

Willmar Municipal Utilities



General Manager

Salary: \$172,400 to \$215,500

The City of Willmar, located in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota, is a city that combines small-town charm with diverse opportunities for residents and visitors. With a population of approximately 21,960 residents, Willmar offers a close-knit community atmosphere where neighbors know each other and local businesses are supported. Willmar serves as the County's regional center and is a diversified, growing, micropolitan city.

Living in Willmar means enjoying a balance of rural and urban amenities. The City boasts numerous parks, recreational facilities, and lakes making it ideal for outdoor enthusiasts. Robbins Island Park, with its beautiful scenery and activities, is a local favorite. The Willmar Community Center and the Kandiyohi County Historical Society offer cultural and educational experiences, showcasing the City's rich history and vibrant community life.

Education in Willmar is provided by the Willmar Public School District which includes three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. Additionally, Willmar is home to Ridgewater College which offers a range of associate degrees and technical programs.

Working in Willmar presents opportunities across various sectors. The area's economy is diverse, with strong agricultural roots complemented by the Technology Campus, manufacturing, logistics/distribution, small businesses, and tourism. The City's strategic location, with convenient access to major highways and railroads, supports its economic vitality.

Willmar's community spirit is reflected in numerous events and festivals throughout the year, fostering a sense of belonging among residents. Whether you are looking to raise a family, advance your career, or simply enjoy a peaceful yet vibrant lifestyle, Willmar offers an inviting environment with the warmth of Minnesota hospitality.



THE ORGANIZATION

MISSION STATEMENT



Willmar Municipal Utilities will provide safe, reliable & quality utility services at competitive rates for their customers.

PRINCIPLE STATEMENT



The purpose of the Willmar Municipal Utilities is to provide the highest quality, lowest cost services while being fiscally responsible. In order to accomplish the mission, the WMU promotes the following three principles:

- Deliver service that exceeds customer expectations.
- Provide a solid financial foundation for the City of Willmar.
- Improve the efficiency with which we provide services using industry-proven processes and technologies.

Willmar Municipal Utilities is dedicated to providing reliable and high quality electric and water service to its consumer owners at competitive rates in a forward-looking, service-oriented manner. The Municipal Utilities Commission is a semiautonomous branch of the city government charged by the Willmar City Charter with full control, operation, and management of municipal utilities and subject to veto powers of the City Council. The Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Mayor, none of whom may hold any other office or position in the city government.

In 2023, Willmar Municipal Utilities once again was recognized for its outstanding reliable service by the American Public Power Association, receiving the RP3 Diamond Level Award. This is the third consecutive time WMU has received the award. The RP3 designation, which lasts for three years, recognizes public power utilities that demonstrate proficiency in four key disciplines: reliability, safety, workforce development, and system improvement.

The WMU Commission and staff would agree that they are very proud of the accomplishments they have made over the last ten years, all done with the community's support. WMU has partnered with Missouri River Energy Service (MRES) and recently completed a \$15 million investment (revenue neutrality) on transmission. WMU also operates the water utility and looks forward to the northeast water treatment plant to be fully upgraded and operational in early 2025. WMU provides the City of Willmar and its customers with high quality water.

The WMU is a highly functional team led by passionate and dedicated staff who are subject matter experts. The team credits their longevity and success to their open and collaborative work style. The Commission is actively engaged and attends workshops and conferences. This is so they understand the industry and can effectively support the work of the General Manager and the WMU staff.

The WMU is hyper focused and forward thinking on providing affordable, reliable, quality service to its utility customers as well as being an active participant in and throughout the community.

THE ORGANIZATION



Willmar Municipal Utilities (WMU) is planning for the future with a new heavily modernized water treatment plant being constructed, additional generation, a brand-new transmission upgrade, conversion of all City street lighting to LEDs, and much more!



The electric system consists of five distribution substations and two transmission substations which step down the voltage from 69,000 volts to 12,470 volts. The current is then distributed through 18 feeder lines to neighborhood transformers to serve over 10,000 electric customers. The system has 230 miles of power lines of which 87% are underground, with that percentage growing every year due to conversion projects. The peak demand citywide was in August 2023 at 61 MW.



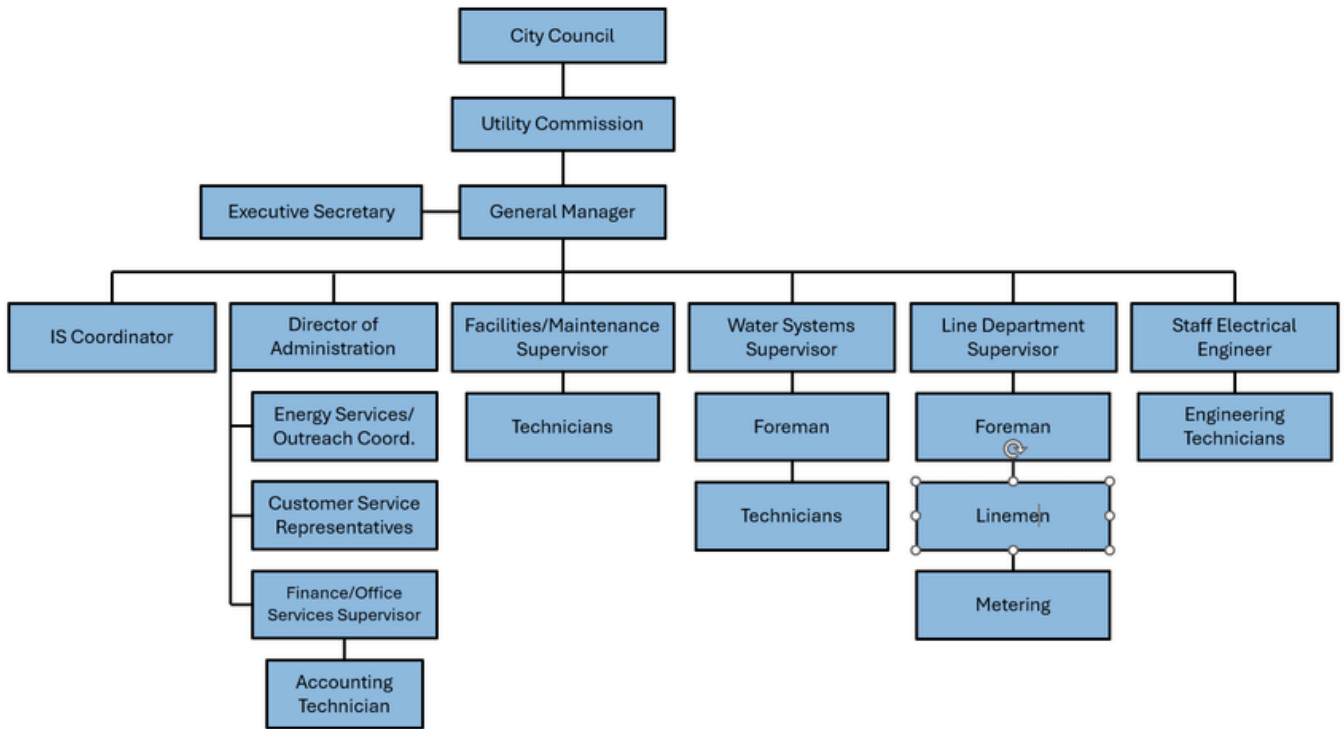
The water system consists of 16 wells, two water treatment plants, three pumping stations, and four storage facilities. The water is then moved over 120 miles of distribution piping to serve over 6,700 water customers. The Willmar Municipal Utilities has been recognized state-wide as an industrial leader in providing low-cost, high-quality water. An average of 4 million gallons of water per day are pumped to Willmar's customers. Willmar Municipal Utilities' production capacity is 7.9 million gallons of water per day.



Willmar Municipal Utilities owns transmission assets totaling \$21M. Assets consist of an 84 MVA transformer and 112 MVA transformer plus 33 miles of transmission lines consisting of 69 KVA and 230 KVA.

THE ORGANIZATION

Organizational Highlights



| Electric Budget | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Operating Revenues | \$33,219,414 | \$33,988,929 | \$35,770,058 |
| Operating Expenses | \$24,716,466 | \$27,451,135 | \$29,888,295 |
| Operating Income | \$710,090 | \$463,349 | \$445,000 |
| Retained Earnings | \$7,076,196 | \$4,864,301 | \$4,189,921 |

| Water Budget | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Operating Revenues | \$4,265,187 | \$5,110,734 | \$5,237,227 |
| Operating Expenses | \$2,352,726 | \$2,812,035 | \$4,254,141 |
| Operating Income | \$63,534 | -\$663,181 | \$50,000 |
| Retained Earnings | \$1,975,995 | \$1,635,517 | \$1,033,086 |



- Acquire land for a new WMU office building. Plan to break ground within 12-18 months. Retain services of an architect and construction manager.
- Continue to build relationships with the City of Willmar at all levels. Staff from the WMU and the City are interconnected and benefit from open communication and mutual understanding.
- Continue to build on proactive communication within the community to educate them on the role of the Willmar Municipal Utility and garner buy-in of its endeavors.
- Plan and develop a workshop/retreat for the new General Manager, Commission Members (new and old), Division Directors, and Supervisors to formalize the Commission's role and ensure all parties have the same vision and serve the organization's mission.
- Explore time of use metering.
- Support the design process for a \$20 million transmission project. The WMU Commission supports a 2028 start date.
- Prepare a plan and specifications for installation of a 10 MW generator for emergency/back-up power. Generators have been ordered (lead time first quarter of 2028).
- Water treatment plant updates: Northeast plant has been converted to a biological plant and is 80% complete. Southwest plant will need to be updated in 8-10 years.
- Track and report on state and federal mandates related to renewable energy. Ensure forward movement toward meeting carbon neutral directives.
- Explore the opportunity to offer a community solar project.
- Play critical role in designing how information will be accessed via the GIS platform to ensure the information is easy to obtain and intuitive.
- Prepare to utilize recently developed MDM to look at electrical systems, feeder loading, and transfer loading.
- Prepare for decommissioning of wind turbines.
- Maintain Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) designation. Application process occurs every three years.
- Update and maintain the WMU Strategic Plan as a living document; centered around the mission of the organization.
- Maintain a continued partnership with United Community Action Partnership (UCAP).



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

- Demonstrate involvement in and attend meetings and conferences for APPA, MMUA, MRES, and other state and national organizations.
- Direct and participate in the development of short and long-range plans and policies for the Utility.
- Gather, interpret, and prepare data for studies, reports, and recommendations for Commission consideration and approval.
- Engage Commission and leadership staff in annual workshop to review annual goals and update strategic plan.

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

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

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

- Hire and remove department heads and all subordinate staff, establish job descriptions, assign work, set clear expectations for department heads, assess their performance, and hold them accountable for results.
- Plan for the development of personnel resources across Utility operations and maintain programs to encourage employee development.
- Direct the development and consistent administration of equitable personnel policies, compensation administration policies, and employee benefit plans.

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

- Develop and present proposed operating and capital expenditure budgets for review and approval by the Commission.
- Review and monitor revenues and expenditures to assure sound fiscal control of operations and oversee the Utility's cost control activities.
- Provide the Commission with regular reports on financial conditions and current and future Utility operating and capital needs.
- Oversee the power supply contracts and maintain relationships with power supply vendors.



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

- Develop effective partnerships and work closely with city officials, including the City Administrator and other members of the staff.
- Promote timely and effective communication to the Commission, staff, and to the customers and Willmar community.
- Identify and develop communication tools and methods to inform and educate all interested parties.
- Represent the Utility through all forms of media.

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

- Ensure that all Utility operations are in compliance with applicable local, state, federal, and other government regulations and laws, including environmental and safety regulations.
- Review, monitor, and participate in legislative issues impacting the Utility.

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

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

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

- Maintain an effective relationship with the customers and the public, represent the Utility in matters of city affairs, civic affairs, and state and national organizations.
- Make presentations to councils, boards, commissions, civic groups, and the general public as requested.

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



- Strong relationship building skills inside and outside of the organization. Places value in strengthening relationships with community partners, vested stakeholders, and industry professionals.
- Highly developed skillset in critical and creative thinking and a fortitude for strategic planning. Highly organized.
- Supports the tenured leadership staff and the projects that are in place.
- Believes in and takes action in providing professional development for staff and self.
- A futurist - can explain how potential decisions made today will affect the community, customer, and the Utility long into the future.
- Understands the power industry and the legislative mandates that are coming.
- Understands how electric transmission works and how it is managed.
- An authentic and communicative leader: understands one's audience, communicates to be understood, listens to understand, and retains an appropriate sense of humor.
- Personnel management skills: approachable with an ability to foster a team atmosphere.
- Is comfortable working with and has an understanding of local government and public finance.
- A demonstrated involvement in, and attends, meetings and conferences for APPA, MMUA, and MRES.
- General understanding of water utility operations.
- Skilled in persuasion and negotiation when politics calls for such. Prioritizes protection of WMU's assets.



Organization: Willmar Municipal Utilities (Willmar, Minnesota)

Position: General Manager

Salary: \$172,400 to \$215,500

Application Deadline: August 13, 2024

Job Summary

As the chief administrative officer, this role involves managing and leading the Utility's daily programs, operations, and services. Reporting to a seven-member Commission appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council, the General Manager develops effective relationships with the City of Willmar, partners, and agencies. Responsibilities include overseeing Utility departments to ensure efficient service delivery, participating in Commission and committee meetings, executing directives and policies, and leading strategic business planning, budget development, safety programs, and personnel administration. The General Manager also ensures compliance with relevant laws, rules, and regulations.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in Business or Public Administration, Engineering, or a related field; a master's degree is preferred.
- Eight (8) or more years of progressive experience in utility operations, preferably with a multi-utility municipal organization.
- At least five (5) years at a management level with administrative and operating responsibilities.

Apply

Visit <https://daviddrown.hiringplatform.com/247646-willmar-municipal-utilities-general-manager/971651-application-form/en> and complete the application process by August 13, 2024. Finalists will be selected on August 26, 2024, and final interviews will be held on September 13, 2024.

Please direct any questions to Liza Donabauer at liza@daviddrown.com or 612-920-3320 x111.