

PUBLIC UTILITIES DIRECTOR

CITY OF BRAINERD, MINNESOTA



WHY NOT WORK WHERE YOU PLAY?

This is a unique opportunity to lead the largest department for the City of Brainerd in the heart of Minnesota's north-central tourist vacationland. The new Director will oversee an exceptional utility operation for a progressive and entrepreneurial community. Reporting to the City Administrator with policy guidance and oversight from the Public Utilities Commission, the Director will be on the leading edge of major infrastructure improvement projects and renewable energy initiatives.

This municipal utility system has stable finances and is well-maintained and operated by experienced and knowledgeable staff. This position also provides many innovative and exciting initiatives on the horizon—all in a family-friendly community with an exceptional quality of life.



Welcome to BRAINERD

Located roughly 60 miles north of St. Cloud and 120 miles north of the Twin Cities, Brainerd is a vibrant community nestled in the heart of Minnesota's lake country. With 14,679 residents, Brainerd is the largest city in Crow Wing County and serves as the county seat and regional hub.

Situated in the center of Minnesota's year-round recreational wonderland, residents and visitors of the Brainerd lakes area enjoy boundless boating, fishing, golfing, hiking, biking, skiing, camping, snowmobiling, hunting, and even scuba diving. In the summer, seasonal residents and tourism nearly doubles the population in the surrounding area. In the winter, the Brainerd Lakes Area hosts the Brainerd Jaycees Ice Fishing Extravaganza, the largest ice fishing contest in the world.

Brainerd's thriving downtown features charming historic buildings and numerous specialty shops and eateries. The town gathers to celebrate its community spirit at annual events like the 4th of July Celebration, Great Pumpkin Festival, Easter Egg Hunt, and the annual Skating Party at Gregory Park.

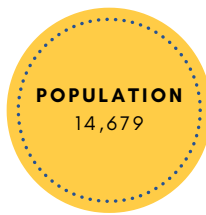
The city supports a growing and active commercial base with major employers like Crow Wing County, Brainerd School District, BNSF Railroad, Essentia Health, and Ascensus Financial Services. Brainerd is also home to Central Lakes College, a comprehensive community and technical college serving approximately 5,500 students and providing a wide range of continuing education, performing arts, and athletic events for the community.

The Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport (BRD) serves the region with daily service to Minneapolis-St. Paul provided by Delta Air Lines. Racing fans can enjoy auto racing at the North Central Speedway or the Brainerd International Raceway, the largest speedway in the northern Midwest. At Safari North Wildlife Park, visitors can feed the giraffes, ride camels, and view more than 150 species of animals from around the world.

THE CITY OF BRAINERD

Incorporated in 1881, the City of Brainerd is governed by a Mayor and a seven-member City Council elected to four-year terms. One Council member is elected from each of four wards, and the mayor and three Council members are elected at-large. The City has an operating budget of \$13.1 million. In addition, the Public Utilities Department's operating budget is \$34.1 million. Staffing includes a team of 125 FTEs and 40 paid on-call positions for the Fire Department.

Departments include Finance, Public Works, Human Resources, IT/GIS, Community Development, Fire, Police, and Public Utilities. Advisory boards and commissions include Public Utilities, Planning, Airport, Parks, Transit, Economic Development Authority, and Housing & Redevelopment.



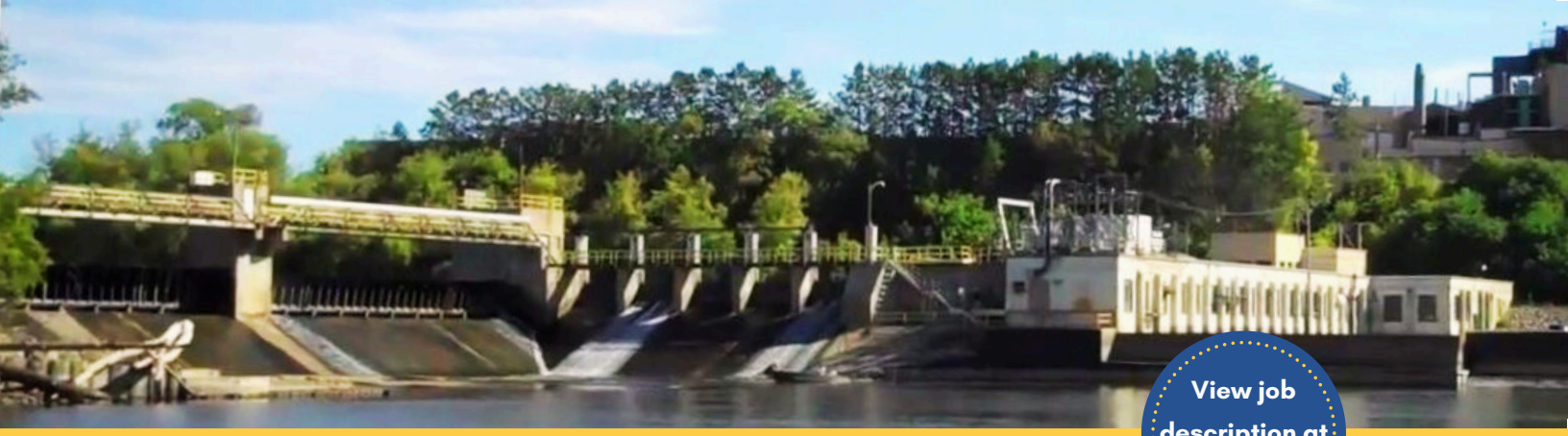
BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES

BPU is a municipal utility that has been providing electric, water, and wastewater services to the City of Brainerd, portions of the City of Baxter, and surrounding townships since 1892. BPU takes pride in being a community-owned utility striving to provide the best possible service to neighbors and owners. BPU has been designated as a gold-level "Reliable Public Power Provider" (RP3) by the American Public Power Association.

BPU has a 2024 operating budget of \$34.1 million, a team of 50 FTEs, and include the Electric Distribution and Hydro Generation, Water, and Wastewater divisions. BPU's hydro dam on the Mississippi River has the capacity to generate 3.2 megawatts of electrical power. In addition, BPU's solar projects generate approximately 7 megawatts of electrical power. Together, this renewable energy accounts for approximately 16 percent of the total usage of Brainerd's load. The Brainerd Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) is a Class A facility designed to treat an average wet weather flow of 6.0 MGD. Brainerd's water filtration plant treats approximately 1.35 million gallons per day.

The utility system also includes:

- Peak demand of 41 megawatts
- 3 water towers and 6 wells
- 8,267 electric, 4,918 water, and 4,877 sewer customers
- Annual appropriation to the City's general fund; \$816,000 in 2024



THE PUBLIC UTILITIES DIRECTOR

The Public Utilities Director provides leadership and direction relating to the Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) Department municipal utilities systems including electric distribution and hydro generation, water treatment and distribution, and wastewater treatment facilities. Work is performed under the supervision of the City Administrator with oversight and guidance from the City of Brainerd Public Utilities Commission. The Director exercises general and administrative supervision over all BPU employees either directly or through supervisory staff. This position requires a high degree of communication skills to establish and maintain a positive and productive work environment.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- Exceptional interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills with the ability to positively interact with diverse personalities. Has a commitment to 'no surprises' and maintains constant communication with direct reports to the City Administrator and Public Utilities Commission.
- Provides visionary leadership in teamwork fashion to develop, articulate, and implement transformational changes of programs and operations that improve service delivery.
- Skilled at supervising and delegating tasks while ensuring quality work performance and accountability. Ability to effectively complete tasks, programs, and projects.
- Strong collaborative skills to improve and sustain organizational change and continuous improvement of relationships, services, and programs.
- Has strong innovation skills involving strategic problem-solving and decision-making; ability to collaboratively resolve potentially contentious issues.
- Experience with managing/overseeing electrical systems involving generation, transmission, and distribution.
- Experience with water and wastewater collection, distribution, and treatment systems.
- Knowledge of renewable energy programs and systems.
- Strong understanding of applicable state and federal codes, regulations, and permitting requirements pertaining to utility systems.
- Ability to work with technical consultants and engineers pertaining to utility systems.
- Knowledge of fund accounting of public enterprise municipal finances as well as rate studies and rate structures for utility systems.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Organizational Change

To improve efficiencies, several changes have been instituted regarding the intergovernmental relationship between the City Council and its Public Utility Commission. Due to recent Charter changes, the Director's reporting relationship has been expanded from the Commission to include the City Administrator. Facilitating this organizational change has resulted in several expected challenges and the new Director will need to be an effective catalyst for further facilitating these changes in a positive manner with the City Administrator, the City Council, and the Commission.

Infrastructure Investment

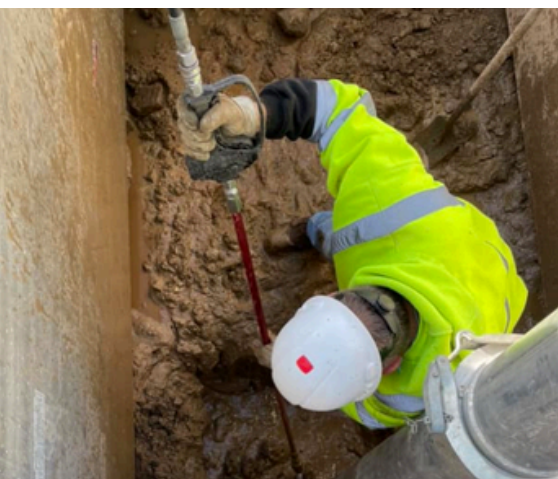
The Department has done an excellent job of maintaining the utility infrastructure systems. However, ambitious capital improvement investment is needed to meet growth demand, replace aging and outdated equipment and physical plant, and maintain compliance with changing regulations. Some situations of deferred maintenance have occurred which need to be rectified. As a result, the City Utility Department will need to aggressively plan, finance, and develop improvements and replacements of various components of water wells and storage, treatment plants, hydro power generation, transmission, and distribution systems. Many of these upgrades address compliance issues of lead and copper removal from pipes, chlorination functions, fluoride injection, biosolid application, and management of PFAS "forever chemicals". Future plans include replacing the turbines at the hydro dam.

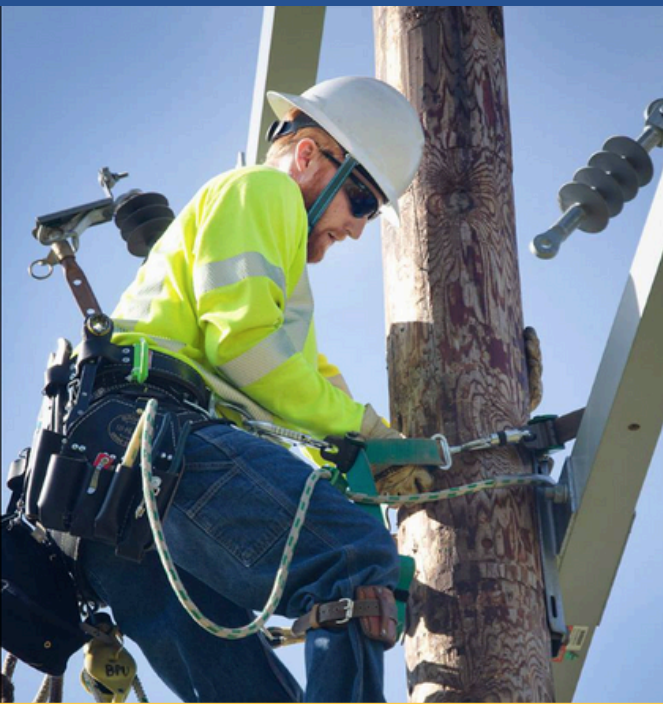
Renewable Energy

The City has been on the forefront of renewable energy issues to comply with state and federal goals and mandates, specifically regarding carbon levels. Phasing in green energy creates new opportunities to reduce coal reliance but comes with potentially high costs that will financially challenge the Utility and ratepayers. The Utility Department operates two solar energy farms that augment the purchased power and hydro generation. These efforts will intensify in the future.

Highway 210 Improvement Project

During the next two years, the State will be re-constructing Highway 210, a major thoroughfare through a fully developed commercial district in the heart of the community. The Utility Department will be one of several infrastructure partners including the State of Minnesota, Public Works Department, along with private contractors and utility companies to complete this ambitious project.





EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

- Bachelor's degree in engineering, public administration, business administration, or an equivalent field.
- Five years of senior level management municipal and/or utility related experience of which two years must be as a department manager or supervisor; or an equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered.
- Knowledge of electrical, water, and wastewater systems.
- Utility supervisory experience and knowledge of sustainable and renewable energy is preferred.

RESOURCES

[2024 Annual City Budget](#)

[Public Utilities Departmental Org Chart](#)

[BPU 2024 Capital and Operating Budget](#)

[City Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Explore Brainerd Lakes](#)

[Visit Brainerd](#)

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Hiring Range: \$127,171 to \$141,690 depending upon experience and qualifications. Overall Salary Range: \$127,171 to \$151,382 Performance-based salary opportunity to up \$169,541. City also offers a comprehensive and competitive [benefits](#) package.



TO APPLY

Apply Online: gmphr.com

First Review: **June 2, 2024**

More Info: Jeff Weldon, GMP Consultants
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