



Welcome to the City of Fort Smith

City Manager/Administrator Position Open - Apply by January 8, 2016

Note: The actual position title is City Administrator but it functions as a City Manager reporting directly to a seven member Board of Directors with the same roles and responsibilities as a traditional City Council.



Population: 87,351 (2014 Estimate)

Situated along the Arkansas-Oklahoma border and nestled in the Arkansas River Valley, Fort Smith offers exquisite scenery while being the second largest city in Arkansas. Its western boundary is the River and beyond that lies the State of Oklahoma. Fort Smith's slogan "Where the new south meets the old west" embodies its rich history as a frontier border town.

While characterized by a heritage of southern charm and warmth, Fort Smith boldly embraces the future. It is a bustling regional hub for business, manufacturing and commerce. It is a city with enormous potential and a tremendous future. Baldor Electric, Dixie Cup, Gerber Baby Food, International Paper, Mars PetCare, Mercy Hospital-Fort Smith, OK Foods, Planters Peanuts and Sparks Health System are among the many companies located here. ArcBest is building a new corporate headquarters and when complete it will bring 975 well-paying new jobs to the City. The Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority offers over 7,000



acres of land (much of which is in the City) for commercial, residential and recreational use.

Fort Smith is also a center for transportation, education and healthcare. Its roads and city streets are in excellent condition and funded through a citizen approved one cent sales tax. I-40 passes through the City and I-49 is nearby. Rail is adjacent to the downtown and manufacturing areas. Barges travel the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System that runs from Tulsa to the Mississippi River. Fort Smith Regional Airport, with the longest commercial runway in the state, provides regular commercial passenger and freight transportation.

The high performing Fort Smith School District has two high schools, four junior high schools, nineteen elementary schools and one alternate school. Eleven excellent parochial and private schools also serve students from K-12. The City is home to three universities: Webster, John Brown and the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith (UAFS). Founded in 1928 and long considered one of the best community colleges in the country, the UAFS became part of the University of Arkansas system in 2002. It is now a four year institution serving over 7,000 students. It derives some of its revenues from a ¼ cent sales tax applied to purchases in Fort Smith.

Healthcare in Fort Smith is excellent with two very strong hospitals – Mercy Hospital-Fort Smith and Sparks Regional Medical Center. These are now branching out into neighborhood clinics. A new player in the area is the Arkansas Colleges of Health Education (ACHE) which is building the Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine. Construction of this 102,000 square foot facility will be completed in May 2016. By 2020 it will matriculate 600 students. While it is expected that the ACHE will expand into other aspects of healthcare in the future, in the near term it will bring 92 new full-time equivalent jobs with an average total compensation of \$116,000 to the area.

The Fort Smith Symphony, the oldest orchestra in the state, headlines a list of cultural and recreation venues in the City. The City's Riverfront Amphitheater is a treasure and, with the proposed U.S. Marshals Museum, will form the catalyst for a new waterfront along the Arkansas River. The Fort Smith Convention Center is centrally located in the downtown



and regularly hosts major concerts and theater productions. The fairgrounds are also home to many events, the most notable being the Arkansas Oklahoma State Fair and Old Fort Days Rodeo. The private sector recently sponsored “The Unexpected Project: Festival of Murals.” International artists spent a week painting 11 murals on the sides of existing downtown buildings. Other elements of the event included an all-age student contest for sidewalk chalk art, food and crafts. By the end of the week, thousands had been drawn to downtown Fort Smith and it was a huge success.

Not far away lie Tulsa, OK, (two hours northwest) and Hot Springs, AR, (two hours and 40 minutes southeast), Fayetteville and the University of Arkansas (one hour north), Branson, MO (three hours northeast) and Kansas City, MO (five hours due north).

The cost of living here is very reasonable. Home prices average around \$145,000 but you can spend into the millions. The City has an outstanding park system with ample playing fields, open spaces, pools, playgrounds and a beautiful aquatic center. These attract many to recreational programs and activities and hosts a variety of annual events. For the outdoorsman, the area offers camping, hiking, hunting (ducks, deer, bear, ferial pigs, quail and dove) and fishing (bass, catfish, crappie and walleye among others).

Most importantly the people in Fort Smith are some of the friendliest people you will ever meet. They care about their community and about others. When Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast in 2005, the City immediately took in 250 evacuees. Everyone pitched in and helped those in need. Volunteers donate over 500,000 hours annually and the community supports over 200 churches including some religions you might not expect such as Buddhists and Muslims.

All in all, the City has a great deal to offer to any aspiring municipal professional. It is also a great place if you have a spouse and he/she is planning to work. The opportunities for employment are plentiful. We invite you to apply!

History

Fort Smith was founded in 1817 as a military post to maintain peace between the Osage and Cherokee Indians. A small civilian settlement soon formed around the fort. As the frontier moved west, Fort Smith became an important supply point for the U.S. Army. The City has already initiated plans for 2017 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the first Fort Smith.

As the military’s presence changed over time so did the fortunes of this frontier town. During the Civil War, Fort Smith was held first by Confederates and beginning in 1863 by Union troops.

After the Civil War the town became a haven for runaway slaves, orphans, Southern Unionists and others the war displaced. In

1871 Federal troops abandoned the post but the town continued to thrive as a place to stage and outfit military companies and pioneers headed west. Its reputation as a bustling community full of brothels, saloons and outlaws on the border of Indian Territory was widespread.

The trouble the outlaws caused overwhelmed area law enforcement. In 1875, Isaac Parker was appointed U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Arkansas (which also had jurisdiction over the Indian Territory or what is now Oklahoma). Over the next 21 years, he would try 13,490 cases, of which 9,454 people pled guilty or were convicted. He became known as a hanging judge for sentencing 160 people to death by hanging.

In 1941 the military returned in the form of Fort Chaffee which was created as a WWII training base for armored divisions of the U.S. Army. After the war and during the 1950s and 1960s Fort Smith struggled for an identity separate from the military presence that had changed frequently.

In the 1960s and 1970s its manufacturing base deepened. Its role as an economic hub for the region increased with the addition and expansion of health and educational facilities. In 1996, a tornado devastated much of Fort Smith’s historic downtown. Today the City is prosperous and growing.

Table I: Historic Population Growth

Census	Population
1860	1,532
1880	3,099
1900	11,587
1920	28,870
1940	36,584
1960	52,991
1980	71,626
2000	80,268
2010	86,268

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Demographics

Table 2

2015 Estimated Population: 87,351			
Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
Caucasian	69%	0 to 20	29%
Asian	5%	20 to 40	28%
African American	9%	40 to 60	26%
Hispanics	17%	60 to 80	14%
Other Races	5%	Over 80	4%

Hispanics (of all races) compose 17% of the population, although the Census Bureau believes many of those claiming some other race are Hispanics.

Educational Achievement (over age 25)		Median Age	
Highschool or Higher	78%	Fort Smith	35.1
Bachelors Degree or Higher	20%	U.S.	37.2

Climate

Fort Smith's climate is characterized by relatively high summer temperatures and cool winters. Frosts are not uncommon and Fort Smith averages 4.9 inches of snow annually. Summers are usually somewhat wetter than winters, with much of the rainfall coming from thunderstorm activity. Fort Smith is located on the edge of "Tornado Alley" and while tornados rarely strike the City, the possibility cannot be ignored. See Table 3.

Geography

Fort Smith occupies a total of 64.6 square miles of which 61.7 square miles is land and 3.9 square miles is water. It is bounded by the Arkansas River on the north, east and west. It is sandwiched between the Ouachita National Forest

Table 3: Fort Smith Climate Data

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average High °F	50	55	65	74	81	88	93	93	85	75	63	52
Average Low °F	29	33	41	50	59	68	72	71	62	51	40	31
Precipitation Inches	2.8	2.8	3.9	4.3	5.5	4.3	3.3	2.6	4.1	4.3	4.4	3.3

Source: Weatherbase

that lies to the south and the Ozark National Forest to the north. The heart of the City is located on the Arkansas River flats with high hills and gorgeous views of the area are located on the outskirts. The City's mean elevation is 463 feet above sea level.

Commerce

Fort Smith is a regional center with major manufacturing plants and several corporate headquarters calling it home. The City has seen significant industrial growth in recent years. Commercial and office developments have followed. All in all, Fort Smith has a bright future as a regional economic hub and business center. See Table 4 on page 5.

The Government

Fort Smith operates in the Council/Manager form of government. The City is governed by a Board of Directors and a Mayor. Four of the Directors are elected from wards and three Directors elected at large. Terms of office are four years and elections are staggered with all the Ward Directors elected at the same time as the U.S. Presidential elections. The Mayor and at-large Directors are elected two years later. The next election is in November 2016.

The Mayor presides over the meetings but does not vote; however, he maintains veto authority. The Mayor and Board Members all have the best interests of the City at heart and get along well with each other. They also have a great deal of respect for the staff over all. The Board does face some significant challenges (see next section). Those can result in some significant disagreements over policy and city operations.

The Board appoints a City Administrator as the city's CEO to oversee daily operations. In most cities the position would be labeled a City Manager as the duties in this case are identical. The Board also appoints members to the independent governing boards of the Parking Authority, Airport Commission, Advertising and Promotion Commission and Public Library. In recent years, the composition of the Board has undergone some significant changes leading to a Board that is more active and one that trusts but verifies.

Table 4: Fort Smith's Major Employers, 2014

Employer	Field	Employees
Sparks Health System	Healthcare	2,336
Mercy Fort Smith	Healthcare	2,200
O.K. Industries	Food Processing	2,033
Baldor Electric	Manufacturing	2,000
Fort Smith Public Schools	Education	1,918
ArcBest Corporation	Transportation	1,388
University of Arkansas - Fort Smith	Education	1,000
Bost Human Development Services	Education	969
Golden Living	Corporate Office	926
City of Fort Smith	Government	916

Source: Fort Smith Regional Chamber of Commerce

The City provides a full range of services including: development services, EMS, fire, police, library, parks, public works, transportation, and water and sewer. It also oversees a convention center. The City employs 937 FTE. The total City budget for FY 2015 is \$248.4 million of which \$107.7 million comprises operating expenses. Capital improvements add another \$89.1 million. The other two major components are debt service (\$28.6 million) and health insurance/worker compensation claims (\$10.1 million). The City listed its "Fund Balance/Working Capital" at \$63.6 million at the end of FY 2015. A largest single source of revenue is sales tax – a little over \$56 million. Water, sewer and sanitation fees are the next largest source at \$50 million. Approximately 6% of revenue comes from ad valorem taxes.

The Challenges and Opportunities

Fort Smith's challenges are not unique but nonetheless daunting. The most significant is the City is under an EPA/DOJ consent decree to eliminate sewer overflows and discharges into the Arkansas River during heavy rains. Over \$200 million has already been spent but it is estimated that another \$480 million will need to be spent over the next 12 years. Aside from the massive nature of the undertaking, funding must be found. Rates have already been raised but will likely need to be increased even further.

Another challenge is budgeting and financial management. While the City has historically balanced its budget, for quite a few years it has done so by drawing down reserves.

The current Board feels the need to manage resources carefully and present truly balanced budgets. The effort will include, among other things, a review of city operations (to make them more efficient and effective), better planning, improved policies and procedures, the development of a fixed asset program, improving capital improvement programming and the introduction of an enterprise system.

Economic development is an area where the Board wants to focus. The City has been very successful overall in attracting new businesses and wants to continue doing so. It also wants to find ways to improve the downtown. The area is beginning to show more life as a few new businesses and restaurants have opened recently but much more can be done.

Other challenges include correcting the underfunding of the police and fire pensions, finding better ways to communicate with the public, insuring the composition of the city government's work force reflects that of the community, and building consensus among the elected officials, city staff and the public.

The Ideal Candidate

The Board is seeking an outstanding leader with a demonstrated track record of achievement. The individual will be a consensus and team builder who knows how to balance competing points of view and find common ground. He/she will be a motivator and not someone who spends most of his/her time behind a desk. Rather the individual will be a leader who is in the field with the staff and in the community with the public.

The Board wants someone to work with it as a partner and a trusted advisor. He/she will be open and honest with the Board, always communicating with them. The individual will be confident and strong in presenting ideas. The Board is definitely not looking for a "yes" person but the Administrator will also recognize the Board has the final say. The individual will insure all the Board Members have the same information at the same time and that there will be no surprises.

The Administrator will have excellent communications skills and know how to relate to a wide variety of groups. In other words, he/she will know how to bridge divides. It will be important to develop strategies that communicate

clearly to the residents how policies and projects will benefit the community as a whole and them in particular. The individual will be proactive with the press in telling the City's story while being completely transparent and honest.

The Board wants Fort Smith to become a world class city and to chart a course for the next 20 years. The next administrator will recognize that short term thinking is the enemy of long term success. As such, planning will be extremely important to the next administrator. It will start with a strategic plan and be followed by long range plans for the City's development, infrastructure and finances. Operational and annual plans will then be instituted and managed.

Customer service will not be just a catchy phrase with the Administrator but rather, along with integrity and a strong moral compass, a core principle and a way of life. She/he will be someone who leads by example and encourages the staff to find ways to get to yes.

The Administrator will be someone who will make the tough decisions while always questioning. The individual will be respectful of past and current processes, but he/she will always ask if there is a better way to conduct business and to solve problems. When a staff member responds with, "We have always done it this way," it will not be deemed a satisfactory answer. It may be the best way but that must be demonstrated on the merits, not on past practice. Analytical skills, as well as a knowledge of the application of information technology to optimize process and inform the public, will be very important. The elected officials want the next Administrator to take a hard look at current policies, procedures and practices.

Internally, the Administrator will delegate and encourage an environment that inspires creativity. The individual will recognize talent, mentor and coach that talent and be confident enough to then step back and let the staff member do their job. He/she will not be a micromanager. Rather the ideal candidate will give assignments, set broad performance parameters, and expect results. While employees will be encouraged to be innovative, they will also be held accountable.

In terms of specific skills, the individual will have demonstrated success in management,



budgeting and finance, economic development and redevelopment and in the advancement of strategic visioning. Knowledge of and experience in working with community groups and agencies and in intergovernmental relations will be important to the individual's success.

Personally, the individual will be intelligent, upbeat, friendly, outgoing, organized, and relentlessly positive – someone with a "can do" attitude and who is visionary yet practical. She/he will also be consistent, cheerfully persistent, high energy, and definitely not a bureaucrat.

The ideal candidate will have at least a Bachelor's degree, and preferably a Master's, in business administration, public administration, public policy or related field and seven to ten years of increasingly responsible experience as a senior level government or private sector executive.

The Board plans to make a commitment to the candidate and hopes the selected individual will make a long term commitment to the City. This position should not be viewed as a stepping stone but as a jewel in its own right.

Compensation

The salary range is \$130,000 to \$170,000.

The Former City Administrator

The former City Administrator retired after three years of serving in the position and over sixteen total years of service to Fort Smith. An internal candidate is a possibility. The Board is, however, committed to a fair and open process. It will select the individual best suited to the job.

Residency

The City Administrator is required to reside within the City limits.

How to Apply

E-mail your resume to Recruit49@cb-asso.com by January 8, 2016. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

Confidentiality

Candidate names will not be released without the candidate's permission. Once finalists are selected, it is anticipated that the names will be released and a public process utilized.

The Process

Applications will be screened beginning January 9th. Finalists will be selected on February 18th and interviews held in late February / early March. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

Other Important Information

The City of Fort Smith is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages women, minorities and veterans to apply.

Additional Information

For additional information about Fort Smith visit: www.fortsmithar.gov.

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING