




Aitkin County Courthouse
Nathan Burkett, Administrator
217 Second Street N.W. Room 130
Aitkin, MN 56431
218-927-7276
Fax: 218-927-7374

TO: County Board
FROM: Nathan Burkett 
CC:
DATE: August 29, 2016
RE: County Administrator recruitment and interim options

Summary of Recommended Action

- Approve Job Description, Recruitment Brochure and Recruitment process and authorize immediate advertisement to recruit a Permanent County Administrator
- Direct assignment of a building project coordinator, negotiations/budget team and a County Administrator recruitment team.
- Direct the County Administrator and Personnel Committee to seek out an external interim County Administrator to recommend to the County Board for 2-3 days per week to handle general administrative day-to-day, general oversight and Board liason.
- Plan to appoint either an interim County Administrator on September 13 or to adopt the management team concept to handle day-to-day administrative matters.

1a. County Administrator vs. County Coordinator

There have been some questions about the difference between County Administrator and County Coordinator. The statute that County Coordinators are appointed under is 375.48 - .50. The statute that the County Administrator is appointed under is 375a.06.

The primary operational difference is that the County Coordinator statute is permissive; the Board *may* give authority to the County Coordinator. As such, the Board may grant the County Coordinator all or some of the duties and authorities of the County Administrator.

The County Administrator statute is more prescriptive. The County Administrator is statutorily tasked with “unifying the management” of the county’s affairs, preparing a budget, and acting as supervisor of department heads appointed by the Board.

As a practical matter, in Aitkin County, the Administrator has served as what you might call a “weak” Administrator. This is due primarily to the tenure and experience of many of Aitkin County’s department heads. While the technical authority to issue discipline, and directives from the Administrator to Department Heads is present, upon direction of the Board that authority is used sparingly, if at all.

In summary, I think that the Administrator vs. Coordinator issue is more semantics than practical issues, from an operational perspective. I think that issue is more pertinent in terms of the type of candidates you want to attract to the position. I find it somewhat unlikely that a current County Administrator, or an individual with Administrator experience would be interested in the County Coordinator position. As far as pay for the position goes; you will pay for the experience and quality of the person you appoint, not for the title you advertise.

I recommend advertising for the Administrator position; in accordance with the recommendations in the following sections.

1b. Internal Recruitment vs. Search Firm

I believe that Aitkin County will get applicants for the position that are about the same regardless of how the County approaches the recruitment. I have solicited bids from two recruitment firms, the detail of which are available upon request.

- David Drown and Associates - \$16,000
- Springsted/Waters and Company - \$15,500

I recommend that the County Board direct an internal recruitment, and that you do so in accordance with the recommended timeline below. If the Board adopts this timeline, I can use some of my time prior to my last day to recruit applicants. I have a pretty good understanding of those individuals who are interested in this type of job, and who might be a good fit for Aitkin County. This would not preclude anyone from reaching out to candidates they like, but my efforts to recruit would probably help.

1c. Recruitment Timeline and Process

The Board is presented today with the entirety of a recruitment package and process with which to seek a permanent County Administrator. There would still be opportunity to make amendments to the job description and refine your individual and collective sense about the position and the candidate you are seeking; department heads and the personnel committee are in favor of moving quickly to find a permanent replacement.

It is recommended that the recruitment committee be coordinated by the Human Resources Director, with the Personnel Committee, Highway Engineer and HHS Director serving.

Week of:	Step
August 29	Post administrator job announcement and begin recruitment activities.
October 3	Recruitment committee reviews applications, schedules interviews with 5-6 top candidates (semi-finalists)
October 17	Recruitment committee conducts interviews with semi-finalists, selects finalists
October 24 and 31	Finalists take in depth management assessment with Gary Fischler and Associates or MacCallister

November 7 or 14	Finalists interview with the Full Board, and all interested Department Heads in separate interviews
November 14 or 21	Backgrounding Top Candidate (s), Additional interview if desired
November 29	Board makes offer
January 2, 2017	New County Administrator starts

1d. County Administrator Position Profile

See attached

1e. County Administrator Job Description

See attached

2a. Management Team Approach

Department heads met on August 24 and have designed a management team approach that should meet the needs of the county in the interim period. This approach is probably best if the County Board is willing to begin the process of recruitment soon and move quickly to appoint a permanent replacement.

- All department heads will meet on the 2nd and 4th ^{Wed} ~~Tuesdays~~ of each month.
- Miscellaneous Administrator issues/Day to day administration, including oversight of maintenance, board agenda prep, purchasing/contracts, constituent issues, etc...
 - The County Administrator's Administrative Assistant will serve as the primary point of contact for miscellaneous administrator issues, for both the board and department heads.
 - When a decision requiring county administrator input is required, The Administrative Assistant will contact the HHS Director. The HHS Director will facilitate a decision being made with the appropriate department heads and/or through the county board.
- The Economic Development Coordinator will coordinate the building project, with the facilities committee maintaining oversight.
- The HR Director will coordinate negotiations and compilation of the budget, including making changes directed by the board or as a result of changes through negotiations. The Community Corrections Director will participate on the negotiations team, and the County Auditor will participate in any budget development/modifications that need to occur.
- The HR Director will coordinate the search for a new administrator with the HHS Director and Highway Engineer on the search committee along with personnel committee. An internal search process is outlined later in this memo.

2b. Interim County Administrator

The County Board may appoint an interim County Administrator. At this point it seems prudent that if the Board chooses this approach that the interim County Administrator be an external appointment. I have found four people that may have an interest in the interim post. This option is likely better if the Board anticipates a drawn out search process.

The County Administrator has a list of individuals who are interested/may be interested in serving in as an Interim County Administrator.

2c. Hybrid Option

A hybrid between the management team concept and a full time interim county administrator would be to make the assignments to coordinate a building project, negotiations/budget team and County Administrator recruitment team and to seek out a part time interim County Administrator.

The interim approach does not need to be decided upon today, and some “feelers” have been put out to see if there are people who might be interested in serving as interim. There is some interest, but I have not been able to really scope in the assignment, or get a good feel for how great the interest is without having some Board indication that they have a strong interest.

In order to narrow down the pool of candidates and identify them for the Board, I would need some sort of authority and direction to do so. If that is given, I believe that within two weeks we could identify candidates, have them meet with the personnel committee and make a recommendation to the Board. If the Board wishes to interview candidates, that would be an option as well.



AITKIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Aitkin County Courthouse
217 Second Street N.W. Room 130
Aitkin, MN 56431
218-927-7276
Fax: 218-927-7374

AITKIN COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Aitkin County, MN (Pop. 17,000) is seeking its next County Administrator. The County Administrator is responsible for a budget of more than \$30 million and over 200 full time employees. The ideal candidates will be collaborative leaders with the ability to build positive working relationships with the County Board, Department Heads, employees and the community. The County Administrator is responsible for the administration of all County Board ordinances, regulations, resolutions and policies and for the administration and direction of all programs and functions of government under the jurisdiction of the Board of County Commissioners. The County Administrator is charged with leading the organization and building an organizational culture that supports and implements the County Mission. All non-elected department heads report to the County Administrator. The Administrator works under broad policy direction of the County Board. The Administrator has wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment and decision making over County government functions.

Candidate Profile

The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners is seeking a County Administrator with the following characteristics.

- **Collaborative Leader**

A County Administrator has a high degree of responsibility and authority. Aitkin County is seeking a leader who builds consensus and makes decisions and recommendations after considering many different points of view. Bringing our people together to obtain the best results possible is of utmost importance, and succeeding as a team is a must.

- **Relationship Builder**

Building trusting relationships is key to the success of any leader, but especially important in Aitkin County. First and foremost, the County Administrator must build trusting relationships with the County Board and Department Heads. Department Heads are seeking an Administrator who they can trust to help them work through issues, and make solid recommendations to the County Board. The County Board is looking for an Administrator that will make recommendations based on the shared knowledge of our team and others. Building relationships in the community is also important, Aitkin County serves a lot of people in a lot of different ways. The next Aitkin County Administrator should be able to build strong ties in the community and be a cheerleader for the good work that we do.

- **Service Oriented**

Aitkin County is a service organization, we provide service to the public and we strive to do it respectfully and efficiently. The Aitkin County Administrator serves as well, with an extremely diverse customer base that occasionally has competing interests. The Administrator serves the Board, Department Heads, our Staff and the Community in general. The next Administrator should approach their work from a service orientation, striving to deliver efficient services to all of their customers.

- **Strategic Thinker**

Aitkin County is seeking a leader who can help set a clear vision for the future and execute to achieve that vision. The next Aitkin County Administrator should be able to assist the Board and Departments to set clear goals, ensure resources are allocated to meet those goals, assist in planning and evaluation and be courageous enough to change course if that is what is needed.

- **Learning Focus**

Aitkin County has many experienced department heads and an experienced County Board. The next Aitkin County Administrator should recognize that experience and take the opportunity to learn from our existing team. The Administrator should be willing to understand the history, see the present and connect it all to the future.

Opportunities

- **Facilities Needs**

Aitkin County has been considering a building project to provide safety, security and better customer service to the Citizens of Aitkin County for many years. The time may be right for such a project to become reality. There has been some initial planning completed, and the Board has taken some initial steps to determine the feasibility of a project. The next Aitkin County Administrator will have the opportunity to be involved in facilities planning and assessment and potentially a construction project.

- **Strategic Planning**

Aitkin County is positioned to think long term. With the potential of a building project, changing demographics, and the resulting changes in service demand, Aitkin County needs to take a long term look at the services we provide, the way we measure success, the resources we have available and how we are going to get there. The next Aitkin County Administrator will have the opportunity to help us plan, execute and evaluate a gradual change process that will ensure our status as a high performing county long in to the future.

- **Workforce Planning**

Over the course of the next several years Aitkin County will see a number of retirements. We need to consider the impact of those retirements and how we will use them to our advantage to

position ourselves better in to the future. This includes transfer of knowledge, planning to absorb the loss of tenured staff, planning for future recruitment and ensuring that we are able to retain the best and the brightest employees. There are projects ongoing related to employee benefits, as well as consideration of how we might best be able to entice the next generation to choose Aitkin County as an employer of choice.

Education and Experience

Qualified candidates shall possess a Bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, public finance, political science or a related field. A minimum of four years of progressively responsible work experience; three of which must be served in an administrative or managerial capacity in a government service organization. Master's degree preferred. The County Board is interested in creating a dynamic and strong pool of candidates and retains the right to substitute experience for education that provides equivalent knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Exceptional oral and written communication skills are required as well as advanced skill in planning, organizing and coordinating diverse functions. Ability to reach out to and communicate with other local governments is desired.

Training and experience in budget and financial analysis is desirable. Familiarity with the distinct operations and functions of County government or the ability to learn them is important. Ability to successfully partner with independent elected department heads is essential.

Salary and Benefits

Salary range for 2016 is _____ . Placement on the scale commensurate with experience. Competitive benefits package including health insurance, life insurance, long term disability and Minnesota Public Employees Retirement Account. Relocation package negotiable.



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Department Administration
Reports to County Board
FLSA Status Exempt
Union Status Non-union Position

Final Appointing Authority

This position shall not be filled until final approval of the County Board. All offers of employment are made in writing.

Job Summary

The County Administrator serves as the chief administrative officer of the County, per Minnesota Statute 375A.06, and is responsible for the overall operation of county government under administrative direction of the County Board of Commissioners. The County Administrator, considering the department specific input of elected officials, provides leadership, direction, and support to all County departments. The County Administrator manages and oversees the administration and coordination of County services in accordance with County Board ordinances, regulations, resolutions, policies, and state laws. The County Administrator establishes goals and objectives within the policy directives set by the County Board, and assists subordinate managers in developing and implementing procedures to accomplish goals and objectives. The County Administrator is responsible for developing and managing the County budget.

Supervision Received

Employees working in this job class work under administrative direction and are free to plan, develop, and organize all phases of the work necessary for its completion within broad program guidance. Generally, they develop and utilize procedures and methods that do not conflict with major organization policies.

Supervision Exercised

All non-elected department heads report to the County Administrator. The County Administrator is responsible, through subordinate supervisors, for the performance of all non-elected County employees. Provides direct supervision of the Building Maintenance Supervisor, Veterans Services Officer, Economic Development/Forest Industry Coordinator, and clerical support. Carries out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the organization's policies and applicable laws.

Essential Functions

This position description is not intended to be all-inclusive. Employee may perform other essential and nonessential functions as assigned or apparent to meet the ongoing needs of the department and organization. Regular attendance is an essential requirement of this position.

1. Carries out day-to-day administrative functions of the County. Establishes goals and objectives for all departments to ensure compliance with County Board policy directives, and applicable rules and



Position Description

- regulations. Provides assistance and management direction to County departments and programs through program review, fiscal control, and administrative overview.
2. Prepares and recommends policy to the County Board regarding county government operations. Advises the County Board regarding short and long range goals and recommends appropriate programs to attain them. Provides direction for the overall operation of county government and coordination with elected and state appointed offices.
 3. Provides supervision and direction to subordinate staff and department heads in developing policy recommendations and programs and in clarifying and delegating County Board directives and policies.
 4. Manages central service functions, including preparation for official Board proceedings. Provides central administrative services to all County departments, including human resources, information systems, building maintenance, property management, risk management, purchasing, motor pool, and other services. Ensures effective risk management programs and practices (safety, liability, property, etc.) exist to preserve and protect County assets. Prepares and recommends policy to the County Board regarding County government operations.
 5. May participate in union contract negotiations and act as the chief negotiator. Participates in the management of said contracts. Adjusts grievances on behalf of the employer.
 6. Directs and coordinates the management of County finances, including the preparation and presentation of proposed annual budgets and a Capital Improvement Plan. Analyzes data and makes recommendations. Reviews and revises department budget proposals, consolidates department budgets, reviews and/or alters any budget County-wide; prepares the budget message, presents the preliminary and final budget proposals, and administers the approved budget. Directs the establishment and development of the County's budgetary system to be used by all departments, including County-wide accounting policies and procedures.
 7. Represents the county and communicates on behalf of the county to individuals, groups, organizations, other units of government, and media. Leads the County-wide management team and conducts management team meetings and communications. Establishes effective team relations with county administrative elected officials.
 8. Strategic planning: continually evaluates the organization, administration and services provided by county government. Advises in the formulation of legislative proposals.
 9. Provides supervision and leadership to department heads, the Administration department staff and, indirectly, all County employees. Has the authority to discipline, hire, and fire appointed department heads upon County Board authorization. Conducts ongoing feedback, coaching, mentoring, and performance reviews, and evaluates performance of department heads and Administration Department staff.
 10. Represents the County concerning intergovernmental relationships and initiatives at local, State, regional and federal levels. Creates and implements a program of positive and cooperative intergovernmental relations with local cities and townships and with neighboring counties.
 11. Spearheads and coordinates economic development programs and initiatives in close cooperation with the business community and county, cities, and townships.
 12. Attends professional meetings and keeps informed of new developments in government operation and management.
 13. Responsible for management and long range planning for county buildings and infrastructure.



Position Description

14. Responsible for communications that maintain relationships key to the function of the County; plans and carries out communications at a level that can impact the morale and performance of staff, and the overall perception by the general public. Directs and manages public relations and acts as liaison between the County Board County employees and the public. Fields and responds to complaints, suggestions, and comments from the public on County services.
 15. Adheres to collective bargaining agreements, county policies and procedures, and applicable laws, including timely/accurate reporting and consistent/uniform administration of EEO, FLSA, FMLA, ADA, Workers' Compensation and Return to Work programs, in close collaboration with the Human Resources Department. Completes departmental new hire orientations promptly and staff performance appraisals in accordance with county policy.
 16. Conducts business in accordance with the Open Meeting law.
 17. Serves as the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act Responsible Authority. Appropriately responds to requests for government data. Maintains department data in accordance with records retention schedules.
 18. Coordinates annual emergency practice drills in department and serves as a member of the county's crisis management team.
 19. Attend seminars and workshops as needed.
- Performs other related duties as assigned or apparent.

Minimum Qualifications

Bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, Public Finance, Political Science or a related field, and minimum of four years progressively responsible work experience, three of which must be served in an administrative or managerial capacity in a multi-function service organization. Master's degree preferred.

Exceptional oral and written communication skills are required as well as advanced skill in planning, organizing and coordinating diverse functions. Training or experience in budget and financial analysis is highly desirable.

Valid Minnesota driver's license required. U.S. Citizenship required. Employment reference checks and a criminal background check will be performed as part of the pre-employment process.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Required

Knowledge of:

1. County and departmental policies, procedures, and practices.
2. Federal, State, and local laws, rules, and regulations relevant to the work performed in this position, including data practices, the open meeting law, accounting, purchasing, information technology, OSHA, and employee and labor relations.
3. Financial management with experience in the preparation and presentation of budgets and fund accrual accounting.
4. Roberts Rules of Order.
5. Principles, practices and legal aspects of public administration as they relate to local government.



Position Description

6. Organizational theory and effective management practices.
7. Public budgeting preparation, presentation and analysis.
8. Governmental accounting and reporting and the relationships of local, state and federal funding.
9. Minnesota property tax law, impact of levies to property and their calculation.
10. Governmental structure, laws, organization and interdependency of levels of government.

Skill in:

1. Communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with staff, board members, and the general public sufficient to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.
2. Typing skill sufficient to complete 30 net words per minute without errors.
3. Preparing and making presentations to groups.
4. Reading, writing, and speaking English proficiently. Includes writing departmental policies and procedures and precise memos to Boards, Committees, and other organizations.
5. Effectively organizing, prioritizing, and delegating workload.

Ability to:

1. Present a positive attitude in the workplace, promote a spirit of teamwork and cooperation, and be able to treat co-workers, supervisors, and subordinates with respect, honesty, and consideration.
2. Maintain confidentiality.
3. Make independent decisions.
4. Multi-task and work under pressure in a sometimes demanding environment.
5. Travel and work in excess of standard hours when necessary.
6. Direct a large staff in a broad range of service areas.
7. Plan, direct, supervise and delegate work, as well as work with others in a consulting capacity.
8. Communicate effectively, demonstrating exceptional oral, written and presentation skills.
Communicate effectively with County Commissioners, coworkers, government organizations, civic groups, the media and citizens.
9. Analyze and resolve management problems.
10. Understand the political issues of county government. Serve as a liaison between the Board and other elected officials.
11. Accurately calculate wage and fringe benefit costs, budget and levy figures, and forecast county finances.
12. Develop and implement short and long range administrative goals and objectives.
13. Prepare and present accurate statistical narrative reports.
14. Evaluate various types of data and make recommendations on the findings.
15. Set direction and interpret elected official needs.
16. Direct, supervise and delegate work effectively.
17. Understand human development and thought processes.
18. Maintain a safe working environment.



Position Description

Language Skills

Very High Skills – Ability to read, analyze, and interpret common scientific and technical journals, financial reports, and legal documents. Ability to respond to common inquiries or complaints from customers, regulatory agencies, or members of the business community. Ability to write speeches and articles for publication that conform to prescribed style and format. Ability to effectively present information to top management, public groups, and/or governing boards.

Mathematical Skills

Ability to add, subtract, multiply, and divide in all units of measure, using whole numbers, common fractions, and decimals. Ability to compute rate, ratio, and percent and to draw and interpret bar graphs. Ability to calculate figures and amounts such as discounts, interest, area, and volume. Ability to apply concepts of basic algebra and geometry. Ability to work with mathematical concepts such as probability and statistical inference. Ability to apply concepts such as fractions, percentages, ratios, and proportions to practical situations.

Reasoning Skills

Very High Skills - Ability to define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions. Ability to interpret an extensive variety of technical instructions in mathematical or diagram form and deal with several abstract and concrete variables.

Computer Skills

To perform this job successfully, an individual should be proficient at using the following software.

County Payroll Software E-time, Webfusion, Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, Publisher, Access, PowerPoint, Inventory Management Software, Data Backup and Recovery Software, Recordkeeping Software, and other job-related software programs.

Ability to Travel

Travel required for trainings and meetings in and out of Aitkin County.

Competencies

To perform the job successfully, an individual should consistently demonstrate the following competencies (descriptions available upon request):

Ethics, attendance/punctuality, safety and security, dependability, analytical, design, problem solving, project management, technical skills, customer service, interpersonal skills, oral communication, written communication, teamwork, change management, delegation, leadership, managing people, quality management, business acumen, cost consciousness, diversity, organizational support, judgment, motivation, planning/organizing, professionalism, quality, quantity, adaptability, initiative, strategic thinking, visionary leadership, innovation, flexibility, and crisis management.

Work Environment

The noise level in the work environment is usually quiet to moderate.



Position Description

Equipment and Tools

Computer, copier, fax, telephone, cell phone, remote access equipment, printer, calculator, shredder, emergency weather-alert system, county-owned vehicles, and personal vehicle (requires proof of insurance on file).

Physical Activities/Requirements

Climbing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, reaching, standing, walking, pushing, pulling, lifting, carrying, use of fingers, grasping, talking, hearing, seeing, and repetitive motions. Must have the ability to lift and/or carry up to 20 pounds.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee performs light work, exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 10 pounds of force frequently, and/or a negligible amount of force constantly to move objects. If the use of arm and/or leg controls requires exertion of forces greater than that for Sedentary Work and the worker sits most of the time, the job is rated for Light Work.

Working safely is a condition of employment. Aitkin County is a drug-free workplace.

Disclaimer

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of the work being performed by employees assigned to this job classification. This is not an exhaustive list of all duties and responsibilities. Aitkin County reserves the right to amend and change responsibilities to meet organizational needs as necessary. This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee.

Reasonable Accommodation Notice

The County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the County will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities and encourages both prospective and current employees to discuss potential accommodations with the employer.

05/13/2014

"Providing Quality Services and Efficient Resource Management for the Citizens and Guests of Aitkin County."