

**Watch Hill Fire District  
222 Watch Hill Road  
Westerly, RI 02891**

**Job Posting: Fire Chief**

Posted: Monday, March 22, 2022

**UPDATED: Friday, March 25, 2022**

This is a full-time paid position with competitive compensation, which is negotiable depending on qualifications. Please submit your resume, references and certificates or other evidence of training and experience by April 11, 2022. Please email these documents to the Chief Selection Committee at [WatchhillFD@gmail.com](mailto:WatchhillFD@gmail.com).

**BACKGROUND**

The Watch Hill Fire District seeks to hire a passionate and committed Fire Chief to provide vision and leadership to our small village's combination career/volunteer fire department and district. The successful candidate will have a track record of progressive and extensive fire suppression and prevention experience as well as proven strong managerial skills. We seek a forward-thinking, logical and practical Chief who can successfully balance the demands of managing a combination fire department with the need to collaborate and communicate with the Watch Hill District Council and Board of Engineers, to achieve the goal of serving and protecting our citizens, businesses and visitors.

Watch Hill is a one square mile coastal village in the town of Westerly, RI, surrounded on three sides by water--the Atlantic Ocean on one side, and Little Narragansett Bay and the Pawcatuck River on the other. While the number of year-round residents is relatively small, the population increases significantly during the summer months. The community of Watch Hill is made up of a variety of seasonal and year-round homes, seasonal businesses, miles of beach, the oldest continuously operated merry-go-round in the country, and a 70 room five-star year-round resort. Watch Hill is a close-knit and treasured community.

Reporting to the District Council and working with the Board of Engineers, the Fire Chief will oversee all aspects of Fire Suppression and Prevention and provide for safe and efficient delivery of emergency and non-emergency services in the community. The Chief is the most senior officer within the department and assumes command at emergency scenes unless authority is delegated to a subordinate officer. He or she will supervise all career and volunteer firefighters, and all full or part time staff, either directly or through subordinate officers. The Chief acts as superintendent of buildings, grounds, and District-owned assets. The department currently consists of two full time employees (a firefighter-EMT and a fire marshal-firefighter-EMT) and 25 volunteers, and responds to approximately 200 calls per year, the majority of which are during the summer season.

## **ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Manages the administration and operations of the Fire Department, including fire suppression, emergency assistance, hazardous materials, technical rescue, marine rescue, fire prevention education and code enforcement services.
- Establishes appropriate safety measures for and provides adequate coordination of all fire rescue personnel working at any emergency scene and is responsible for utilizing an adequate incident command system for all incidents.
- Develops department policies, regulations, goals, priorities and operating procedures. Prepares and periodically updates the District's Emergency Operations Plan.
- Spearheads recruitment and retention efforts, training, professional development and succession planning for firefighters and staff to build skills, achieve performance excellence and develop promotional opportunities and varied job assignments.
- Works with the Board of Engineers and District Council to develop operating and capital budgets and strategic plans. Administers budgets, plans, and reports.
- Serves as the Fire Department's representative on the Watch Hill Fire District Council and as the District Representative on various town and state committees. Provides expertise on safety impact of changes to traffic, zoning and other community rules and regulations.
- Oversees all repairs and maintenance of fire department buildings and grounds, and other District-owned assets.
- Promotes positive public relations by participating in a variety of civic, professional, service, and community group meetings and events.
- Works a full week and works flexible hours as needed to accomplish objectives. Must be available for emergency calls 24/7, with the ability to work extended hours in high-stress emergency situations, including evenings, weekends and holidays.
- Resides within a reasonable distance from the fire station.

## **THE IDEAL CANDIDATE IS SKILLED AT:**

- working under intense and stressful situations and conditions and making rapid decisions in a short timeframe on an unpredictable schedule
- engaging collaboratively and diplomatically with a variety of stakeholders, establishing key partnerships with District, Town and State officials, neighboring mutual aid communities, and local residents and businesses
- managing priorities, delegating authority, and communicating in an effective and transparent manner
- recruiting, developing and retaining both volunteer and career firefighters

## **TYPICAL JOB QUALIFICATIONS/CERTIFICATIONS**

Any combination of education, training and experience that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be to have:

- Bachelor's degree, from an accredited college or university. Courses in fire science, business administration, public administration or related field are desirable
- Ten years prior work experience as a firefighter and five years of leadership, management, and supervisory duties as a Lieutenant or higher, ideally in a combination volunteer and career department
- Considerable knowledge of applicable laws, ordinances, standard operating guidelines, and regulations
- Proven expertise and skill in the operation of department tools and equipment
- Completed professional certifications such as:
  - Firefighter I and II
  - Fire Officer I and II
  - Fire Instructor I and II
  - RI EMT or EMR license
  - RI Assistant State Fire Marshal

## **HIRING PREREQUISITES**

- Valid driver's license with clean driving record
- Clear background check
- RI Boating Safety Card (obtain within 3 months of hire)
- Deemed fit for duty by medical physician
- Ability to reside within a reasonable distance from the fire station
- Verified references

## **PHYSICAL & MENTAL REQUIREMENTS**

The physical and mental demands described here are representative of those that must be met by a Fire Chief for the District to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable qualified individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the job.

### **PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:**

While performing the duties of this job, the Chief is frequently required to work at a computer or stand for prolonged periods of time. Operates computer (hardware and software), telephone, portable radios, and other standard office equipment. Sufficient speech and hearing are needed to clearly convey and receive information over the phone, portable radio, and in person. Must have sufficient vision to perform the essential functions of the job in both daytime and nighttime

conditions. While performing the duties of this job, the Chief will frequently stand, sit, talk, walk, operate a motor vehicle, inspect documents, reach with hands and arms, as well as use hands to finger, handle or feel objects routinely used to perform job duties. The Chief must regularly crouch, bend, stoop, step up, and lift and/or move objects weighing up to 30 pounds independently, such as office supplies and other equipment routinely used in the department. Requires the ability to recognize and identify similarities or differences between characteristics of colors, shapes, and sounds associated with job-related objects, materials, and tasks. When engaged in emergency response duties or related training exercises, the Chief must be able to lift and move up to 100 pounds independently both short and long distances; climb ladders; perform elevated work at heights greater than 10 feet; climb several flights of stairs while carrying heavy equipment; walk over uneven surfaces; and safely wear self-contained breathing apparatus while wearing full protective clothing in extreme weather conditions.

### **MENTAL REQUIREMENTS:**

Work is in moderate to very high-stress environments. Position necessitates a high level of accountability, attention to detail, and ability to make decisions under pressure in chaotic situations. While performing the duties of this job, the Chief is frequently required to use written and oral communication skills; make expedient and prudent decisions; observe, accurately interpret, and quickly respond to highly sensitive and/or volatile situations, emergencies, and/or persons; read and interpret technical information, such as diagrams, manuals, and legal documents; analyze and solve complex problems; use math and mathematical reasoning; perform highly detailed work under changing and intensive conditions; manage multiple concurrent tasks; work with constant interruptions; and frequently interact in a calm, professional manner with others. The Chief may encounter situations involving emotional or psychological stress in which the possibility of loss of life, injury, and property exists. Has access to confidential documents requiring the application of appropriate judgment, discretion, and professional office protocols to ensure the integrity of sensitive information.

Has frequent contact with town officials, employees, the general public, contractors, vendors, and state agencies and representatives. Contacts are in person, by email, telephone, and in writing and involve discussing routine and complex information; contacts with the public require considerable patience, tact, and discretion and in many cases confidentiality.

### **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

Administrative duties are performed in a typical office setting. Emergency response duties are performed in a wide variety of uncontrollable conditions, such as extreme weather conditions, in and/or around water, hazardous traffic areas, unsanitary conditions, and confined spaces. While performing the routine duties of this job, the Chief may occasionally be exposed to fumes or airborne particles, vibration, and moving mechanical parts and equipment. When performing emergency response duties, Chief may be exposed to extreme heat/cold, extreme weather conditions, strong fumes and/or smoke, toxic or caustic chemicals, airborne chemicals, and bloodborne or airborne pathogens, among other dangerous materials/situations. Other hazards may include risk of electric shock, exposure to human error, and hostile humans, among other things. The noise level is usually moderate but may reach extremes, where hearing protection is required. Personal Protective Equipment is provided.