already up 5% from January to May 2025 over the previous year. This position also reduces the risk of burnout for the Library Director by sharing leadership responsibilities. Lastly, the position would improve internal support by adding a second supervisor available to both Library and City staff.

Hiring the position back aligns with goals around people management. Following analysis—including findings from the Assistant Director's 2022 exit interview—it was clear that the dual role of Assistant Director and de facto Youth Services Librarian was unsustainable.

This proposed structure supports a healthier work environment and stronger retention. It also enhances the Library's role in supporting a vibrant local economy by providing welcoming, literacy-rich spaces and free community resources.

Operational Benefit:

Adding this position significantly improves communication, culture, and workflow. With the Director currently responsible for all supervision, workload limits the ability to maintain regular staff coaching. A second supervisor ensures more frequent check-ins, better staff development, and more consistent procedures across the organization. An increase in staff also aligns with the Library Strategic Plan.

Risk of Not Funding

Currently, there is no formal designee with managerial authority to represent the Library at Board meetings, City or System Director meetings, or to handle tasks such as performance reviews, payroll, timesheet management, or operational decisions beyond the Director. The Director must personally respond to building issues during all 61 open hours each week.

This has affected the Director's ability to take meaningful time off from work. Even while on vacation or sick, staff reach out due to time-sensitive or incident-driven needs and there are deadlines that must be maintained regardless of vacation/sick status. At times, coverage gaps occur—affecting both internal operations and public service. For example, patron account issues requiring Director review often remain unresolved until their return.

Budget Impact:

The Assistant Director is a fulltime, salary position. Anticipated cost with benefits: \$138,500

Alternatives Considered: The Library could transition the current Adult and Youth Services positions to Librarian II to add supervisory duties. However, this would increase their workloads without the additional support staff in place to help with programs, collections, and services in their respective department and would not alleviate the number of current direct reports for the Library Director.



People & Operational Plan 2026 Budget Request

Department: Public Works
Submitted By: John W. Neumeier, Director of Public Works/City Engineer
Date: 7/17/2025
Position Title/Request: Parks and Facilities Subforeman

Background & Justification:

An increasing demand and focus on our parks and trails, both the number and size of our added buildings/facilities, and the growth of the city over the past several years has shown us the need to have staff that is more focused on our parks and facilities areas rather than utilizing only a mix of staff and only when available. The Parks and Facilities Subforeman will give the current infrastructure and the continuing growth of the same, the attention it needs to keep our new park improvements as an asset, to keep our new buildings looking and operating in good condition, to provide a steady contact point for various city department maintenance needs, facility management including coordinating contracted services, providing a single contact for park and facility maintenance, and in addition, providing a regular contact for sports groups, event organizers, and residents to host events in city parks and facilities. The position will also help coordinate maintenance of the over 50 city managed stormwater ponds and biofilters to help maintain municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) compliance. The position looks to keep parks, facilities, and events, cores of our community while also providing some relief to other departments and positions.

The position would be responsible for daily oversight of the current Parks Department including four Park Tech positions, one extended/limited-term Seasonal Laborer, and all (nine currently) regular Seasonal Laborer positions. We also anticipate a small re-alignment where the one existing janitor/facilities position would fall under Parks and Facilities Subforeman. The current four Park Tech positions are recommended to be maintained, which means that an additional staff hire would be needed to fill the new position or backfill the current role from an internal promotion in a Grade 10 (Park tech or Laborer). This addition of one full-time employee (24 to 25) would be the first added position to the Street Department in over 40 years.

Strategic Alignment:

The Parks and Facilities Subforeman position will help make us a Community of Choice, by increasing public and park open space attendance as called for in the strategic plan; "In order to be a community of choice, we believe we need to continue to enhance our parks

and public open spaces.” We envision this need to include keeping all our public facilities in good condition and to better plan improvements to facilities and parks.

Operational Benefit: This position will provide reduced workload on the street foreman for scheduling and oversight, allowing more attention and tutoring for inexperienced newer staff, better management of daily/weekly jobs, increased availability for small construction and street maintenance projects, and provide better oversight of parks and seasonal labor. The current trial position has also taken the lead as contact for athletic clubs and some special events and would continue to develop that role, taking tasks from both Street Department management and Community Enrichment (Rec). Finally, the position will help develop the framework and SOP for purchasing and contractual services, leading to less time and coordination of these tasks by other department heads and efficiencies of grouping contracts for similar services.

Risk of Not Funding We see this position as a need for the existing size, trending growth, and strategic direction of the city. The question is not if we need additional staff focused on parks and facilities, but when we need the position to start. The recent and upcoming major investments into the parks system tell us the time is now. From a facilities side, we are seeing our “new” buildings being a decade old and starting to need more rehabilitation and replacement maintenance, not just regular upkeep and cleaning. From a strategic plan view, the efforts to optimize service contracts and find efficiencies across departments has traction but needs direction and a staff more focused on the task. If we do not add this or a similar position soon, we risk a backslide or a reduction in services.

Budget Impact: \$110,000 Proposed General Fund, Street Maintenance budget, plus additional requests as noted below. Some tasks could also be funded by Stormwater Utility.

- Cell reimbursement (\$25/month or as updated),
- Additional seat/license for Microsoft suite
- Add second Gator/Utility type vehicle (unrealized trade-in value of a 2011 Gator unit, estimated at \$5-8,000 currently planned in 2026)
- Future work truck (currently proposed to continue using/sharing truck #1 for one to two years. Possible addition of new fleet vehicle in 2028 could be \$45-55,000)

Alternatives Considered:

- 1) **No Change** – We see reduction in service and increase in stress in public works management as the city grows and assets increase in number but could lose value due to reduced maintenance over time.
- 2) **Temporary/Seasonal Subforeman Position** The current trial of a subforeman, has already shown to be beneficial, and included an increase in seasonal staff hours to help backfill regular daily tasks. However, it has not allowed for time or resources to address additional facilities related tasks as outlined in the job description, or to provide community involvement/volunteer programs, or to focus on larger administrative/planning tasks.



People & Operational Plan 2026 Budget Request

Department: Human Resources (Communication)
Submitted By: Andrea Fencel
Date: 7.15.2025
Position Title/Request: Social Media Specialist

Background & Justification: Not only does social media act as a channel for us to communicate updates and news to our community, it provides other benefits such as: increased brand visibility, free or low-cost marketing, job recruiting, helps build trust in local government, and gives us the opportunity to showcase services.

Our social media posts primarily consist of general updates, holidays, some recognition days, and job opportunities. This has allowed us to have a constant presence on social, however if we want to fully reap the other benefits mentioned above, we will need someone who is dedicated to crafting creative posts that capture people's attention, educate, and entertain.

Currently the Administrative Coordinator assists the Marketing and Communications Manager with managing the City Hall Facebook profile. The Marketing and Communications Manager primarily manages the City Hall Facebook and Instagram profiles. Several people including the Community Enrichment Coordinators and the Recreation Administrative Coordinator manage the various Community Enrichment & Recreation profiles (with the help of the Marketing and Communications Manager). Social media is not their main job duty and having 4+ people involved slows efficiencies and creates missed opportunities.

Ideally the Social Media Specialist would be responsible for the management of City Hall's three main accounts and will provide additional support to Community Enrichment and Recreation for their event pages and feature posts. Specific duties would include content creation, scheduling and posting, audience engagement, social listening, analytics and monitoring, social media advertising, and strategy development (with the assistance of the Marketing and Communications Manager).

Strategic Alignment: By enhancing our external communication, different platforms have the ability to build on other aspects of our strategic plan:

- Advance our Community of Choice with Facebook and Instagram
 - Updating the public in times of crisis helps promote a safe community
 - Highlighting city services to build trust and public advocacy online
 - Promoting our parks and public spaces helps increase attendance

- Promoting growth and development opportunities brings more growth and development opportunities, creating a vibrant economy for all who live, work and play in Kaukauna
- Advance our People Management Plan with LinkedIn
 - Marketing open positions, workplace culture, benefits, and building up the reputation as a great place to work advances our recruiting plan.

Operational Benefit: Having a Social Media Specialist will begin to centralize our communication efforts to one area/department. This will lead to more cohesive messaging. This position will also allow us to better highlight the city's services, creating more trust and public advocacy for the city. This will also allow the Marketing and Communications Manager to focus on other aspects of the position such as strategic plan items, updating and maintaining the website (including form and PDF remediation to be web accessible to WCAG AA standards by the 2027 deadline, and merging the 1000 Islands website), updating/maintaining content for the intranet, creating more frequent press releases, etc.

Risk of Not Funding: The city may not be fully web-compliant with our forms and PDFs by 2027, which could lead to the city being sued. Longer wait times on website updates and mergers. Some high-level social media strategy items not being realized such as further showcasing city services, video content, and more involved recruitment tactics. Missed out revenue from increased tourism, difficulty recruiting.

Budget Impact: Average salary for a full-time Social Media Specialist in Wisconsin is \$57,553. If you add the full benefits package, the total would be \$85,553. These funds would come from the General Fund levy.

Alternatives Considered: As mentioned, the Administrative Coordinator assists with managing the City Hall Facebook profile. This does not account for the City Hall Facebook profile nor Instagram profile. The Community Enrichment Coordinators and Recreation Administrative Coordinator manage the various Community Enrichment & Recreation profiles. Social media is not their main job duty and having 4+ people involved slows efficiencies and creates missed opportunities.

A social media management tool has been implemented to help increase efficiency for City Hall, Library, and Recreation. This has helped multiple departments with managing posts, however, this does not impact content strategy nor creation.

We could invest in digital tools to help prepare the city for WCAG AA web compliance standards for 2027 so it isn't a manual process. I've obtained a quote for several tools, and will be looking into additional options: Approximate total cost: \$26,570 for the first year, with an annual recurring service cost of \$21,570 (plus an annual 5% increase beginning the second year).



People & Operational Plan 2026 Budget Request

Department: Human Resources
Submitted By: Elisa Hodge, HR Director
Date: 7/17/2025
Position Title/Request: HR Coordinator

Background & Justification:

The human resources [HR] function consists of several functional areas in a department of one person. Previously, the payroll position was payroll and human resources, and reported to the HR Director. When this position was changed to report into Finance, it reduced the experienced knowledge within the HR function to only one person. With the number of departments, locations, processes, and employees who, in some cases, are working evenings, weekends, overnight, and holidays, the volume of work within HR is unsustainable by one person. Timely responses, initiatives, management of manual processes, and maintaining compliance are all put at risk by continuing the staffing of HR with only a single person. The summer HR Intern was able to assist in catching up on filing, record retention, and organization that otherwise are not adequately maintained due to prioritizing employees and servicing those questions and processes.

Strategic Alignment:

"Create a People Management Plan"—developing the processes and procedures for standardized staffing assessments, regular and routine compensation review, performance management, targeting recruiting plans for hard-to-fill positions, and creating an employee engagement plan all need dedicated time and attention. The current workload does not allow for those projects while maintaining the day-to-day operational needs of employees.

Operational Benefit:

The addition of an HR Coordinator would increase turnaround times for employee services and processes and would allow time for projects that increase employee satisfaction to be completed. The previous HR Director noted in 2023 that the staffing level of HR did not allow for all activities to be sufficiently completed to avoid burnout, missing deadlines, or not being able to act on making progress with initiatives and improvements that have been asked for by departments and employees.

The previous HR Director had to engage with consultants on projects such as the performance management restructuring, compensation evaluation, and employee handbook

updates. These costs will again be necessary for future maintenance if the staffing remains at one person.

Risk of Not Funding

The risk of not adding additional staffing to HR is the extra costs of future consultants to address projects that cannot be completed internally due to a lack of resources. There is an increased risk of delays in processing the manual updates to benefits, recruiting, employee data, open enrollment, compensation planning, and performance management. Safety planning, training, and process improvement projects lack attention and prioritization without additional staffing resources for HR.

Budget Impact: Funding for this position would come from the General Fund levy, with an estimated annual cost of \$87,000, including full benefits. This would be an ongoing expense. Since 2022, the City has spent approximately \$58,800 on contracted HR support and special projects such as the compensation study and performance evaluation framework. Bringing these responsibilities in-house would reduce reliance on outside consultants and result in cost savings over time.

Alternatives Considered:

A summer HR Intern was used for 2025 and was useful in catching up on the basics of filing and cleaning up documents. This is a very short-term solution for the most basic administrative tasks that occur year-round. These types of tasks will fall to the side again during the “school year” when there isn’t the capacity.

The Payroll Coordinator assists with some HR activities but reports into Finance and is classified as exempt. Placing the administrative HR functions more on the Payroll Coordinator would likely end up reducing the classification to non-exempt and re-evaluating the compensation for the position. A job analysis of the work in Finance/Accounting is being reviewed for where processes and functions should sit with the different positions. The risk of having the Payroll Coordinator take on more of the HR actions, such as job and pay changes, is that segregation of duties is not taken into account for the appropriate checks and balances. Support from the Payroll position is helpful, but does not have sufficient capacity or expertise within HR to drive the projects, manage the processes and enhancements, or to take on the volume of supporting administrative tasks within the HR function under the HR Director.

At a minimum though, if a full-time HR Coordinator is not able to be approved for the next year’s budget, continuing the HR Intern for summer 2026 will be requested.



People & Operational Plan 2026 Budget Request

Department: Planning and Community Development
Submitted By: Dave Kittel
Date: 7/17/2025
Position Title/Request: Building Inspector

Background & Justification:

Kaukauna is experiencing rapid growth, with over 1,100 new residents since 2020 and a surge in housing development. This has led to a significant increase in permit volume—over 1,000 annually—straining the city's lone inspector and requiring costly contracted services. A second full-time inspector would improve service, support code enforcement, reduce reliance on contractors, and ensure continuity during staff transitions. A 2021 study also recommended this addition to align with peer communities and maintain service quality.

Strategic Alignment:

This staffing request aligns with the Strategic Plan in the objective for improving Internal and External communication by providing the needed staff to respond to inquiries as quickly as possible. As well in creating a community of choice where one of the tactics is to increase the number of housing units by 120 each year, an additional inspector will support the review of the plans and inspections of new residential units in a timely fashion.

Operational Benefit:

A second inspector will allow our current inspector to focus on commercial licensing which will long-term assist in better service and reduce expenses in contracting. Increase in response to permit inquiries, ability to handle the increased inspection volume with new construction and overall growth of the municipality. Cross department benefits for storm water inspections and additional assistance with code enforcement as well. The additional position will then allow for Planning staff to focus more time on other efforts such as long-term planning, grants, economic development, ordinance review, floodplain management and new ideas to continue making Kaukauna a place people want to live, work and play in.

Risk of Not Funding

Not funding this position risks staff burnout and delays in service to residents and contractors. Over time, this could hinder development, as developers prefer municipalities that process permits efficiently. Missed or delayed inspections are another concern. If not completed within 48 hours, contractors may proceed without oversight, increasing the risk of costly rework. Additionally, the city lacks backup coverage if an inspector leaves, leaving inspections unstaffed during transitions. Adding a second position would reduce these risks, ensure service continuity, and support long-term development goals.

Budget Impact:

See below table for a financial breakdown on the additional positions:

Building Inspector Position Cost Estimator	
	Data
Pay Rate	
Hours per Week	
Salary	\$65,000.00
WRS	\$4,543.50
Social Security	\$4,972.50
Works Compensation	\$2,457.00
Residency Incentive	\$3,900.00
Health Insurance	\$28,000.00
Total City Cost to Hire	\$108,873.00

To help offset operating costs, funding will be partially supported through permit fees. A new fee schedule will be proposed for 2026, which includes adding fees to existing processes such as site plan reviews.

Hiring an additional inspector is expected to reduce long-term contracting expenses. In 2024, the City spent approximately **\$111,614.05** on contracted inspection services. Of this:

- **\$10,000** was for UDC inspections during staff vacations or periods of high demand.
- **\$50,000** was for basic structural commercial inspections.

By hiring an additional inspector, we could immediately save around **\$10,000** annually.

Further savings are expected as our current inspector finalizes certification for commercial inspections, potentially reducing contracted services by another **\$50,000**.

Some contracted services will still be necessary for specialized inspections (e.g., plumbing, electrical, HVAC). However, total savings could reach **\$60,000 annually** after the first year—offsetting roughly half the cost of a new inspector.

Additional revenue from fee adjustments could include:

- A new **\$500 site plan review fee**, generating approximately **\$2,500/year**.
- A **\$20 increase in deck permit fees**, generating about **\$400/year**.
- New permit requirements for paving/patios, estimated to bring in **\$600/year**.

In total, these fee changes could generate **\$3,500–\$5,000/year**, with potential for more pending a full fee review. Combined with reduced contracting costs, we estimate **\$71,500/year** could be used to offset the cost of the new position over time with about **\$21,500** in the first year.

Alternatives Considered:

To manage workload, the city has implemented online permitting and scheduling tools, and planning staff have taken on additional responsibilities. While these measures have improved efficiency, they haven't fully addressed the strain. Staff remain overextended, and the city increasingly relies on costly and limited contracted inspection services. Ultimately, the workload is too much for one person to handle sustainably.



People & Operational Plan 2026 Budget Request

Department: Finance and Clerk
Submitted By: William Van Rossum
Date: 07/18/2025
Position Title/Request: Covert Accounting Specialist – AR to Full-time

Background & Justification: The City’s financial operations continue to grow in complexity, with increasing demands for analysis, compliance, and strategic insight. This request proposes expanding the existing part-time Accounting Specialist – Accounts Receivable role to a full-time position to better support these evolving needs.

Many City decisions, from budgeting to program implementation—would benefit from a deeper analysis of the data already being collected. With additional staff capacity, the Finance Department would be better positioned to provide timely, meaningful insights that help ensure taxpayer dollars are being used as effectively as possible.

As operations and staffing levels across departments have expanded, the support capacity within shared services has not kept pace. This expanded position would provide greater coverage during peak operational periods—such as elections and tax collection—while also enabling the department to conduct follow-up evaluations on past decisions to assess outcomes and identify improvement opportunities.

Strategic Alignment: This request supports multiple pillars of the City’s Strategic Plan, including Operational Excellence, Financial Stewardship, and Community Engagement. By expanding the Accounting Specialist – AR role to full-time, the City can enhance its internal controls, strengthen financial reporting, and improve data-driven decision-making. These improvements align with best practices for responsible government operations and promote long-term fiscal sustainability. The added capacity will also support transparency and accountability in how public funds are allocated, ultimately reinforcing public trust and confidence in City services.

Operational Benefit: Expanding this role to full-time will enhance the City's ability to deliver accurate, timely, and actionable financial information. With greater capacity, the department can improve budget-to-actual reporting, strengthen compliance with state and tax reporting requirements, and provide more consistent support during peak operational periods. The additional support will also create opportunities to analyze procurement trends, track fixed assets more effectively, and contribute to more efficient use of our accounting software implementation and optimization. Expanding this role will also strengthen financial controls by improving the separation of duties, which are currently limited due to staffing constraints.

Overall, the added bandwidth will allow the Finance Department to shift from primarily transactional work to a more strategic role, offering insights that help departments make better operational decisions and ensuring continuous improvement across City functions.

Risk of Not Funding: If this request is not funded, the City will continue to face capacity limitations within the Finance Department, which may hinder its ability to fully support departments with timely financial data and analysis or continue to go without. Without additional staff, opportunities to evaluate past decisions, improve internal controls to GASB Standards, and enhance reporting accuracy may be missed. The lack of bandwidth also increases the risk of delays during critical periods, such as tax collection and elections, and limits the City's ability to pursue efficiencies or cost savings through deeper data analysis. Over time, these constraints may impact the City's ability to make informed, strategic decisions and reduce the effectiveness of its financial stewardship.

Budget Impact: The estimated cost to expand the Accounting Specialist – AR position to full-time is approximately \$40,000 annually, including wages and benefits. This cost would be incorporated into the 2026 budget and funded through the General Fund levy support. While this is a recurring expense, it is expected to be offset over time by operational efficiencies, cost-saving opportunities identified through improved procurement analysis, and better alignment with state reporting requirements that could positively impact shared revenue allocations. Investing in this role represents a proactive approach to strengthening financial oversight and achieving long-term value for the City.

Alternatives Considered: Workflow improvements and temporary help have been explored, but these are short-term solutions and are only seen as maintaining the current workload status. Cross-training has been helpful but cannot substitute for a dedicated full-time role.



People & Operational Plan 2026 Budget Request

Department: Community Enrichment & Streets Departments
Submitted By: Terri Vosters & Jake Van Gompel
Date: 7.15.25
Position Title/Request: Seasonal Office Aide

Background & Justification:

Workload continues to increase with Aquatic Center passes, disposal site cards (new and renew) and refrigerator and no refrigerant stickers. From April to July of 2024, there were 526 in person transactions and 289 web transactions. In 2025, during that same time frame, in person transactions increased to 1250 and online to 567. Although most services are provided online and more residents are taking advantage of the online option, the additional services and growth in the City of Kaukauna has more than doubled the amount of foot traffic to the SPaR counter. These totals do not include phone calls, in person questions, social media q & a or emails.

Strategic Alignment:

This requests aligns with Quality of Life and the ability to provide excellent customer service.

Operational Benefit: Currently, there are two administrative assistants that assist our customers. We also have an intern, however, there is no guarantee that the position will be filled each summer. Recreation and Community Enrichment Managers and Street Superintendent are often off site at different campuses completing their own job tasks. Additional staff will improve the quality of customer service, customer wait time, increased satisfaction from residents, and staff will have additional time to complete other tasks that are outside the scope of face-to-face customer service.

Risk of Not Funding: Our goal is providing excellent customer service within the City of Kaukauna and we have found over the past several years that with the growth of services and growth of residents, we are having a difficult time keeping up with day-to-day tasks.

Budget Impact: This request is for a seasonal office aide from the month of April to the month of September. 20 hours per week, totalling approximately 450 hours annually with a salary of \$15/hr. The total cost to the operating budget would be approximately \$6,750. The Streets/Parks would pay half and Community Enrichment the other half.

Alternatives Considered: Added additional services online, new software for registration and reservation.



People & Operational Plan 2026 Budget Request

Department: Library
Submitted By: Ashley Thiem-Menning
Date: July 21, 2025
Position Title/Request: Local Historian

Background & Justification:

In 2024, a memo to Council outlined the option to gradually restructure Library staffing by converting five part-time positions to full-time over future budget cycles in an effort to ensure operational efficiency. The Library successfully converted two positions in 2025. In 2026, the Library is requesting to convert one part-time position to full-time.

Strategic Alignment:

Additional staffing enables the Library to maintain its current service levels more effectively. Offering free access to programs provides our community with more opportunities to engage with library services and events. We enhance the lives of community members by providing free access to a wide array of materials, programs, and services that cater to their lifelong learning, recreational, and informational needs.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, libraries in the state provide an impressive return of over \$4.00 for every dollar spent—a figure that is likely conservative. Our initiatives not only engage current residents, but also attract individuals from neighboring communities, stimulating local business support when they visit.

The Local History Room is the Library's most complex space, housing archives, databases, maps, photographs, books, microfilm, and more. While many visitors expect immediate help in the room, current staffing levels make this difficult to manage. Staff with the most knowledge of the room is only onsite four hours per day. Creating a Local Historian position would improve both the quality of the room and services provided, fulfilling our value in services rendered by the City.

Operational Benefit:

With the disbanding of the Kaukauna Historical Society, the Library is now one of the few institutions preserving the City's history. Kaukauna history is extremely extensive given our location as the first settlement in the state. Local history collections play a central role in our organization. We handled 163 research requests in 2023, 137 requests last year, and 83 so

far this year—including inquiries from universities and researchers beyond Wisconsin, positively raising the City's profile.

Local history is the Library's second most requested special service. Over ninety percent of the Local History Room use is drop-in, despite the website stating that appointments are required for those needing assistance in the room. In best practice, staff still assist walk-in visitors. However, the front desk staff cannot leave the desk, so another staff member must stop their off-desk work to assist in the room.

Due to the complexity of the room's special collections, most staff can only offer basic help, which has sometimes proved frustrating to users. Basic training in the room is part of all library onboarding. However, the scope of the collection in conjunction with the scope of the research request often exceeds the basic training provided. We currently house over 15,000 photographs and over 100 reels of microfilm, just two of the many collections housed in the room.

Creating a Local Historian position would allow the library to promote scheduled, bookable time with the Local Historian. When not in appointments with patrons, the additional hours would be dedicated to pending research requests, as well as handling the backlog of items needing collection management, and assisting with general library operations.

The position would also continue to support other City departments, including Community Enrichment, Planning, and Legal with research requests, which have increased over the last two years.

Risk of Not Funding:

The Library was forced to close one evening in the fall of 2024 due to a lack of staff. Increasing the number of staff in the building is critical to maintaining operations. All staff members are cross-trained to work all service points in the building, so any increase to staff hours assists in helping operationally.

Budget Impact:

The library currently has one open part-time position. The funds from that position would be applied towards this conversion for an increased amount of \$54,500 for salary and benefits.

Alternatives Considered:

The Library continues to review current and future staffing levels. Converting part-time positions to fulltime offers the Library higher retention rates and increases employee morale. Our recommendation in 2024 was to move forward with conversions in an effort to increase fulltime opportunities within the organization and ensure operational standards be met.



People & Operational Plan 2026 Budget Request

Department: Fire Department
Submitted By: Jacob Carrel
Date: 07/18/2025
Position Title/Request: Administrative Assistant

Background & Justification:

The absence of full-time administrative support in the fire department results in command staff performing clerical tasks, which detracts from their focus on leadership, strategy, and community safety. To address this inefficiency, this proposal outlines the need for a dedicated administrative position, as we currently operate with only 7.5 hours per week (0.2 FTE) of administrative support, far below the operational needs of our fire department.

The Kaukauna Fire Department manages a nearly \$4 million annual budget, generates over 3,200 incident reports annually, and prepares EMS documentation to support ambulance billing that exceeds \$1.3 million each year. Yet, we do so without a full-time administrative assistant. This places the department as a clear outlier when compared to similarly sized agencies, where dedicated support staff are standard for ensuring operational and financial efficiency.

Job Analysis Questionnaires confirm that a significant portion of command staff time is spent on routine administrative work—tasks that, while necessary, do not require the expertise or compensation level of senior leadership.

As the department moves forward with its *Restructuring with Purpose* initiative, this position becomes even more critical. Newly created roles, such as Division Chiefs and Fire Captains, require appropriate support to function at their full potential. Without adequate administrative assistance, the restructuring risks falling short of its goal.

Strategic Alignment:

This request directly supports multiple Foundations of the City's Strategic Plan:

- **Financial Responsibility:** The administrative assistant position improves stewardship of taxpayer resources by allowing specialized command staff (Fire Chief and Assistant/Division Chiefs) to focus on the strategic and leadership duties they were hired to perform rather than spending substantial portions of their time on clerical tasks.

- **Culture:** By reducing the administrative burden on command staff, this position fosters a more engaging workplace where leaders can devote more time to mentoring staff, deepening collaboration, and strengthening ties with the community rather than performing tasks that don't require their specialized expertise.
- **Sustainability:** The position ensures the department can meet present community safety needs without compromising future service delivery, as it plays a vital role in the successful implementation of the *Restructuring with Purpose* initiative that creates a more sustainable organizational structure.

Operational Benefit:

If approved, this position will:

- Free up substantial command staff time currently spent on clerical tasks
- Enable proactive strategic planning versus reactive daily task management
- Support the successful implementation of the new fire department structure
- Enable command staff to concentrate on core leadership responsibilities, strategic initiatives, and proactive community safety programs.

Risk of Not Funding:

Without this position:

- Command staff will continue underutilizing their specialized skill sets on clerical tasks, resulting in missed opportunities to apply their expertise where it can have the greatest impact.
- Strategic initiatives will remain delayed or unimplemented as the command staff remains consumed by daily clerical tasks.
- The new organizational structure cannot be fully effective, jeopardizing the success of the restructuring of the department.
- The department will continue operating reactively rather than proactively.

Budget Impact:

- **Annual Cost:** \$87,000
- **Funding Source:** General Fund, supported by anticipated ambulance revenue increases that may exceed \$100,000 annually
- This is an ongoing, recurring cost.

Alternatives Considered:

- **Status Quo (current 0.2 FTE):** Evaluated as unsustainable and inefficient, continuing to misallocate specialized leadership and strategic expertise to routine clerical functions
- **Part-Time Position:** Deemed insufficient given the volume of duties currently handled by Assistant Chiefs and the Fire Chief, as documented in Job Analysis Questionnaires
- **Technology/Software Solutions:** Would help with specific tasks such as timecards and scheduling, but cannot address the full range of administrative needs, including visitor reception, records management, and direct daily command staff support

CITY OF KAUKAUNA

7/24/2025

PEOPLE AND OPERATIONAL PLAN 2026-2030

*Red = Added from Phase 2 workshop

YEAR	Department	CLASSIFICATIONS/ DESCRIPTIONS	ESTIMATED TOTAL	REOCCURRING/ ONETIME EXPENSE
2026		PERSONNEL		
	Library	Assistant Library Director	\$138,500	Recurring
	DPW	Laborer / Park and Facilities Foreman	\$130,000	Recurring
	HR/Communications	Social Media Specialist	\$85,500	Recurring
	HR	HR Coordinator	\$87,000	Recurring
	Planning	Building Inspector	\$109,000	Recurring
	Finance	Convert Accounting Specialist - AR to Full-time	\$44,000	Recurring
	DPW/Recreation	Seasonal Office Aide	\$6,750	Recurring
	Library	Convert Library Assistant Local Historian to FT	\$54,500	Recurring
	Fire Department	Administrative Assistant	\$87,000	Recurring
2026		NON-PERSONNEL		
	Information Technology	Switch - Interconnect	\$10,000	Onetime
	Engineering	Plotter/Scanner	\$5,000	Onetime
	Information Technology	Server	\$15,000	Onetime
	DPW	Asset Management Software	\$15,000	Onetime
	Fire Department	Scheduling software specific to Fire Department	\$3,000	Recurring
	HR/Communications	Social media archiving tool	\$7,188	Recurring
		TOTAL	\$797,438	
2027		PERSONNEL		
	Fire	(3) Firefighter/Paramedics	\$391,000	Recurring
	Library	Transition one part-time Library Assistant to fulltime	\$54,315	Recurring
	Engineering	CAD/GIS/Stormwater Technician	\$120,000	Recurring
2027		NON-PERSONNEL		
	Legal, Court, Police	Standard Operation Procedures - Common process for creating, capturing, and updating S.O.P.'s that is user friendly*	TBD	Recurring
	Court/Police/Clerk	QR code for paying fines or completing form	TBD	Onetime
	Engineering	GPS Unit	\$35,000	One time

CITY OF KAUKAUNA

7/24/2025

PEOPLE AND OPERATIONAL PLAN 2026-2030

*Red = Added from Phase 2 workshop

YEAR	Department	CLASSIFICATIONS/ DESCRIPTIONS	ESTIMATED TOTAL	REOCCURRING/ ONETIME EXPENSE
		TOTAL	\$565,315	
2028		PERSONNEL		
	Library	Transition one part-time Library Assistant to fulltime	\$54,315	Recurring
	Community Enrichment	Converting Community Enrichment Coordinator to FT	\$65,000	Recurring
	Legal	City Manager/City Administrator	\$188,883	
	Police	Police Officer	\$117,000	Recurring
2028		NON-PERSONNEL		
		TOTAL	\$425,198	
2029		PERSONNEL		
	All	Purchase Specialist – Consolidate vendor contracts*	\$116,000	Recurring
	Clerk/Finance	Grant Writing Staff Member*	TBD	
	DPW	Certified staff/Enviromental (applicator, arborist/forester, native plants, ecologi	\$120,000	Recurring
	Library	Transition one part-time Library Assistant to fulltime	\$54,315	
2029		NON-PERSONNEL		
		TOTAL	\$1,021,397	
2030		PERSONNEL		
	DPW	Laborer / Park Position	\$110,000	Recurring
	DPW	Mechanic / Fleet	\$120,000	Recurring
2030		NON-PERSONNEL		
		TOTAL	\$0	



People and Operational Plan

Purpose of the People and Operational Plan (POP)

1. It fosters thoughtful discussions, ensuring requested funds are carefully considered, efficiently allocated, and aligned with organizational priorities and long-term goals.
2. The plan enhances visibility into future budgetary and operational requests for both the council and the public.
3. The plan serves as a starting point for conversations and strategic planning to address departmental needs.
4. Ensures the group can prepare for future changes.
5. Offer the council insights into anticipated budget impacts.

How we will use the POP

- The group will revisit the plan multiple times throughout the year to refine and adapt it to evolving organizational requirements.
- As circumstances shift within departments, the plan can be updated to reflect those changes.
- Items moving into the first year of implementation will be discussed during the budget cycle to collaboratively determine how they fit within existing financial constraints.
- Any new request/need that exceeds **\$5,000** or spanning **more than one budget** cycle will be incorporated into the plan for thoughtful, long-term planning. Furthermore, if an item doesn't fit into the budget, it will be placed on the POP plan.