

West Liberty, Iowa



City Manager Search

The Community

West Liberty is a small community located in eastern Iowa, near Iowa City/Cedar Rapids. It has the advantage of all the resources of major metropolitan areas, with less than half an hour's drive, while living in a small community with a lower cost of living.

The residents are a culturally diverse population from Latin America, South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa. Many families are fourth generation residents of the city. The Latino population is 54%, the first city in Iowa to have a majority Latino population. The school system is ranked #1 high school in the state according to US News & World Report 2018 Rankings. It features a Dual Language Program for K-12 student. More than 51% of the high school students speak both Spanish and English. Although diverse, the community sees itself as a small town where people care about one another.

The major industry is West Liberty Foods, a food service supplier, established in 1947, employing 800-850 people. Shaking Earth Digital, located in downtown, develops apps for mobile, tablet and desktop devices. They work all over the world. Liberty Communications, internet provider, is a Certified Gig-Capable Provider able to offer internet speeds up to a Gig using fiber network and broadband connections.

The sense of community pride and commitment is strongly shared among the city staff and business community. That sense of community is built upon a shared vision. The next city manager must be a skilled listener and have the ability to assimilate ideas from a variety of viewpoints into a coherent concept that is mutually acceptable. The task is not easy. The city manager must have an ability to receive criticism without becoming defensive, and be able to explain how the objectives can be obtained. Then the manager must promote the agreed upon adopted actions.

The community hosts a number of events that occur annually, including:

- The city's biggest event, the Muscatine County Fair is held every year in July.
- Summer Music in the Park is every Friday.
- The Children's Festival is held every year in September.
- In the months of April through August the West Liberty Raceway hosts races nearly every Saturday night.



Airport:

West Liberty residents utilize several Regional Airports (Eastern Iowa, Southeast Iowa and Dubuque) within an hour drive in and is only 40 miles from the Quad City International Airport, a hub providing four airlines serving to 11 major airports in the US.

Arts and Culture:

The Eulenspiegel Puppet Center has been performing for over 40 years and has called West Liberty its home for many of those years. The New Strand Theatre is a historic opera building that has been hosting performance arts and movies in the community since 1910. The historical Rock Island Depot, built in 1897, now serves as a museum.

Churches:

There are nine (9) churches in West Liberty.



Parks and Recreation:

West Liberty offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities in their nine (9) well-maintained parks, including a swimming pool with a waterslide, a skate park, multiple ball diamonds, soccer fields, frisbee golf, tennis, a walking trail and much more. West Liberty Golf & Country Club opened in 1959 and is a 9 hole course featuring 3,057 yards of golf from the longest tees for a par of 36.

Library:

The West Liberty Public Library building was constructed in 1904 with the help of a \$7500 grant from Andrew Carnegie. It is listed as a State Historical Building and has been renovated and expanded various times over the years. The library holds a host of activities throughout the year including summer reading programs, screenings of educational movies, toddler story times, a morning coffee book club, and much more.

Health Care:

In West Liberty, there are four (4) health and wellness options, including Chiropractic Care, Physical Therapy and a mobile family clinic.



Education

The West Liberty Community School District (WLCSD) consists of elementary, middle, and high schools. Construction of a new high school was completed in 2004. A new middle school was opened in 2009 with a combination of new construction and extensive renovations of parts of the old high school. The school district serves over 1220 students with a student/teacher ratio of 11/1. West Liberty High School was ranked #1 in the state according to US News & World Report 2018 Rankings.

The West Liberty Elementary, Middle School, and High School are all International Spanish Academies (ISAs) The WLCSD Dual Language Program allows students to take all of their classes in both Spanish and English, increasing their bilingual skills and their understanding of another culture through language immersion. Students enter the program in pre-kindergarten and parents make a commitment on behalf of their child and themselves to participate in the program through fifth grade.

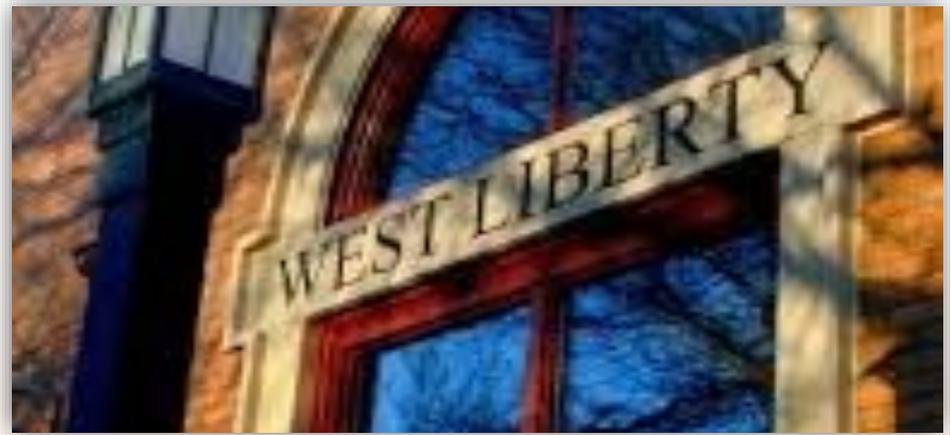


Governance and the Organization

The City of West Liberty's Council/Manager form of government is a system founded on the balance between the policy-setting functions of the five-member City Council, the Mayor, and the management expertise of an appointed City Manager. There are five (5) council members elected by City residents to serve for four-year overlapping terms. The mayor serves a two-year term. To assist the city council in their duties there are numerous commissions, committees, and task forces which operate to address needs and trends identified by city staff and the community. The City Council meetings are held every First and Third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. The Council meetings are located at City Hall in the Council Chambers at the 101 E Fourth St. entrance.

West Liberty is a full government service community, including administration, electric, police, fire, public works, solid waste, recycling, parks and recreation, library, water and wastewater utilities.

The city's current tax rate is \$15.31415 per \$1,000 valuation and has a FY 19–20 general fund budget of approximately \$14.6 million, \$8.4 million in TIF, and \$17.3 million in GO, TIF and revenue debt service.



Public Safety

Fire: The West Liberty Volunteer Fire Department also provides ambulance service. There is one centrally located fire station in the community. The Department provides fire suppression to the residents of West Liberty as well as many other emergency services. The fire fighters are certified at the Fire Fighter II level. The fire department also is active in fire prevention activities. This includes the fire fighters providing fire prevention education to all students in kindergarten, 2nd, and 6th grades.

Police: The West Liberty Police Department is comprised of six (6) full time officers, several Part-time and Reserve Officers and recently ranked as the number 6 safest community in Iowa as reported by The SafeWise Report.



Organization Culture

The city staff is relatively young. This is a result of retirements and turnover of staff members. The city manager needs to consider how to encourage quality employees to stay. Management styles are evolving toward greater employee involvement in determining how employees do their jobs. There is often more than one way to get the job done, and allowing employees and supervisors the latitude to make decisions on how to meet the objectives, results in a higher level of job satisfaction and performance.



Ideal Candidate

The City of West Liberty seeks a creative and visionary leader to be the next City Manager. The ideal candidate will have a management style that evolves toward greater employee involvement in determining how employees do their jobs. There is often more than one way to get the job done, and allowing employees and supervisors the latitude to make decisions on how to meet the objectives, results in a higher level of job satisfaction and performance.

Incentives for the employee to acquire skills that benefit the city, and accepting input from those employees, along with recognition of quality job performance is a means to retaining quality people. Employees' involvement includes the employee understanding the importance of providing good and friendly service to the citizens. It also requires recognition of the value of cooperation with the needs of the business community. Contemporary leadership is a combination of being open to new ideas and cheerleading success.

Leadership involves holding people accountable. The organization benefits when employees are recognized for success and held accountable for substandard performance. The latter is not an easy responsibility or a pleasant duty. To fail to meet the responsibility of holding people accountable degrades the organization's internal operations.

City departments are diverse in their responsibilities. It is easy to develop the tendency to operate in silos, each department working on objectives without consideration of how that impacts other departments. The city manager has the responsibility to create a team atmosphere. Each department becomes aware of the jobs of the other departments and should seek to identify a way to work cooperatively.

The city manager is the chief executive officer for the city and is the public relations contact person. This means being open with news media about city operations, admitting when things do not go right and making sure it is known when the city does a good job. The city manager must understand the obligation to be involved in community organizations, if not a member of the organization, then be readily available to meet with those organizations to discuss city business. Skill with social media venues such as Facebook and Twitter and speaking at public events and with citizens shopping at the local stores will serve the community's need to know. The city manager is a public figure and these opportunities are very much part of the job.

Every community is working on economic growth and redevelopment. West Liberty has the advantage of being attractive to startups and entrepreneurs. The availability of reasonable commercial rental space and Gigabit internet speeds make this an attractive place to launch a new business. The city manager can use these resources to stimulate economic development.

Specific traits identified:

- Experienced in local government operations
- Good communication skills
- Clearly plans and programs
- Advocate for the objectives of the city
- Comfortable in a culturally diverse population
- Accepts responsibility
- Skilled in human relation issues
- Recognize employee accomplishments
- Economic development and growth
- Capable with using compromise to achieve goals
- Understand bonding, TIF, grants
- Experience with city owned utilities
- Accept and evaluate new ideas with an open mind
- Comfortable being a public figure
- Approachable in public
- Open and not defensive in controversial situations
- Active in community events and organizations
- Hold employees accountable
- Experience with developing housing
- Using technology to operate more efficiently
- Understand budgets and how to manage

Leadership & Innovation

The City of West Liberty just held a goal setting work session in December 2019. The next City Manager will develop long-term strategies that will help the city address the following current projects and priorities:

- ◆ Adopt a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) with a focus on a 20-year reconstruction plan to include maintenance, repair, timely implementation and budgeting consideration.
- ◆ An analysis of all utility rates.
- ◆ Housing programs for both the residents and the developers.
- ◆ City Hall and Public Safety Building feasibility studies.
- ◆ Map the community with the utilization of GIS and GPS systems.
- ◆ Staff training for service, safety and human resource compliance.

Position Announcement

West Liberty, Iowa, population 3,736 is located in eastern Iowa, near Iowa City/Cedar Rapids. It has the advantage of all the resources of major metropolitan areas with less than half an hour's drive while living in a small community with lower cost of living. The city owns and operates the electrical power system, water system, waste water treatment plant, and solid waste which includes curb side recycling. Experience with managing city owned utilities is valuable.

The residents are a culturally diverse population from Latin America, South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa. Many families are fourth generation residents of the city. The Latino population is 54%, the first city in Iowa to have a majority Latino population. The school system is ranked #1 high school in the state according to US News & World Report 2018 Rankings. It features a Dual Language Program for K-12 student. More than 51% of the high school students speak both Spanish and English.

The major industry is West Liberty Foods, a food service supplier established in 1947 employing 800-850 people. Shaking Earth Digital located in downtown develops apps for mobile, tablet and desktop devices. They work all over the world. Liberty Communications, internet provider, is a Certified Gig-Capable Provider, able to offer internet speeds up to a Gig using fiber network and broadband connections.

The successful candidate will have the skills to develop increased housing programs, economic development and is comfortable working with a culturally diverse population. The next city manager will be expected to understand budgeting, TIF, and bond management. That person will be expected to represent the city with local groups and participate in community events.

Education:

Bachelor's degree in public administration, political science, planning or related field. Master's preferred.

Experience:

Five years of management experience in the public sector, knowledge of public finance, personnel policies, public safety, public works, ability to communicate; to listen with an open mind, and find compromise solutions, and experience with municipal owned utility systems.

Salary and benefits:

\$80,000 to \$90,000 annually, depending on experience, IPERS and ICMA 457 retirement benefits, life and short-term disability, medical and dental insurance, and Holiday, Vacation, and sick leave benefits.

Tentative Timeline

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled with the first review on	February 21
Screening/Written and/or Phone Interviews	February 28
Selection of Finalists	March 6
Background Checks	March 9-20
Interviews	March 27-28
New City Manager Starts	April or May



Moulder & Associates/Midwest Municipal Consulting, LLC

Application Process

Candidates should submit confidential materials such as a cover letter, resume, salary history and five work related references by February 21, 2020 to:

Moulder and Associates, LLC.
williammoulder@mchsi.com
Ph: 515-371-1669

To learn more about West Liberty and the position profile, visit website at www.westlibertyiowa.com or www.cityofwestlibertyia.org.

Out of town candidates will be reimbursed for usual and customary travel related expenses coming to town for interviews.