

**CITY OF KAUKAUNA, WISCONSIN  
ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW  
PLANNING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS  
JUNE 2021**



Prepared by GovHR USA





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**INTRODUCTION**

GovHR USA (“GovHR”) is pleased to present the City of Kaukauna its findings and recommendations concerning our review and assessment of the City’s organizational structure and staffing levels in two departments – Planning and Community Development and Public Works. The review entailed an examination of these two department’s organizational structures and a review of the current services provided by them in the context of staffs’ workloads, all with an eye to provide ideas for possible re-organization considering current and anticipated vacancies in key positions, as well as to identify opportunities for improvement. Charlene Stevens and Lee Szymborski, GovHR USA Senior Vice-Presidents, were authorized in March 2021 to conduct this study by the Mayor and Common Council, and they prepared this report.

GovHR is a public management consulting firm specializing in executive recruitment, interim staffing and management consulting. Our services focus on public jurisdictions and not-for-profit entities. GovHR provides service to jurisdictions and agencies on a variety of contemporary issues, including management, financial and human resources assistance.

It is with this background and perspective that we appreciate the continued drive for public sector excellence and efficiency. Public sector organizations in the United States, including Kaukauna, face unprecedented pressures to not only maintain services, but also improve service quality while finding ways to progressively lower their costs and tax burden to citizens.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of Kaukauna, incorporated in 1885 and operating under the Mayor/Council form of government, is in Outagamie and Calumet counties and is part of the Appleton, Wisconsin Metropolitan Statistical Area. The city serves a population of more than 16,070, per 2019 U.S. Census Bureau data, and occupies an area of 7.7 square miles. The City’s growth in the last three decades has exceeded 30%.

The City's median household income is \$62,622 and the median value of a single-family home is \$142,500. Kaukauna is one of the oldest European-settled communities in the state. Today, the city is part of the vibrant Fox Valley offering small-town Midwestern friendliness combined with contemporary lifestyle amenities and an abundance of outdoor activities.

The Common Council, comprised of a Mayor and eight Alderpersons, is responsible for establishing and approving an annual budget and providing the general policy direction of the City. The City's day-to-day operations are under the general direction of a full-time Mayor, who oversees city staff of approximately 120 full-time and part-time personnel. The City's combined budgets are more than \$36 million.

This study looks to develop an in-depth understanding of two city departments – Planning and Community Development, and Public Works – and within the context of those findings presents options and recommendation for reorganization. The report presents its understanding, observations, and findings on pages 4 through 18, and those findings are supplemented by our surveys of peer communities. We present options and recommendations for the organization beginning on page 18.

## **APPROACH AND SCOPE**

GovHR USA approached this study within the context of managing service delivery in the public sector that primarily consists of balancing three classic concerns of public administration: 1. Effectiveness—getting the right things done; 2. Efficiency—accomplishing them in the right ways; and 3. Economy—utilizing scarce resources. Balancing these three concerns requires a coordinated policy analysis and management approach.

The approach for the study was organized around the following purposes:

- To deliver an independent assessment of the organizational structure and staffing levels of the services delivered by the Planning and Community Development and Public Works departments, particularly within the context of the current and anticipated retirements in the coming year and concerns about the loss of institutional knowledge. The study effects approximately 15 administrative/office staff and 24 labor positions.
- To review current and past organizational structures and staffing levels of the two departments.
- Within the context of organizational readiness, to review the services provided and understand the staff workloads.
- To determine what is working well within the two departments and ascertain the areas that may need improvement.
- To compare the departments' organizational structure, services, and staffing levels with other similar sized communities in the region.
- To determine cost saving measures that could be implemented that will allow similar or increased levels of service and improved overall efficiency.

- To evaluate workflow processes and identify any inefficiencies.
- To identify options for departmental structures that will best serve the City today and into the future and identify the steps and/or costs necessary for implementation.

## PROCESS AND SCOPE

For this study, the consultants met with the following City officials and City staff beginning in mid-April through May 2021. Meetings were held virtually and in-person.

- Mayor Anthony Penterman
- John Sundelius, Director of Public Works/City Engineer
- Will Van Rossum, Finance Director/Treasurer
- John Neumeier, Senior Engineer
- Pat Vanden Heuvel, Streets Superintendent
- Jeffrey Malloy, Recreation Director
- Rachel Audette, Human Resources Director
- Allison Watson Brunette, Principal Planner
- Cassidy Mickelson, Executive Director, Gringon Mansion
- Martin West, Planning and Community Development Coordinator
- Jason Holmes, Planning/ Engineering Technician
- Dakota Hicks, Community Enrichment Coordinator
- Jacob Carrel, Fire Chief
- Cody Foss, Assistant Fire Chief
- Two focus groups of nine Public Works employees

GovHR also reviewed the following information and materials in preparing this report: past and existing organizational charts, position descriptions, the City Code, and other relevant documents such as department and City budgets, and capital improvement plans.

GovHR also reached out to neighboring communities asking for their participation in a survey to understand how and in what manner those municipal organizations deployed their services and organized their departments. We contacted 12 municipalities; we had a successful return of seven (7) surveys, as noted in the following chart. The municipalities were selected in consultation with the Mayor and Human Resources Director. The primary criteria for what communities were selected included the municipality's population, which is typically an indicator of the size of the workforce and offers a greater chance for a "like-for-like comparison."

**Figure 1 – Public Works and Planning and Community Development Survey – Population, Household Income, and Total Number of departmental employees.**

<b>Municipalities</b>	<b>Population – Source: U.S. Census 2019 Est.</b>	<b>Median H.H. Income Source: U.S. Census 2015-2019 ACS</b>	<b>Public Works Total Number of Full-time Employees, excludes all utilities</b>	<b>Planning and Community Development Total Number of Full-time Employees</b>
Allouez	13,900	\$70,915	24	3
Ashwaubenon	17,140	\$59,415	29	3.5
Bellevue	15,700	\$55,704	10	4
De Pere	24,000	\$72,286	29	8
Grand Chute	23,100	\$60,419	20	8
Hartford	14,977	\$56,784	8	3.5
<b>Kaukauna</b>	<b>16,070</b>	<b>\$62,822</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Neenah	25,900	\$59,820	64	10

Note the employee total for Kaukauna includes the recently added Building Inspection position and the vacant director position.

## **PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

The mission of the Planning and Community Development Department for the City of Kaukauna is to promote the orderly growth and development of the city in a manner intended to maintain a high-quality living environment. The department includes 4.4 FTEs as follows: Community Development and Planning Director, Principal Planner, Community Development Coordinator, Planning/ Engineering Technician (shared with Public Works), Executive Director of the Grignon Mansion and the Community Enrichment Coordinator, also a part time position.

An overview of each functional area follows:

- Planning and Zoning: The department leads annexation efforts as well as all planning and zoning reviews of proposed developments. The staff are responsible for long range planning for the city, including parks master planning.

The department supports the work of the Redevelopment Authority, Industrial Park Commission, Joint Review Board, Planning Commission and Mayor and Common Council. The support includes preparation and presentation of all agenda items, public notices, minutes, presentation, and submittal of reports on required time schedules. The department also coordinates with the Finance Department for loan portfolio reconciliation and TID reporting.

- Economic Development: The city currently has seven tax increment districts (TID) and administers a small business loan and downtown redevelopment loans and planning. The principal planner position is currently the lead in this effort and meets with potential businesses as well as administering the loan programs.
- Inspections and Code Enforcement: Prior to the Great Recession, the department did include two full time residential and commercial inspectors. Most recently, that service has been fulfilled through a private contract for residential and commercial inspections. During this study, the city added a full time Building Inspector. A building permit report is submitted monthly to the Common Council, as well as reconciliation of permit fees and communicating new sewer connections to the Finance Department.

Fire safety inspections are performed by the Fire Department and those activities are directed by an Assistant Fire Chief, who estimated he dedicates 12 to 15 hours per week to inspections. Inspections are performed by fire inspectors under his direction. Previously the Fire Department did have a day-staff (M-F) handling inspections.

- Grignon Mansion: The City owns and oversees a historic 1837 home and museum. Until 2020, the department staff provided support to a volunteer Friends group. In August of 2020, the city hired a full-time Executive Director with the support of a three-year grant. The mansion is a historic property, listed on both the National and Wisconsin Historical Registers. The mansion is physically located within the city limits and within a city owned and maintained park. The mansion is primarily open on the weekend for tours and hosts special events such as historical re-enactments and school tours. The Executive Director is the only paid staff person. The Grignon Mansion was closed during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Community Enrichment: The services in community enrichment began as a tax increment district investment. The Community Enrichment Coordinator focuses time and effort on supporting the Farmers Markets and the Live! from Hydro Summer Concert Series. The position occasionally supports smaller seasonal efforts, but those two programs are the primary focus. The Farmers Market has been in existence for eighteen (18) years and Live from Hydro has been occurring for ten (10) years. City staff coordinate the vendors and/or performers, any fundraising and/or sponsorship opportunities and ancillary support infrastructure such as portable restrooms and trash collection and removal.

## Understanding and Observations

To better understand how and in what manner these services are provided, and to additionally assess how effective the organizational structure contributes to, or perhaps detracts from, meeting the department's mission, we met with all the department's staff both full and part time as well as speaking with the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief.

Meetings with the city's staff were detailed and constructed to better understand how Community Development services are organized, delivered, and how personnel interacted with one another and/or other departments. Close to 20 questions served as an initial basis of our conversations, however, additional information was discussed as the conversations developed.

The department has undergone several staffing changes and transitions over the years, with all but one of the current staff having a tenure of five years or less with the city. The previous director served as the chief land review and planning expert for the city. While the director position is vacant, the planning reviews are conducted by an outside contractor, Mead and Hunt.

The principal planner leads public engagement, long range plans, development agreement and site plan reviews for new construction in the industrial park and downtown, as well as administering redevelopment loans. The Community Development Coordinator coordinates the permitting process, manages the website and serves as overall administrative support to the department.

There have also been changes to building inspections. Prior to 2008, the department employed two full-time residential and commercial building inspectors. Most recently inspection duties have been fulfilled through a contract for service. Kaukauna has delegated authority status from the state to perform commercial inspections and plan review for plumbing, electrical, mechanical, and building. During the time of this study, a Building Inspector was hired, but per city code that position is a stand-alone department. Fire safety inspections are performed through the Fire Department and overseen by the Assistant Fire Chief. The Fire Department also previously had a full-time day-staff (M-F) handling inspections.

City staff manage local permits not governed by state statute, including bee and chicken keeping, fences, sheds, siding, pools, decks, and detached garages. Nuisance or property maintenance codes are primarily enforced on a complaint basis. There did not appear to be a dedicated staff person or effort focused on property or nuisance code enforcement. The technician also performs the computer drafting, mapping, field work, survey and inspection and is a shared position with Public Works.

The Community Development Coordinator assists with administration and coordination for inspections as well as permits. Planning staff estimates that they provided 12-15 hours per week supporting inspections.

Community Enrichment and Grignon Mansion appear to be a unique function for the planning department. Indeed, there is no model we have found where those types of activities are housed under

Planning and Community Development. Typically, museums and special events are coordinated and/or overseen within recreation services or parks and recreation.

### Peer City Survey

As noted previously, we surveyed peer communities for comparisons of service delivery models and staffing. The charts below illustrate the comparisons.

Figure 2 shows how the service delivery model of Kaukauna compares with peer cities. A check indicates that the service is provided by the city and is also included under the umbrella of a Planning and Community Development Department.

One clear distinction with the peer city comparison is that no other city included special events and/or community enrichment within the Planning and Community Development Department. In all the responding peer cities, it is common for fire safety inspections to be performed by public safety or the fire department.

**Figure 2: Comparison of service delivery model with Peer Cities.**

Municipalities	Planning	Economic Development	Building Inspections	Code Enforcement	Fire Safety Inspections	Community Enrichment
Allouez	✓		✓		Green Bay Metro Fire	
Ashwaubenon	✓	✓	✓	✓	Public Safety	
Bellevue	✓	✓	✓		N/R	
De Pere	✓	✓	✓		Fire Dept.	
Grand Chute	✓	✓	✓	✓	Fire Dept.	
Hartford	✓	✓		✓	Fire Dept.	
<b>Kaukauna</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	Fire Dept	✓
Neenah	✓	✓	✓	✓	Fire	

Figure 3 illustrates a comparison of staffing within each function area. Community Enrichment has been excluded from the chart below due to a lack of a comparable.

**Figure 3: Comparison by FTE and Functional Service Area.**

Municipalities	Admin	Planning	Economic Development	Building Inspections	Code Enforcement	Total FTEs
Allouez	1	1	0	1	1 PT	3
Ashwaubenon	1 FTE shares responsibilities			2	.5 FTE	2.5
Bellevue	0	1	1	2	Provided by planner	4
De Pere	1.25	1	.75	1.75	.25	6*
Grand Chute	1	2	1	3	1	7
Hartford	1	.5	.5	1.5	0	3.5
<b>Kaukauna</b>	1	.4	1	1 FTE Combined		3.4**
Neenah	3	3	0	3	1	10

Figure Notes: Not included in the City of De Pere employee census are two GIS positions that increase the total department FTEs to eight and Kaukauna does not include the Building Inspector.

It is also helpful to look at the staffing levels in terms of the construction and permit history. We surveyed the cities over the three period of 2018-2020 to balance the impact of the COVID 19 Pandemic. The figure below illustrates that comparison.

**Figure 4: Single Family Permits Issued Per year. (Notes are on next page).**

Municipalities	2018	2019	2020	Total FTEs
Allouez	145	645	700	3
Ashwaubenon	14	21	61	2.5
Bellevue	52	46	60	4
De Pere	13	32	54	8
Grand Chute	112	69	63	7
Hartford	74	29	33	3.5
<b>Kaukauna</b>	55	49	89	3.4
Neenah	29	33	N/R	10

Figure note: The Village of Allouez reported the total of ALL permits issued not simply those for single family units.

The City of Kaukauna's permit volume continues to increase while the staffing is lower than comparable communities with similar volumes. We do not expect the city to see a decrease in construction either. The city has sufficient land and opportunity for annexation and growth and the region is also seeing growth overall.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

The City's Department of Public Works services break down into three primary areas – Engineering, Streets and Recreation. The Director of Public Works oversees all these areas, with the three division heads reporting to the director.

Kaukauna's Department of Public Works does not include utilities, except for sanitary sewer conveyance and stormwater utility. Water and electric are handled by Kaukauna Utilities, a community owned and operated utility. Sanitary sewage is treated by the Heart of the Valley Metropolitan Sewerage District. This inquiry does not include the utilities.

An overview of each division is as follows:

- Engineering This division develops and implements the City's capital improvement program including the design, construction, inspection and management of streets, sewers, sidewalks, stormwater facilities and associated rehabilitation programs and all other City public works projects. The division also implements the City's right-of-way management ordinance requirements; it performs survey work as required, conducts traffic studies, reviews, and inspects new construction and redevelopment sites, compiles special assessments, and maintains official maps and records. Presently, there are three full-time staff and one shared staff.
- Streets This division manages the maintenance and conditions of the city's street, solid waste pick-up, and the maintenance of city park facilities. The Streets division is also responsible for the maintenance and repair of streets, alleys, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, street signs, traffic control devices, storm sewers, sanitary sewers, city buildings and structures, parks, athletic fields and all machinery, equipment and property used in any activity under departmental control. Other services include fleet maintenance, snow and ice control, street cleaning and such other activities as may be assigned from time to time.

As it concerns parks maintenance, Kaukauna has 35 city-owned parks and open spaces, which have been classified as one of three types of parks (regional, local, or neighborhood), or one of two types of open spaces (urban or natural). These 35 parks make up 458 acres of dedicated

park and open space in the city limits and feature a wide range of settings, amenities, and natural environments.

This division represents the largest workforce in the Public Works department, with 25 authorized full-time positions. During the summer, the division's workforce is supplemented by eight to ten seasonal workers.

- Recreation This division offers year-round leisure service programming, community enrichment and sports leagues for youth and adults. Facilities include an outdoor municipal pool, a community room, a conference room, and picnic pavilions. Two full-time personnel work in this division, with their work supported by more than 80 part-time and seasonal staff, and instructors.

## Understandings and Observations

To better understand how and in what manner these services are provided, and to additionally assess how effective the organizational structure contributes to, or perhaps detracts from, meeting the department's mission, we met with all the department's leadership – the Director, and all three division heads. We also met with nine Public Works staff, representing tenure with the city ranging from a couple years to more than 20 years, and work experience in a variety of positions, from laborer to heavy equipment operator.

Meetings with the city's staff were detailed and constructed to better understand how Public Works services are organized, delivered, and how personnel interacted with one another. Close to 20 questions served as an initial basis of our conversations, however, additional information was discussed as each individual or group conversation developed.

The purpose of the meetings was to discuss and understand the operations of the divisions' functions to accurately assess the challenges facing Kaukauna's public works services, particularly in light of the anticipated retirement of long-serving Director Public Works John Sundelius, and how the department may be differently organized in light of that upcoming change. To be sure, some policy decisions also affect operations, and how those affect these areas will also be discussed.

City staff were cooperative and candid in their discussions with our firm. In our interviews, participants were assured that no comments would be attributed to specific individuals, and it is with that understanding we note trends, issues and common understandings about the services, roles, and expectations from Public Works.

Across the board, city staff shared these views when asked about how they assessed the best components of the Public Works department: those strengths were teamwork, responsiveness, work ethic, customer service, resourcefulness, and knowledge. They viewed themselves as one of the department's top assets. Workers asserted that, as a whole, their team was talented, experienced, knowledgeable, cooperative, and helpful. For instance, this is captured in response to the question

about what the department did well: “We cooperate with each other,” “We get it done,” “We’re dedicated to the city,” “We’re reliable,” and “We work well with the public.” Working among themselves they note reasonably good interdepartmental communications and coordination. Resources, such as personnel and equipment are shared when needed.

In the divisions’ individual findings, as further articulated in the following pages, we found additional commonalities, as well as some differences. Considering, too, our direct observations in the city’s Public Works Department, complemented by our experience in assessing organizational needs of hundreds of local governments, we present a list of findings, recommendations and options as Kaukauna considers its next steps in how to administratively organize the Public Works department.

## Streets

Streets division employees emphasize that their customer service approach strives for excellence, and the most important responsibility includes ensuring reliable public infrastructure systems and solid waste pickup. In a similar vein, they said, it is important to educate and communicate those needs to elected officials for them to make educated decisions about funding capital projects. They assert that customer service excels in such areas as responsiveness to requests for service and complaint resolution. “We look at ourselves and we think we excel in comparison to others,” was a sentiment held by many.

Management and supervision of the division is the responsibility of the Streets Superintendent and Streets Foreman; additional periodic oversight is exercised by the Director of Public Works. The Superintendent, a 15-year veteran with the city, brings additional years of public sector experience to his supervisory role, as well as several years as a foreman for the organization.

Line staff are in general agreement with the assessment that the city gives them the latitude to do their jobs the way they need to be done, “the City gives us the freedom to do our job.” Yet, others recommend improving means of internal communications, want more training or are frustrated by the occasional lack of focus on what tasks are priority.

We universally heard that operations run lean, and workloads in the areas of solid waste and streets lead some to conclude that “we need more time in the day...” and “more staff.” Shifting priorities, too, keep some staff wondering where their assignments will next take them. For instance, staff expressed concern that the focus of their efforts has turned more toward maintenance and customer service responsiveness, whereas in the past their work focused on construction, i.e., concrete work, hot-mix work, street tarring and building construction.

Curbside pick-up of household or other disposable goods is being done weekly in Kaukauna, whereas in the peer communities this service was offered monthly. A forestry component is no longer part of the division’s services. There does not appear to be a comprehensive effort, or tree inventory completed, to address an emerald ash borer infestation of city trees.

We understand that the Street division has shrunk in the last decade or more by a few positions., Yet we did not note that that translates to continuous or excessively long days (greater than 8 – 8 ½ hours), or excessive amounts of overtime.

We additionally understand the Department has in place “Standard of Operating Guidelines (SOG).” It articulates a number of policies, procedures, and conditions of work. Included are such items as probation and employment status, seniority, normal workday and work week hours, wages, benefits, time off, and residency. This appears to work in parallel to the city’s employee handbook and shadows what had been a collective bargaining agreement that was in place prior to the State’s adoption of Act 10, which in 2011 effectively abandoned local government workers’ (other than public safety and transit) ability to collectively bargain in Wisconsin. The issue is relevant because it may have been a factor, and could have a future effect, on management’s ability and flexibility to run the department.

## Engineering

This division’s primary focus is to oversee the design, construction, and maintenance of the city’s infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, sewers, and stormwater facilities. This division works most closely with the Public Works administration, and the Streets division; it also has significant interaction with the Planning and Community Development Department. This is not to be unexpected as the development scene in Kaukauna, mirroring much of the Fox Valley region, is very active. It has little interface with the Recreation division.

The workload, as reported to us, is being met, yet staff reports that on occasion their time is stretched thin. In addition, and intuitively this follows from our knowledge and work with growing communities, staff speculates that as the city continues to grow, additional pressure will bear upon the division. This is borne out, too, by the city’s comprehensive plan (2013) which projects growth between 2010 and 2035 to increase by 35%. In addition, the city is not land-locked, and can grow in several directions, according to the plan. Growth, of course, will put pressure on the City’s infrastructure. It will also put pressure on the division to work more interactively with Planning and Community Development.

This division has a hand in the development of the city’s five-year capital improvement plan (CIP), the last of which was updated in late 2019 totaled about \$16 million, although it appears that the lion’s share of the CIP’s development rests with the Director. What also appears to rest with the Director is the direct supervision of the employees in this division.

Out of a division of four staff members, only the Director of Public Works/City Engineer holds a professional engineering license. The senior engineer in the division, a 16-year veteran with the city, is working on attaining his P.E. That may or may not be a critical factor in replacing the Director, an issue we will discuss in the organizational options we will outline.

## Recreation

Not uncommon in many municipalities is what we found in Kaukauna, i.e., parks maintenance is housed in the Public Works department. Across the country, many communities the size of Kaukauna approach it similarly to the city, whereby they share equipment and cross-train personnel, lending toward a more cost-efficient approach. We also found that to be the case in the communities we surveyed for this assessment.

Yet, an unusual feature in Kaukauna's Public Works Department is its housing of the Recreation division. Recreation came under the direction of the Director of Public Works when the previous Recreation Director retired about a dozen years ago, who then suggested combining parks and recreation. In none of the surveyed communities that we tapped for this project, or in our experience working with scores of other municipalities, have we seen recreation falling within the purview of Public Works. It is typically a standalone department combined with parks, or the offerings are handled by a school district, or a separate government (park) district, although the latter approach is rarely seen in Wisconsin.

It was reported to us that comprehensive park planning, at present, is handled by the Streets division and the Department of Planning and Community Development. The City's Recreation and Open Space Plan (2019 – 2024) was developed and written by the Planning and Community Development Department. It contains seven goals and strategies for park and open space improvements, not the least of which are goals directly affecting the Recreation division such as developing a master planning process for the municipal pool and developing cross-promotional recreation opportunities with the Farmer's Market. The acreage of parkland in Kaukauna, at 458 acres, meets the national average of park space per 1,000 residents as measured by the National Recreation and Park Association.

The division is led by a full-time Recreation Director, a 12-year incumbent. The Director's work is supported by a full-time Office Assistant and more than 80 part-time and seasonal employees. The division reports pride in its customer service, convenient registration transactions, great facilities (or access to school facilities), and strong communications with its patrons. The division's work is considerably supported by the Streets division, which provides maintenance of the parks, community rooms and pool facilities.

The division offers as many as 80 different recreational, instructional and enrichment programs geared for a broad spectrum of ages and interests. Some of the programs, not unlike what is encountered by other municipal recreation departments, compete with youth-league clubs, school extracurricular programming, as well as private gyms and exercise studios.

The majority of the division's programs are fee-based; however, the division does not have a cost-recovery goal or model in place. Some of the programs have low registration but are kept because their demise would perceptibly upset some community expectations. Some overlap on special events currently handled by the Planning and Community Development Department was also noted.

## Strategic Direction

It is apparent from our conversations that the Public Works staff has a focused understanding of their divisions' deliverables. The most common essential services that residents receive from the Street division, as identified by City staff, were maintenance and repair of streets and sidewalks, city-owned park and public lands, maintenance of public buildings and grounds, as well as service in the areas of refuse collection, snow and ice removal, and weed and grass cutting. There was no misunderstanding or deviation among the staff as to their divisions' core responsibilities.

Similarly, the Recreation and Engineering divisions have a clear understanding about their responsibilities, and what the Common Council, and residents alike, expect. They are knowledgeable, dedicated and team focused.

The organizational design and a lack of strategic direction, however, works against those attributes and risks cultivating silos. That is particularly noticeable in Recreation. As Brent Gleeson writes in Forbes magazine, "[some] may look at their organization and dismiss department inefficiencies and lack of cross-functional solutions with immature employees, lack of basic training, or simply the inability for some employees to play *nicely* with one another. Unfortunately, while these behaviors may be a result of the silo mentality; it is not the root cause." Some of the key solutions identified by Gleeson are creating a unified vision and working towards achieving a common goal.

An organizational strategic plan coupled with the need to clarify leadership in this area, will help the Public Works divisions get off the path of simply getting tasks done based on a "what's urgent today" approach. A mapped-out approach to achieve goals and objectives strategically and methodically, and clarity about the Public Works Department's leadership structure, will go a long way toward moving the Department ahead, especially when paired with the additional and specific findings and recommendations for how the department can achieve greater efficiency.

## Peer City Survey

A helpful element in GovHR's study was determining Kaukauna's comparability with other communities either similar in size, or close in proximity. When looking at the comparable communities used in this analysis, it is important to note that the population sizes vary between each community, but not more than 50% greater or less than Kaukauna. All the same, GovHR found the comparison instructive, especially in light of the organizational design we were focused on.

The comparable services that were examined included: number of Public Works employees per division, square miles covered, center-lane miles maintained, and other factors as noted in the figures that included financial and supervisory responsibilities of the Public Works Directors. As an additional point of comparison, we also note that even by standards and measures developed for the American Public Works Association's accreditation process, formulas or measures of productivity are not features of the APWA assessment methodology. In other words, APWA does not "dictate how a function or activity must be accomplished." We lift that up to say that a predetermined APWA standard was not used in this analysis because it does not exist.

A quick take away from the comparisons noted in Figure 5, is that Kaukauna’s Public Works staffing is on par with the communities that responded to GovHR’s survey. Kaukauna’s workforce is in a comfortable range when compared to the average number of DPW employees per 1,000 residents, which is one employee per 1,051 residents. Kaukauna’s ratio is one employee per every 669 residents. That measure should also be looked at along with the number of squares the department covers, as well as center-lane miles maintained.

Since Kaukauna’s Public Works employees are also on tap to assist with parks maintenance, and further supplemented by seasonal help, Kaukauna’s ratio of parks maintenance workers is at a level that in on par not only with the peer communities, but with the standards recommended by the National Recreation and Parks Association.

**Figure 5 – Public Works Departments FTEs compared by square miles, center-lane miles and population.**

<b>Municipalities</b>	<b>Population –  Source: U.S. Census 2019 Est.</b>	<b>Public Works -  Total Number of Full-time Employees, excludes all utilities</b>	<b>No. of square miles covered</b>	<b>DPW employees per 1,000 population</b>	<b>Center-lane miles maintained</b>	<b>Street Maintenance  FTEs/lane mile</b>
<b>Allouez</b>	13,900	24	5.15	1/579	56	0.196
<b>Ashwaubenon</b>	17,140	29	12.83	1/591	103	0.135
<b>Bellevue</b>	15,700	10	14.39	1/1,570	71	0.140
<b>De Pere</b>	24,000	29	13	1/827	105	0.123
<b>Grand Chute</b>	23,100	20	22.47	1/1,155	278	0.023
<b>Hartford</b>	14,977	8	8.4	1/1,872	87	0.091
<b>Kaukauna</b>	16,070	25	8.23	1/642	78	0.320
<b>Neenah</b>	25,900	64	5.0	1/404	104	0.298

Figure Notes:

- Hartford DPW does not cover park maintenance, solid waste or engineering.
- Street maintenance FTEs covering “x” center lane miles calculated with the number of employees each municipality reported that were dedicated to street maintenance.

We also examined each peer communities’ public works department’s services in comparison with how Kaukauna’s DPW efforts are organized. See Figure 6 below. Not surprisingly, public works departments not only reflect the diverse nature of the municipalities themselves, but public works departments today present one of the more broadly, diverse skilled groups of workers found among municipal personnel who are charged with delivering an inter-disciplinary range of services. The old paradigm where public works handled streets, fleets, and engineering, is today a contemporary conglomeration of services that not only include the fundamental services, but requiring meeting the challenges such as stormwater management, environmental concerns, and lifestyle expectations.

Yet, there are several commonalities among the municipalities in terms of the types of services and how the divisions are organized. Most universal was that streets maintenance fell within the purview of Public Works and set up as a division of the department. That was also the case when the municipality provided solid waste collection (and if not part of the Public Works department, it was contracted out), and fleet management. In most cases engineering was housed in Public Works, with some municipalities contracting out the service, or tucking it in with Community Development.

**Figure 6 – Public Works Divisions Compared**

Municipality	Admin	Streets	Solid Waste	Parks Mtce.	Recreation	Fleet Mgt	Engineering
Allouez	✓	✓	✓	Separate Department		✓	✓
Ashwaubenon	✓	✓	✓	✓	Separate Dept.	✓	✓
Bellevue	✓	✓	Contracted	Separate Department		✓	Contracted
De Pere	✓	✓	✓	Separate Department		✓	✓
Grand Chute	✓	✓	Contracted	✓	Separate Dept.	✓	✓
Hartford	✓	✓	Contracted	Separate Department		✓	In Comm. Develop.
Kaukauna	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Neenah	✓	✓	✓	✓	Separate Dept.	✓	✓

We add to this analysis a look at how the city handles parks maintenance compared to peer communities, but as well as some national standards that measure how much parkland communities ought to provide and then, of course, need to maintain. According to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) park metrics database, one way to view agency staffing is to measure it relative to the population the agency serves. The typical park and recreation agency has 8.1 FTEs on staff for every 10,000 residents in the jurisdiction served by the agency. By this standard and understanding that

Kaukauna’s Public Works staff (more than just the Parkman classifications) are available to maintain the City’s 458 acres of parkland, the city meets that guideline.

Also, according to the NRPA park metrics database, the typical park and recreation agency offers one (1) park for every 2,281 residents served, with 9.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Kaukauna nearly meets the “parks per 1,000 population” NRPA metric and exceeds the standard in comparison to the peer communities. It exceeds the NRPA metric measuring acres of parkland per 1,000 population by almost three times.

**Figure 7 – Parks Maintenance Compared**

Municipality	Parks Maintained	Parks per 1,000 population	Total Acres of Parks	Acres of parkland per 1,000 population	Staff assigned to Parks Maintenance
Allouez	12	0.86	330	23.74	6 seasonal; 5 FTE
Ashwaubenon	19	1.10	280	16.33	15 seasonal; 5 FTE
Bellevue	10	0.64	242	15.41	3 seasonal; 3 FTE
De Pere	N/A				
Grand Chute	9	0.38	134	5.80	1 seasonal; 3.5 FTE
Hartford	18	1.20	226	15.09	2 seasonal; 3 FTE
Kaukauna	35	2.17	458	28.50	8 – 10 seasonal; 23 FTE available
Neenah	25	0.96	400	15.44	12 seasonal; 13 FTE
NRPA Standard		2.28		9.9	8.1 FTE/10,000 pop.

**Figure 8 – Recreation Programming and Staffing Compared**

Municipality	Number of Recreation Programs	Full-time Recreation Staff	Seasonal Recreation Staff	Monthly Registrations	Annual Community Events
Allouez	25	1	40	N/A	12+
Ashwaubenon	100+	2	175	N/A	12+
Bellevue	N/A	1	25	N/A	N/A
De Pere	N/A				
Grand Chute	N/A				
Hartford	152	1	24	946	4
Kaukauna	89	2	80	775	15
Neenah	300	2	120	2,200	15

Where the other municipal departments diverge from their similarity to Kaukauna is how parks and recreation services are handled. In every instance among the comparable communities, recreation is handled outside of Public Works. In some instances, the maintenance of parks is provided by Public Works, but at least half have a standalone, combined Parks and Recreation department.

This tracks with other Wisconsin communities GovHR has studied. For instance, we recently examined the organization of some larger Public Works departments in municipalities in Wisconsin. We found, similar to the polling we did for this study, that those departments all contained streets or highway maintenance divisions under the umbrella of Public Works.

Also noteworthy in this comparison is the housing of Engineering as a division of Public Works. Wisconsin municipalities are moving away from previous trends in which Engineering and Public Works were separate departments. Fiscal challenges, Act 10-induced retirements and municipal workforce reductions as seen throughout the state, forced many communities to consolidate and right-size their municipal organizations. On the other hand, it is not uncommon to see Engineering housed with Departments of Community Development. What we also see is that in the instance of parks maintenance being handled by Public Works in these larger communities, that effort is combined with forestry services.

**Figure 9 – Public Works Departments in medium-sized Wisconsin municipalities**

City	Wauwatosa	Brookfield	Eau Claire	La Crosse	Oshkosh	Fond du Lac	Wausau
Population	46,396	37,920	65,000	51,500	66,000	49,288	39,106
Square Miles Covered	13.25	27	34	22	24	20	20
Public Works Divisions	5 Divisions: 1. Water 2. Fleet 3. Operations 4. Parks & Forestry 5. Traffic & Electrical	5 Divisions: 1. Engineer 2. Highway 3. Water 4. WW 5. Solid Waste	8 Divisions: 1. Admin 2. Engineer 3. Fleets, Bldg & Grounds 4. Parks, Forestry & Cemetery 5. Recreation 6. Streets 7. Transit 8. Utilities	9 Divisions: 1. Admin 2. Engineer 3. Grounds & Bldg 4. Highway 5. Parking 6. Refuse & Recycling 7. WW 8. Storm Water 9. Water	3 Divisions: 1. Engineer 2. Streets/ Sanitation/ Central Garage 3. Utilities	9 Divisions: 1. Engineer 2. Constructi on & Mtce 3. Solid Waste 4. Electrical 5. Fleet 6. Water 7. WW 8. Transit 9. Parks & Forestry	7 Divisions: 1. Engineer 2. GIS 3. Water 4. WW 5. Streets 6. Inspections 7. Parking

**OPTIONS FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF KAUKAUNA’S PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENTS AND PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.**

**CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR POSITION:**

Before considering organizational changes, we deliberated about the Public Works Director’s position, and the idea of whether it is critical for the next Director of Public Works to be a Professional Engineer. Before a final decision is made, we advise the Mayor to consider the Department’s needs, partly in light

of this inquiry and some of the strategic options we recommend, but also the other needs that the position must fill – staff leader, liaison to the elected officials, and representative to the community and other stakeholders.

The Director's position in Kaukauna is the only position within the staff's ranks to hold a P.E. We understand that at least one person in the Engineering division is seeking to attain his P.E., and that is laudable and may be a key factor in deciding whether the next Director should also possess that credential. In some organizations we have examined, there is an expectation, from some staff, for the next Director to be an engineer. That expectation could emanate from professional bias, believing that the Director's credibility is heightened if they possess a P.E. In Kaukauna's case, that expectation was not strongly expressed.

Our experience also tells us that in today's hiring environment, many communities, while valuing professional engineering credentials, do not view the P.E. as a hard-and-fast requirement. In our view, there must be more compelling reasons for a professional engineer to be at the helm of the Department other than professional credibility among some of the staff. Instead, it should be the knowledge of issues affecting their organizations and the community's environment that establishes credibility. It also depends, too, on how much design work is being generated by the department.

Consequently, in some of the reorganization scenarios outlined below, a P.E. would be beneficial, but not critical. In large part, and again in today's environment of managing complex public organizations with as many personnel as the city's Department of Public Works, the technical skills, experience and background is what shapes today's Directors. It is also the skills of communication, leadership, relational interaction, financial and human resources that additionally and arguably more significantly, define the qualities of a departmental manager.

A look at the city's and Department's organizational charts illustrates reasonably tight and manageable lines of authority. Comparatively speaking, the total number of departmental employees ranks about the same with the other jurisdictions, and the number of the Director of Public Work's direct reports is on par when viewed next to the average of other municipalities. The Director's current span of control – one Streets Superintendent, a Senior Engineer and a Recreation Director – is not out of synch when stacked up against some of the comparable communities. With that as a foundation and the subject of review, the options discussed later on in this report may enhance the Director's span of control.

The Director's position, as assessed by direct-reports and some fellow department heads, requires a view of the entire blackboard of Public Works services to assure continuity of attention, and effective integration with all infrastructure-related demands. The city' taking on of a strategic planning process would be important, too, to more effectively establish and achieve goals. It may also address, for the next Director of Public Works, some of the challenges faced by the current Director, particularly since Kaukauna does not have a City Administrator. In other words, the current Director, in concert with a couple other key management staff, is currently operating as a de-facto City Administrator.

Mr. Sundelius has in his long tenure established himself as an extremely valuable manager, and leader, in the organization. And like many high-asset employees in organizations across the spectrum, they are relied on to take on projects, or assist in strategic level discussions, not always directly related to their department. It is unlikely Mr. Sundelius's replacement will be able to fill that role, or establish that level of trust and credibility, in a short period of time. Consequently, it will be important for the city to

consider developing a strategic plan that will help guide and prioritize the work or what will likely be several new managers.

A Public Works Director's job is very demanding, and each day typically includes addressing requests from elected officials and senior staff, participating on the development team and managing the many and varied divisions of the department. Such is the case in Kaukauna. The next Director will need to be skilled in multi-tasking and continue the current Director's ability to develop a strong working relationship with the elected officials and senior staff. Given the workload, the next Director will need to assess the skills and abilities of the Public Works senior staff and delegate assignments, accordingly, providing opportunities for professional development of the senior staff. With the consideration of a professional engineer credential in the mix, there are several options discussed below that we recommend considering while filling the Director's position.

***STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:***

The Department Director position is currently vacant due to retirement, and it is recommended that the position be filled. It is important that the next Director of Planning and Community Development have a planning background, in addition to skills in economic development. Currently, the city is relying on a contract with Mead and Hunt for site plan reviews and planning support because current staff do not have that experience. While the contract is reasonable and can provide some supplemental aid to the department, the city should have an individual on staff who can provide leadership in site planning, including review of plans as needed and provide quick guidance to potential developers on what may be feasible or not feasible early in the process. The director should also have experience with economic development.

We also recommend the city consider a second Building Inspector position with commercial certification. The city previously had two inspectors on staff, then moved to a contract for service and recently hired a full-time inspector. Adding a second inspector provides additional capacity and coverage for vacations and illness and the city does have the workload to support a second inspector. It would also aid with property and nuisance code enforcement. It did not appear as if there was a clear plan or clear responsibility for enforcing neighborhood property complaints. Many cities do operate with a complaint driven system rather than a pro-active inspection program, but in Kaukauna it was unclear as to when a complaint is received who had primary responsibility and/or the process for resolution. Currently, the .4 FTE position that is shared between public works and planning appears to take on much of that responsibility, but it is not a clear priority.

We do note that under the current interim leadership the staff have appreciated the increased communication and the sense of team. Having regular communication and being able to share a common vision and strategic priorities can help everyone in a department or division to better see how their activities align with the larger efforts and create a greater sense of engagement and job satisfaction. When the department is fully staffed, engaging in setting a strategic direction with mission, values and goals would be helpful to guiding the work of the department.

## ORGANIZATIONAL OPTIONS CONSIDERED (See Appendices for Organizational Charts)

### ***Option #1 – Keeping the Status Quo, as it pertains to the Streets Division.***

In the process of evaluating options, a do-nothing or keeping the status quo is certainly an alternative. That option has re-filling the Director's position and retaining the reporting relationships as they are currently configured, i.e., having the three division heads reporting to the Director.

Advantages to this scenario is consistency (the organization has had this arrangement in place for at least 12 years), less organizational upheaval (albeit a temporary disruption), and having an organizational structure that provides for a reasonable span of control for the Director. It has also lent toward a close working relationship and shared resources and manpower between Streets and Recreation. It has, too, kept the mayor's span of control smaller.

Yet, keeping this organizational structure in place, in our view, presents some challenges. The primary disadvantage lies with maintaining recreation under the umbrella of public works. It is highly unlikely that the city's next Director of Public Works will have much, if any, experience in overseeing recreation. It is conceivable, however, that candidates will have tangential exposure if they have been in a public works department that has had oversight of parks maintenance.

Keeping recreation under public works, and not pairing it more closely with parks development, currently under the purview of community development (not to be confused with parks maintenance because we can certainly see a continued alignment between parks maintenance and public works), strains the connections between planning and implementing, and using park space in closer alignment to the city's recreation needs. It is also constraining the ability of Recreation to operate independently and stand on its own.

In this, or any of the other options presented in this report, we see no purpose or value to moving the Streets division out of Public Works. The services provided by Kaukauna's Streets division mirror many of the services and components that all other peer communities also offer, as do most Public Works departments across the country. To be sure, those services are "bread and butter" of what most residents and users of Public Works expect. Certainly, those services would remain whether they are offered under the flag of Streets or Public Works, but Kaukauna's organization does not need another department head. The mayor's span of control and number of direct reports does not need expansion.

We think there are several drivers to this sentiment. One is the tight schedule handled by the Director of Public Works, which challenges his ability to spend more time "managing by walking around." Clearly, the rank and file want to see more of the Director (and that should be viewed positively!).

There is also a gap in communication between management and the rank and file. Bridging that gap would help the Public Works staff understand why they are doing what they are assigned. Today's workforces hold that expectation and want to understand the nexus between what they are doing, and why. "Listening to workers is especially important, because more and more people want to feel they are

playing an active part in what happens in the organization,” says Manpower executive Deborah Schroeder-Saulnier.

We think, too, that the Director’s occasions to sometimes overrule the Streets Superintendent’s decisions has fomented a belief that eliminating that line of authority will make for a smoother decision path. It will not. Every staff person, no matter where they fall in the organization, will always have someone to report to. If this is a chronic issue, which we have no reason to believe it is, then that is a communication issue, not an organizational one.

***Option #2 – Establish a Separate Engineering Department (Appendix A)***

Some communities have a separate Engineering Department with a City Engineer reporting directly to the Mayor or City Administrator. This provides for direct access to the Mayor or Administrator and is particularly useful when organizations are undertaking large capital programs. Under this model, the department has to be highly collaborative working closely with the Planning and Community Department on development proposals as well as with Public Works operations on capital improvement design and construction. This would also reduce the span of control of the Director of Public Works, allowing the Director to focus primarily on operations.

One disadvantage to this option is that it is not likely to facilitate or improve coordination. The challenge of being highly collaborative with two different operational departments – Streets and Community Development – would add to the workload for the City Engineer. The other disadvantage is that it increases the mayor’s direct reports. This option is hampered with no one currently in the Engineering division holding a P.E. certification.

We add to this discussion what was mentioned early that fiscal challenges, Act 10-induced retirements and municipal workforce reductions as seen throughout the state, forced many communities to consolidate and right-size their municipal organizations. In the main, we do not favor this option, believing that some of the other options are more suitable for Kaukauna’s organization.

***Option #3 – Move Recreation Division out of Public Works and create a standalone Parks and Recreation department. (Appendix B)***

Current efforts to provide a robust recreation program are to be lauded, but they are hampered by a very small staff that has little time to approach their mission strategically. Staff is stretched overseeing a multitude of programs, even offering classes that have outlived their interest. That is happening, in part, because of a full-time staff of two, only one of which is specifically trained in recreation, which does not have much more time than simply being able to focus on the day-to-day operations.

In addition to compromising a strategic approach to programming, pulled-thin staffing also hampers the division’s ability to measure the economic viability of its offerings. For instance, we understand there is no cost-recovery model or goals in place for the City’s recreation program. Many municipalities have a policy in place or established goals on what percentage of recreation fees should cover the total cost of an offering. Coupled with user surveys, the City’s recreation program could have powerful tools in place

to more sufficiently zero in on what people want and how to offer it with the bottom line, and the value of public goods, always in view. But establishing a cost-recovery and subsidy allocation philosophy is an involved and strategic approach, that city staff is currently unable to accomplish because of a lack of time and resources.

Keeping parks and recreation under the shadows of another department undercuts the impact these services have on Kaukauna and the local economy. Parks and recreation can become too easy of a target when municipal budgets are constrained. Often, and rightfully, parks and recreation are seen as adding to a community's quality of life, but their impact on the local economy is underappreciated. For instance, in key findings from research conducted in 2017 by the National Recreation and Parks Association and the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University, the economic impact of local park and recreation agencies generated \$166 billion in economic activity and supported more than 1.1 million jobs throughout the United States. According to the NRPA, "investments made to local and regional parks not only raise the standard of living in our neighborhoods, towns and cities, but they also spark activity that can ripple throughout the economy."

With these ideas in mind, thereby adding more robustness to Kaukauna's current parks and recreation offerings, we suggest an option to consider is moving the recreation division out of the Public Works Department and create a standalone Parks and Recreation Department. Along with that comes the additional action:

- Re-classify the Recreation Director to a Parks and Recreation Director position.
- Keep the parks maintenance functions, equipment, and personnel within Public Works but give oversight and authority to the Parks and Recreation Director. Allow for Parkman positions to cross-train, and provide back-up for seasonal needs, such as snow plowing.
- Create a Recreation Programming Manager position.
- Keep Engineering Division within Public Works.

***Option #4 – Create a Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Events or alternatively named, Department of Leisure Services. (Appendix C)***

This option takes the ideas presented in Option #3 and expands them further. In this scenario, we suggest creating a department that includes parks maintenance and planning, and recreation, and combining it with functions currently handled by the Planning and Community Development Department, which include community events such as the Farmer's Market, Live from Hydro and the oversight of the Grignon Mansion.

While Planning and Community Development is to be commended for its willingness to take on Community Enrichment and for the activities that have become successfully ingrained in the community, those functions are not in common with the primary mission of Planning and Community Development, and we found no other communities that had a similar service model of incorporating community enrichment or recreation activities into Planning and Community Development.

By aligning the Grignon Mansion and Community Enrichment with more common partners, such as Recreation, there may be opportunities to share resources such as marketing and programming. It may aid sponsorship and fundraising opportunities by combining efforts or by eliminating duplication. The activities clearly have value to the community and should continue but shifting oversight will provide better support for the activities. It will also allow the planning team to focus on its core missions of planning and economic development.

There is an expectation that the Grignon Mansion will become self-supporting through obtaining grants, expanding programs and seeking additional sponsors. While this may be possible, the city should consider a long timeframe, such as three years, for evaluation. There are also not clearly defined roles and responsibilities with the Friends group and those roles and expectations should be more clearly defined and memorialized in a memorandum of understanding. The Executive Director has been working to develop a baseline of data on programming, budget and attendance, as well as completing a historic structures report on the property itself which can be used to help develop a strategic plan for the mansion.

***Option #5 – Create a Development Services Department. This newly formed department includes planning, community development, economic development, engineering and building inspections. (Appendix D)***

This option would incorporate building inspections and engineering into the Planning and Community Development Department. The department would incorporate all the functions of planning and zoning, economic development, building inspections and engineering. By including engineering within a reconstituted Development Services Department, engineering is at the front end of development and can collaborate on solutions and creates a “one stop shop” for development.

Incorporating Engineering into the Planning and Community Development Department can be a very effective option, particularly in communities where there is a significant amount of economic development, as is the case in Kaukauna. Having Engineering as a division of Community Development helps ensure collaboration and streamlining with respect to economic development and similar review and regulatory processes. The disadvantage is the need to continue to coordinate with Public Works on capital items and other permit processes in the public right of way.

Public Works staff viewed themselves as intra-departmentally solid, and that there has been a strong inter-departmental relationship between Public Works and Community Development. Folding Engineering into Community Development should not alter that relationship and would additionally assure that Engineering is immediately brought into development discussions. It can also preempt what plagues several municipalities, which is a lack of coordination between departments, especially when critical economic development projects are on the line.

The City Code requires the Building Inspector to serve as Department Director. Currently, this is a department of one individual. A better and more efficient scenario would to be include Building Inspection in a reconstituted Development Services Department. This would allow inspections to be integrated with planning and zoning. The inspectors have an opportunity to provide more input to plans

on the front end as well as understand the entire project, priorities, and timeline. It would also allow administrative and staffing support for the department. It would also reduce the number of direct reports to the mayor by one. Additionally, it would require a simple change to the Code.

Fire inspections would remain with the fire department but be coordinated with building inspections. There is a need to better coordinate fire and building inspections. The permitting should be integrated and where possible, the inspections should be conducted in tandem as well to avoid multiple inspections and inconvenience to a business.

Collaboration and cooperation are needed in ensuring that the development review process operates as efficiently as possible. This is critical for the City's relationship with its business community, and the importance of collaboration and cooperation in development review cannot be overemphasized. A delayed development review process can dramatically impact economic development for the city, particularly if the city earns a reputation for being slow to work with or inconsistent. If there are bottlenecks in the review process that result in unnecessary delays, the city risks gaining a reputation for being "slow" or "difficult" in the development community. For developers, time is money, and an efficient development review process can be as appealing as financial incentives.

Land and economic development involve multiple disciplines that are currently fragmented across city departments. The city should create a development review team that involves all disciplines: Planning, Economic Development, Engineering, Inspections, both Fire and Building. The team should also involve Public Works, Finance, Parks and Police as well. Seeing development plans at the inception and reviewing them in a wholistic manner will identify potential challenges and opportunities upfront. For example, Public Works maintenance can identify potential challenges a roadway design or width may cause for snow removal. Public safety can identify challenges to ingress and/or egress or traffic accidents. Finance can assist in evaluating potential impacts of incentives. It also ensures that all departments are working in alignment to facilitate development in a responsible, sustainable, and efficient manner.

The department would also benefit from mapping the development review process to understand where delays or bottlenecks occur. Documenting the process for plan review, building permits, inspections both internally and externally, will streamline the process for all stakeholders and ensure that projects do not suffer delay and/or that staff are not duplicating efforts. This will result in a streamlined process that eliminates either the developer or the staff rushing to finalize an agenda item for the Plan Commission or Common Council. The "mapping" should involve all staff who are involved in development review coming together for a half day to look at the process from start to finish. This should be facilitated by the mayor's office.

Cities wrestle with how to handle the civil engineering component of development review. Some like the Village of Glenview, Illinois (pop. 42,000) placed Engineering under their Community Development Department many years ago. Others, like the City of Elgin, Illinois (pop 100,000) have engineers specifically assigned to conduct development review. It is not uncommon to have tension in this process; however, it is the developers and ultimately the city that pay the price for it. Based on the

results of the mapping process, Kaukauna may want to alternatively consider moving, or assigning, an engineering position to the Planning and Community Development Department to facilitate the process, if they choose not to combine Engineering with Development.

Ultimately though, we believe there is significant merit in having the Engineering division as a part of the Community Development Department to help ensure collaboration and streamlining with respect to economic development and similar review and regulatory processes. In the end, this will also encourage and empower staff to cross interdepartmental boundaries more freely, especially when larger City-wide goals outrank hierarchical control, provided that this type of approach is accompanied by information sharing, cross-communication, and a respect for project deadlines.

***Option #6: Combine Building Inspections with Planning and Community Development. (Appendix E).***

If the city does not wish to create a Development Services Department, then combining Building Inspections with Planning and Community Development is the next best option. As noted in Option #5, collaboration and coordination are the keys to a successful development process. Continuing to have building inspections as an autonomous department does not aid the development process. Planning and Community Development already provides much of the coordination for building inspections including permitting and scheduling. Earlier in the report we noted the administrative support to building inspections is approximately 12-15 hours per week from Planning and Community Development staff. Merging building inspections into Planning and Community Development would also reduce the number of direct reports to the mayor by one.

Fire safety inspections would remain with the fire department. However, cities also want to ensure that the permit and inspection process is coordinated in house and inspections are performed with the least amount of disruption to a business. Where possible, the personnel for fire and building inspections should try to be on site simultaneously for inspections. It is less disruptive to the business as well as ensuring the interconnected problems can be jointly addressed. As noted in Option #5, mapping the development process, including permitting and inspections will ensure a smoother process and an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each department and individual staff member. Inspections and Planning and Community Development are not contrary services, but complimentary. The goal of any community should be to encourage development and construction in an expediated manner that is also safe for occupants and follows best construction processes.

The permitting and inspection process would also benefit from some additional investments in technology. A priority area should be an on-line permitting software. The software should also include online scheduling of inspections, online payments and a field module that would allow inspectors to input data in the field via tablet devices.

Currently, the city has a system where residents and/or contractors may access the permit forms online, but then city staff input that information manually back into the MyGov system, calculate fees and then contact homeowners, business, and contractors to ensure payment. Inspection information is also entered manually. These are unnecessary redundancies, particularly when the department has limited administrative support.

The department should also consider project management and online plan review software. These upfront investments allow for greater efficiencies of workflow, as well as allowing the city to track performance metrics in real time as well.

## **PREFERRED OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Of the options presented above, we strongly recommend:

1. Establish a Parks and Recreation Department, which includes Community Enrichment activities, including the oversight of the Grignon Mansion.
2. Move the building inspections function under Planning and Community Development. This is accompanied by a change to the City Code to eliminate a department of one and reduces the Mayor's span of control.
3. Establish a Development Review Team and map the development process to ensure coordination of efforts, eliminate duplication and streamline development activities, paying particular attention to coordination of fire and building inspections and permits.
4. Continue to invest in technology that will streamline the permitting and plan review process and reduce administrative work for staff.
5. Keep the Streets division under the umbrella of the Department of Public Works.
6. Do not create a separate Engineering Department. There are equally compelling options and arguments to consider housing engineering with Planning and Community Development, as well as keeping engineering under Public Works. If pressed, we suggest that engineering stay within the Public Works department until a new Director of Public Works is in place. Should the City replace the Director with an individual not in possession of a professional engineering license (assuming it concludes it will no longer be a job requirement), the city can reassess the makeup of the new team, particularly if the Senior Engineer attains his professional engineering license.

This recommendation also assumes the Director of Planning and Development is hired and inspections incorporated into that department. The two new directors should be tasked within their first year of employment to assess the level of development and economic development activity and maximizing a team effort to streamline the development process, and then determine how engineering can bridge the needs for capital planning (a DPW mainstay) and development (as led by Planning and Community Development).

## **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

While not necessarily within the scope of the agreement, we also wanted to note some general best practices we recommend and/or general recommendations that might be helpful to the city.

- Establish a succession planning program for the city to identify future leaders for the organization. We continue to see many professionals in local government retiring or otherwise

exiting local government and the hunt for talent will only become more difficult. There should be a concentration of providing on-going training to those within the city that have expressed the desire to be in management or that perhaps current leadership believes has the potential to become leaders within the organization.

- Continue to strengthen communication across departments through regular interdepartmental meeting that discuss current projects, goals, and initiatives. Meetings should have clear agendas and provide clear status reports and assignments for follow up.
- Continue to develop and document operating procedures and practices. This is helpful for both internal and external stakeholders. Documenting process and procedures is also a way of transferring knowledge as individuals retire. Planning and Community Development has documented the process for intake of permits as an example.
- Contracted services are often a good way to supplement services or fill short term needs, however including clear measurables and response times in the contract up front can avoid potential problems later when the vendor is not as timely in response as the city's or resident's expectations.
- We noted in some of our conversations that job descriptions may be outdated and so as the city looks to re-organize some departments and functions, it is an opportune time to also review and revise job descriptions.
- Take a critical look at DPW's Standard Operating Guidelines through the prism of whether they are enhancing, or impeding, management's ability to lead and guide the department. They mirror a collective bargaining contract and may be hampering management's ability to change and contemporize the Department's operations.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Through this analysis we have offered various findings and recommendations and in some instances options for implementing those recommendations. The goal was to offer expert opinions on current operations and how they can be enhanced or improved for better delivery of public works, planning and community development for the City of Kaukauna.

The study team's efforts were focused on gaining an understanding of the present organizational structure and staffing of service delivery/operational approaches of the City of Kaukauna, comparing those findings to present day models of similar organizations, and making recommendations for revisions, enhancements, and adjustments where necessary. The staff at the City of Kaukauna are talented and dedicated group of employees who work hard to ensure that Kaukauna residents and businesses receive excellent service.

All organizations can improve in some areas, and we believe that with a focus on the issues raised, here, the City of Kaukauna will continue to be a thriving community.

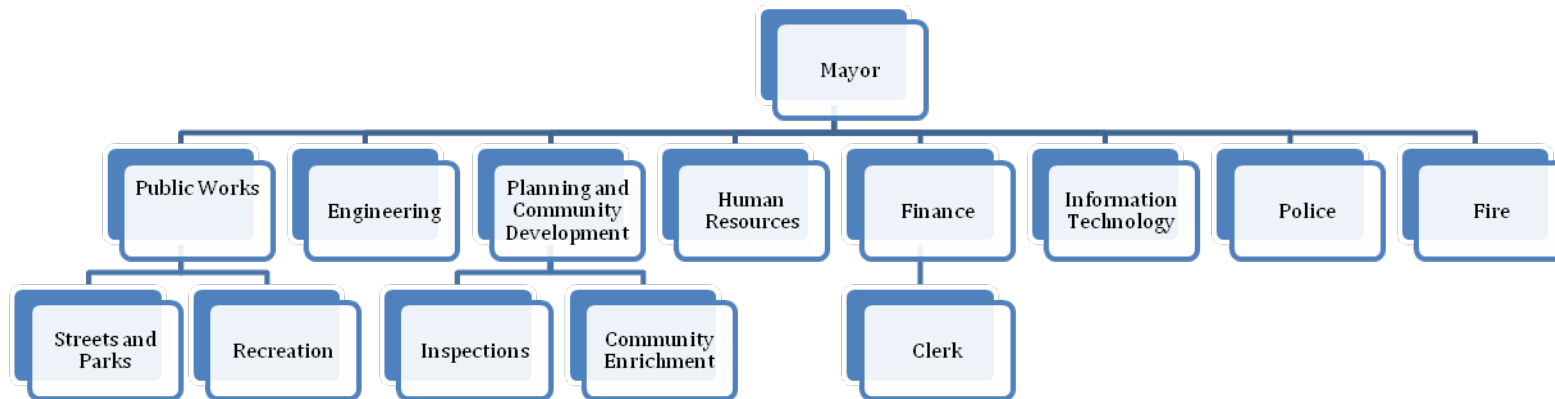
GovHR USA appreciates the opportunity to work with the City of Kaukauna on this important study and we wish you the very best going forward.

# APPENDICES

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

# Appendix A

## Engineering Division



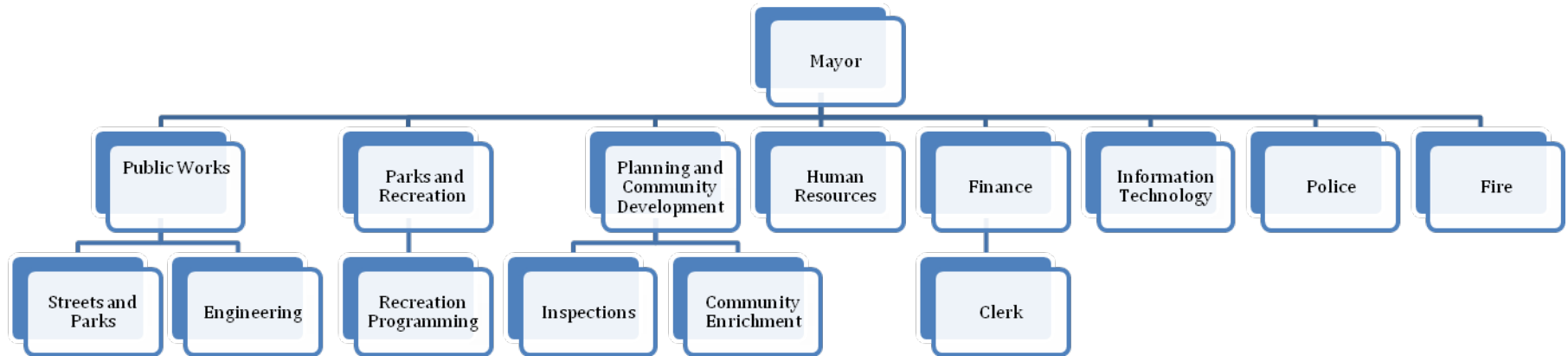
### Notes:

- Increases the number of direct reports to the mayor by one while reducing the direct reports to the Public Works Director.
- Assumes that Building Inspections will be incorporated into Planning and Community Development.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

# Appendix B

## Parks and Recreation Department



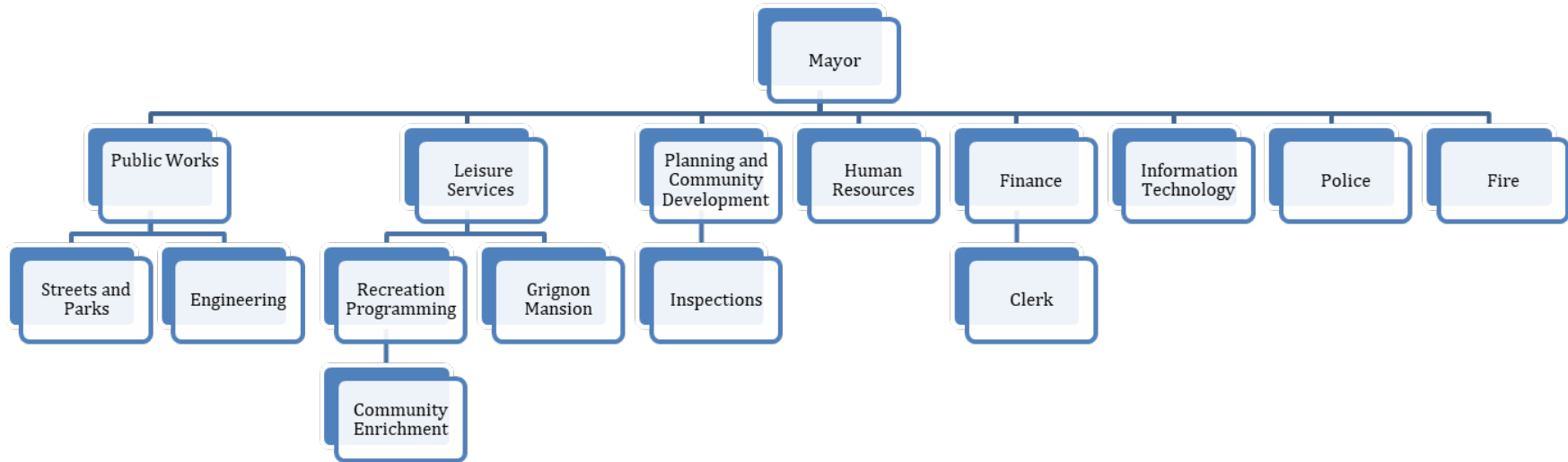
### Notes:

- Increases the number of direct reports to the mayor by one while reducing the direct reports to the Public Works Director.
- Re-classifies the Recreation Director to a Parks and Recreation Director position and creates a Recreation Programming Manager position.
- Assumes that Building Inspections will be incorporated into Planning and Community Development.
- Park maintenance remains with Public Works, but authority is shared with the Parks and Recreation Director.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

# Appendix C

## Leisure Services Department

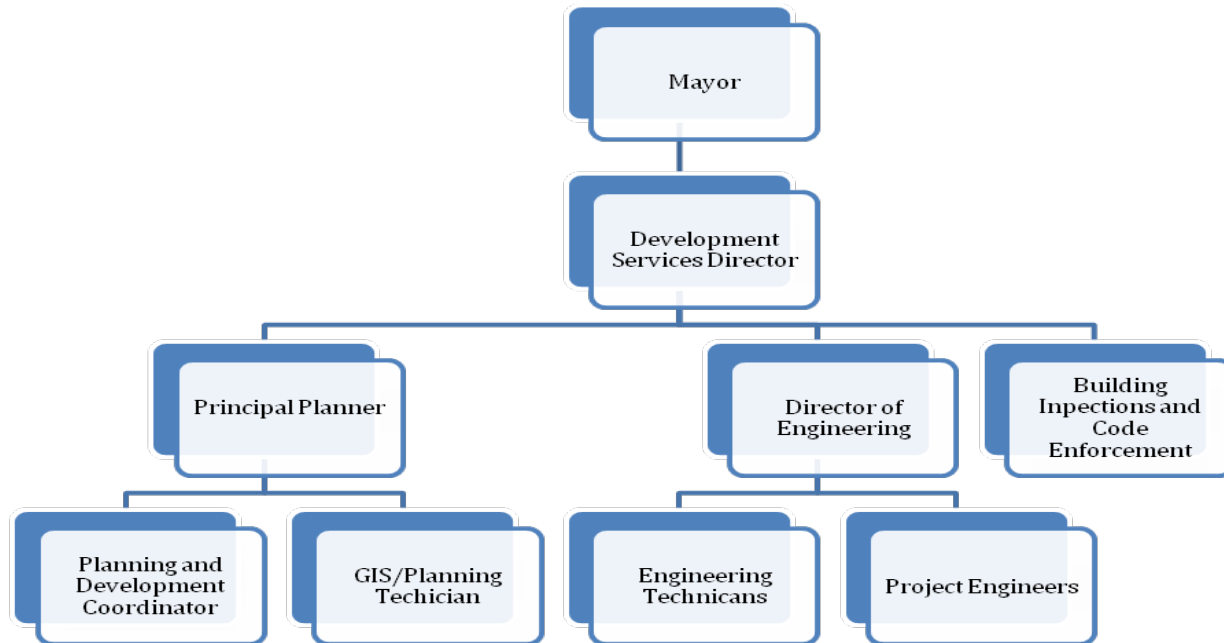


### Notes:

- Increases the number of direct reports to the mayor by one while reducing the direct reports to the Public Works Director.
- Re-classifies the Recreation Director to a Parks and Recreation Director position and creates a Recreation Programming Manager position.
- Park maintenance remains with Public Works, but authority is shared with the Parks and Recreation Director.
- Transfers Community Enrichment and Grignon Mansion to the Parks and Recreation Director.
- Building Inspections is incorporated into Planning and Community Development.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**Appendix D**



**Notes:**

- Engineering shifts from Public Works to Development Services, but Streets remains in Public Works.
- Building Inspections shifts from independent department to Development Services.
- Community Enrichment and Grignon Mansion are transferred to Recreation or Leisure Services.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

## Appendix E

### Community Development and Inspections



#### Notes:

- Building Inspections shifts from independent department to Planning and Community Development.
- Community Enrichment and Grignon Mansion are transferred to Recreation and/or Leisure Services.