



Cowlitz 2

FIRE & RESCUE

Washington

FIRE CHIEF

\$158,704 - \$172,332

Plus Excellent Benefits

Apply by

February 19, 2023

(First Review, Open Until Filled)

PROTHMAN



THE COMMUNITY



The city of Kelso is the county seat for Cowlitz County, Washington and sits on the I-5 corridor. The city is 40 miles north of Portland, Oregon and 90 miles south of Seattle. Kelso is located on the Columbia River where it meets the Cowlitz and Coweeman Rivers, and shares a border with the city of Longview. The total county population is approximately 112,000, with about 70,000 people residing in the Longview, Kelso, and adjacent unincorporated areas.

A blue-collar community, the local economy is fueled primarily by the timber and shipping industries. The Port of Longview provides eight deep draft marine terminals, multiple rail lines, and several lumber processing mills and manufacturing companies. Other industrial areas include paper and fiberboard manufacturers, chemical manufacturers, and food production plants. The largest employer in the area is the local hospital.

The area boasts a number of public parks with walking trails, playgrounds, and multi-use sports fields. Lake Sacajawea in Longview hosts the annual Go 4th Celebration, as well as many night-at-the-park events in the summer. Tam O'Shanter Park in Kelso hosts the annual Hilander Festival celebrating the area's Scottish heritage. Golf courses, baseball and soccer fields, and sports complexes also provide recreation opportunities. The many rivers and nearby lakes have excellent fishing and are great for kayaking, sailing, water skiing, and jet skis, and the nearby Cascade Mountains provide opportunities for year-round recreation.



THE DISTRICT

Cowlitz 2 Fire & Rescue (District) is an all-hazards emergency response department. The District is the largest fire district in Cowlitz County, with four stations and a first due area of over 145 square miles and a population of approximately 37,500.

The District serves the City of Kelso and the unincorporated areas around the cities of Kelso and Longview, and by contract various waterfront industries along the Columbia River. The 2023 Preliminary budget is \$14,671,427, and the District just successfully passed a six-year levy lid lift in November 2022.

The District is a combination department with both career and volunteer responders. The District employs a Fire Chief, two Deputy Chiefs, a seven-person administrative staff, 48 paid emergency responders, and has a roster of approximately 50 volunteers. The District is also home to Station 29, a technical firefighter education program for high school juniors and seniors, which currently has 16 students from nine area high schools.

The District provides a multitude of services for the community, responding to both fire and medical emergencies, medical transport, and hosting the regional hazardous materials team. Service and mutual aid areas include Interstate 5 and high-volume railways serving both passenger and freight trains.

The District and its members participate heavily in wildland fire response, both through state mobilizations with the Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Patrol, federal mobilizations through FEMA, and individual assignments to National Incident Management Teams. The District contracts with the city of Kelso and Cowlitz County to provide certain fire marshal duties such as commercial fire safety inspections and fire, life safety building plan reviews, and fire investigations, overseen by the District's Deputy Fire Marshal.

The District is also proud to provide public outreach for community events, educational visits for schools and daycares, and be involved in local safety organizations such as Safe Kids Lower Columbia and the Cowlitz County Traffic Safety Coalition.

THE POSITION

Reporting to the five-member Board of Commissioners, the Fire Chief's responsibility is to manage and supervise all District business. Work involves managing the protection of life and property from a medical emergency, injury, or damage by fire within the Fire District and contractual service areas, responding and assuming command at major emergencies as appropriate. This position must be available for response on a 24-hour call out basis to emergencies or other important department work. To view the full job description, please view the attachment found [here](#).

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

1. The incoming Fire Chief will need to evaluate the growing call volume and impact at Station 21. A review and update of the District's Standard of Cover is needed to address an imbalance between stations for emergency responses as well as providing automatic and mutual aid.
2. The District has a history of good labor relations. The current labor contract with Local 3828 expires on December 31, 2023. Negotiations for a successor agreement will begin mid-year.
3. The District has experienced a fair amount of staff turnover due to lateral transfers to other departments and retirements during the past 18 months, and more service retirements are anticipated in the coming year. Planning for continued staff turnover will need to be addressed.
4. A review and update of the Organizational Action Plan (OAP) is needed. With the growth in the community and a limited ability to add resources in the near future, a "fresh look" at programs provided by the District may be needed.
5. Commercial contracts for fire suppression and emergency response in the District's "No Man's Land" expire in 2023 and will need to be renegotiated. These are important community businesses and the new Fire Chief will need to work alongside the City of Longview who is a partner in these contracts.
6. There is currently a vacancy in the Deputy Chief of Operations position and the work has been spread amongst the staff. The new Fire Chief will need to prioritize and review the position and duties.



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Education and Experience:

- Any suitable combinations of education and experience which would provide the necessary knowledge and abilities for the position, such as an associate's degree in a related field and graduate of Executive Fire Officer Program through the National Fire Academy, and/or experience as a Chief Officer will be considered.
- Must possess a valid motor vehicle operator's license.
- Must possess current EVIP certification or be able to obtain within six months.
- Must successfully complete a background investigation and credit check.
- The ideal candidate will have a bachelor's degree in fire administration, public administration, business administration, or a related field, and five (5) years of experience as a Chief Officer in a like-size or larger agency or relevant training and work experience to be considered.



The ideal candidate will:

- Have a solid grasp and understanding of the operational and administrative duties and issues facing a modern-day fire department, and a history of working and leading in an agency providing EMS response, transport and billing. This person will have experience in managing change due to growth in the community, and experience in negotiating private contracts and collective bargaining is preferred.
- Develop a strong relationship with the Board of Commissioners. This includes but is not limited to transparent leadership between the Board and staff and taking community metrics into consideration when making decisions about programs, budget recommendations and service delivery.
- Be visible to staff and the community, listen for understanding, and consider alternative points of view prior to making a decision. The incoming Chief will excel at team building, embrace that part of the learning process that includes making mistakes, and insist on accountability at all levels without being heavy handed. This person will recognize good performance and will take the necessary time to learn the organization prior to making any significant changes.
- Have a passion for solving problems, have excellent follow through and inspire and manage change brought on by financial challenges when there is not enough funding “to do everything”. The new fire chief will also have experience managing change amidst a growing community.
- Support professional growth and mentorship amongst the staff with a focus on job satisfaction while embracing essential succession planning for the agency. A key component to success will be to spend time with the staff and crews to understand their needs and/or desires.

- Embrace and champion partnerships, have a strong business and political acumen, and see collaboration as a foundation to their leadership style.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- **\$158,704 - \$172,332 DOQ**
- Medical/Dental/Vision = 100% premium paid for employee and 90% premium paid for spouses and dependents by the District.
- Life Insurance.
- 457 Deferred Compensation Match.
- LEOFF Retirement System.
- AFLAC option.
- Vehicle Allowance or District Vehicle Assigned to Fire Chief.
- History of Annual COLA increases.
- Longevity Pay Benefit.
- Uniforms cost shared by the District.
- Generous paid time off package includes holidays, floating holidays, negotiated vacation and sick leave.
- WA State Paid Family Medical Leave Program.
- Employee Assistance (EAP) Program.

For more information on Cowlitz 2 Fire & Rescue, please visit:

www.c2fr.org



Cowlitz 2 Fire & Rescue is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply by **February 19, 2023** (first review, open until filled). Applications, supplemental questions, resumes and cover letters will only be accepted electronically. To **apply online**, go to **www.prothman.com** and click on "Open Recruitments", select "**Cowlitz 2 Fire & Rescue, WA – Fire Chief**", and click "**Apply Now**", or click [here](#). Resumes, cover letters and supplemental questions can be uploaded once you have logged in.



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