

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

City of Wayland



City Manager

City of Wayland

A desirable small-town community located nearly halfway between downtown Grand Rapids and downtown Kalamazoo in southwest Lower Michigan is seeking a city manager who is looking for a long-term relationship with the community. With a population of 4,435, Wayland offers a beautiful place for families, businesses, and industry. Residents highly value the small-town atmosphere, safe and walkable neighborhoods, and excellent parks and schools. The ideal candidate will be a leader who wishes to immerse themselves in the attributes that make Wayland a charming and thriving place to live and work.

The council encourages the next city manager to treat Wayland as their home and participate in and enjoy the many local events, including the twice-per-week farmers market, and Summerfest, to name a few. They will also work to bring life to high-priority plans, like their continued dedication to the Main Street program, infrastructure redevelopment, and parks expansion and development.



Wayland boasts a stable, forward-thinking city council, solid departmental leadership, and a supportive and hardworking staff. The city's strong financials, high-quality parks, and good relationships with area local governments, including Allegan County, are testaments to its success. The city is searching for a manager who values teamwork and has excellent communication skills with the council, staff, and citizens. The city council expects a collaborative leader who is open to working with the Gun Lake Tribe, which has strong community ties and operates a large casino just south of the city. Additionally, the manager will be expected to engage with Wayland Union Schools, various community organizations, and area governments to better Wayland and the entire region.

Candidates with four-year degrees in public administration are preferred. However, related degrees in management will be considered.

The salary range for the city manager position is \$115,000 to \$135,000. Starting salary will be based on qualifications and experience.

The Community

Wayland is conveniently located off US 131, offering close proximity to downtown Grand Rapids and downtown Kalamazoo. These nearby cities provide a wealth of cultural and recreational opportunities, including professional hockey, baseball, soccer, and volleyball teams, Broadway theater productions, and major entertainment venues hosting top acts. Additionally, Wayland is near prime outdoor vacation destinations in northwest Lower Michigan. This outstanding community is 45 minutes from Lake Michigan and numerous other inland lakes, rivers, and streams.

The cost of living here is below the national average, with varying housing types and costs. Major roadways are separated to promote walkability between residential and downtown areas.

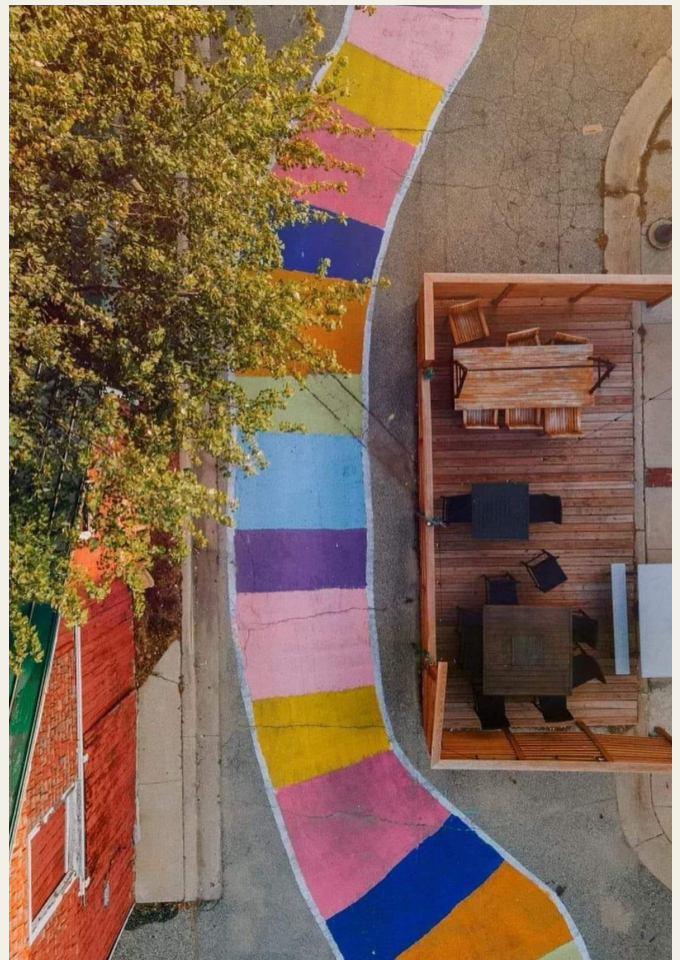
Wayland Union Schools are excellent and work cooperatively with the city on various community projects. The city is also close to several higher education institutions, including Grand Valley State University, Western Michigan University, Davenport University, Grand Rapids Community College, Kendall School of Art and Design, Calvin College, Aquinas College, and several other private colleges in the area.

In addition to well-kept residential neighborhoods, Gun Lake Casino is close and has served to attract an influx of restaurants and retailers to the city. Redevelopment opportunities are on the horizon as the Gun Lake Tribe has acquired and is currently acquiring property in and near Wayland for Tribe, public, and private development. The Gun Lake Tribe continues to be a good and supportive neighbor of the city and regularly provides funding to the schools, city, and local non-profits.

The city has a thriving downtown, supported by an active DDA. As a Master Level Main Street community, Wayland has achieved National Accreditation through Main Street America.

Main Street America continues to assist Wayland in a full Main Street program by offering technical assistance, resources, training, and networking opportunities. Master Level communities also serve as a mentor for other Michigan Main Street Communities. The DDA sponsors events that draw thousands to the city, including parades, concerts, and festivals. They also provide grant assistance and education opportunities to area businesses.

The community recently completed a bonding process for street improvements for a large city section. The city again plans to use bond revenues to continue infrastructure improvements in the current budget.



The Organization

Wayland functions under a council-manager form of government wherein department directors are hired and report to the city manager. The city council comprises six members and a mayor, all elected at large and serving two-year terms, including the separately elected mayor. Council members work collaboratively, are results-oriented, and seek to provide excellent value to the community. Wayland council members take pride in their cooperative relationship and ability to work as a team with the city manager and staff without tension.

The city council will appoint the next city manager, who will serve as the chief administrative officer. The city council sets policy and direction and approves the budget and significant expenditures while serving as the legislative authority through the approval of ordinances and major planning initiatives. The norm in the City of Wayland is a successful city manager/city council relationship. The city council looks to the manager for innovative and creative leadership and the ability to mobilize the staff to implement the council's and the staff's joint vision.

Wayland city government serves just under 5,000 residents and provides a full range of services overseen by the city manager. Departments include clerk, finance/treasurer, public works, police, fire, water and sewer, parks, and utility billing. The fire department provides contracted service to two adjoining townships.

The administration oversees consultants and contractors who provide assessing, engineering, planning, and building department services. Several services are shared with other agencies including the dispatch center, EMS, and Economic Development. Wayland is also a member of the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, which is an alliance of governmental units in the West Michigan area working on growth, development, and improving the quality of life in West Michigan.



The current workforce includes 26 full-time, several part-time, and 39 paid-on-call firefighters. Three unions represent employees in the Police, DPW, and Water and Sewer Departments. The city has a stable workforce and experiences low annual turnover rates at all levels. Union grievances are not the norm, and the city enjoys good relationships with its unions.

City staff enjoys a generous benefits package that includes a MERS-defined benefit pension program and a MERS 457 plan that includes a 3 percent contribution with a 3 percent match. The health care plan is a Health Savings Account plan with a 5 percent contribution of up to \$1,400 monthly for family coverage. 100 percent employer-paid dental, vision, short and long-term disability, and life insurance plan. Finally, the city offers tuition reimbursement for continuing education.

The city's general operating fund for FY 2026-2027 is approximately \$3.54 million, and the total of all funds is approximately \$4.09 million. Wayland is one of the few Michigan full-service communities operating significantly below its state-authorized tax cap.

Additional information regarding the city is available at www.cityofwayland.org.

Opportunities and Challenges

No position profile would be complete without highlighting community challenges and opportunities.

Opportunities

- Council that thrives on stability and cooperation
- Experienced leadership team
- Redevelopment of commercial and industrial properties
- Development of long-term capital improvement plans for all infrastructure
- Relationships with the Gun Lake Tribe
- Development of the Interurban Trail
- Partnerships with Wayland Union Schools
- Expansion of communication framework to include the use of technology and expanded social media
- Expansion of all forms of Housing to meet the growing needs of the community

Challenges

- Workplace culture
- Housing, senior, and workforce units
- Tax-exempt property development
- Perception of high taxes
- Commercial and Industrial growth, downtown retail mix
- Infrastructure funding
- Police and Fire funding to match community growth
- Growth-related issues, including traffic, infrastructure planning, staffing, etc.
- No higher education institutions in Allegan County



The Ideal Candidate

The city is seeking motivated and experienced local government administrators and will consider applicants who possess the following knowledge and experience:

- It is preferred that the candidates possess a bachelor's degree in public administration
- Related degrees in management will be considered
- A master's degree is preferred
- Five years of progressively responsible local government experience preferred

All applicants need to be prepared to address these critical skills that the city council and staff are focused on:

- Outstanding communicator both verbally and in writing
- Responsive to staff, council, and citizens
- Team builder and leader who engages the staff and the council to reach solutions that are in the best interest of the city
- Empowers the leadership team
- Desires to create a long-term sustainable, fiscally responsible, and service-oriented local government.
- The council is not looking for a caretaker; they seek an individual with a bold vision.
- People skills, good listener
- Non-biased and transparent
- Organized
- Values long-term planning
- Decisionmaker
- Strategic thinking

The incoming city manager will be an effective leader and a partner working collaboratively with the city council, staff, and the community. They should have the following traits:

- Collaborator and appreciates good teamwork
- Capable to work effectively with surrounding government agencies
- Even temperament
- Humble, serves with ethics, integrity, and authenticity
- Shares vision for the community and works with council and staff to facilitate their joint vision
- Desires to create a long-term sustainable, fiscally responsible, and service-oriented local government
- Customer service oriented
- Pro-active
- Takes pride in the community.
- Engaged with staff, council, and the community
- Trusting and trustworthy



Application Process

Application window is open until the position is filled.

Please submit resume, cover letter, consent form, and five professional references to:

Email:

arodriguez@cityofwayland.org

Subject Line: Wayland City Manager Search

Questions can be directed to the City Clerk/HR Manager Amanda Rodriguez and the above email.

Candidates desiring confidentiality of their interest, as allowed for and provided by Michigan law, must indicate such in a separate subject line above the body of the cover letter.

This search is conducted by an Equal Opportunity Employer.

