



## Job Profile: TCPUD Director of Utilities

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND QUALITIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF UTILITIES**

The Director of Utilities position is a challenging role that requires an experienced leader with exceptional communication, staff management, analytical, and technical skills. The person in this position manages a complex and critical department, requiring that they be able to calmly and confidently deal with difficult situations, manage competing relationships and priorities, guide the high-intensity work of a large team, navigate a complex and shifting regulatory environment, multi-task and manage stress, while collaboratively working toward solutions with others. To succeed in this role, the Director must possess a wide range of skills and qualities.

The individual in this position must be knowledgeable in the industry, exude confidence to build the trust of the Utilities Team, the General Manager and the District Board, and be technical and methodical by nature, while simultaneously being a strong analytical, strategic, and forward thinker, inquisitive and desirous of continual learning, and with a willingness to both thoroughly analyze situations and take calculated risks.

Strategic thinking is a crucial aspect of the Director's role, as they are responsible for identifying priorities and projects for both the near and long term, creating and administering the budgets necessary to achieve them, lead conversations and discussion in strategic planning in their area of expertise, and look ahead to identify areas of team growth and focus. The Director must be proactive rather than reactive, able to identify areas of concern and develop action plans needed to prepare for them.

They must simultaneously be able to oversee the day-to-day responsibilities of the Utilities team operations, such as staffing and deployment of resources, and be engaged in other administrative tasks, including processing paperwork, invoice coding, ensuring that timecards are submitted accurately and on time, conducting rate studies, and writing reports.

To perform their duties effectively, the Director of Utilities must be an excellent communicator, empowering leader, and mentor, with the ability to navigate stakeholder relationships and communicate well in writing and verbally in presentations with the District Board and the public. Additionally, the Director must be willing and able to conduct difficult conversations while building trusting relationships. As a member of the District's Senior Management Team, they must lead by example, act as a role model for the District's Core Values, have strong integrity and honesty, and be welcoming to all.



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By embodying these qualities and demonstrating these skills, the Director can successfully manage the complexities of critical work of the Utilities team and ensure safe and reliable access to water and sewer services for the community.



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### TCPUD JOB PROFILE REPORT

*The following profile was written with assistance from Veronica Frenkel, MA, SPHR, President, Pathways Consulting, LLC*

**POSITION TITLE:** Director of Utilities

**DEPARTMENT:** Utilities

**ROLE OVERVIEW:** plans, organizes, directs, and reviews the operations, maintenance and service of the District's water and wastewater system, and fleet services; coordinates assigned activities with other departments and outside agencies; and provides highly responsible and complex administrative support to the General Manager.

**REPORTS TO:** General Manager

**SUPERVISES:** Directly supervises three full-time positions, including two Superintendents and one Administrative Technician.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES**

**The following provides a breakdown of the frequency the duties listed in the attached job description are performed.**

#### *Daily*

- Review and respond to emails and other communication.
- Check in with and oversee and support Superintendents and Administrative Technician with daily tasks.
- Support superintendents with work prioritization and staff deployment decisions.
- Review daily data from multiple sources including SCADA, meter reading system, weather forecasts.
- Coordinate and collaborate with Engineering and Finance Departments on Capital Projects and Department and/or District initiatives.
- Review and respond appropriately to new and proposed regulatory rules and proposals.
- Track status and maintain forward progress on Capital Projects, initiative, orders, and purchases.

#### *Weekly*

- Participate in weekly TCPUD management team meetings.
- Schedule and lead Utilities Team meeting with 2 Superintendents, 1 Administrative Technician.
- Hold individual meetings with Superintendents and Administrative Technician.
- Meet with the General Manager to provide updates on key department projects and priorities.



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- Focus on Project goals and objectives prioritizing deadlines and planning for FY Strategic Plan Priorities and Department Operational Priorities and Projects.
- Review and, if required, sign off on department invoices.
- Review and sign off on HR documents.

### Monthly

- Prepare memos/presentations/related board documents in advance of monthly Committee and Board meetings; actively participate in monthly committee and Board of Directors meetings.
- Prepare agenda for and lead monthly Sewer and Water Committee meetings.
- Review and edit Department Memorandums and related documents prepared by subordinate staff.
- Review monthly water audit data, adjust, and approve as needed.
- Review budget status, typically monthly or quarterly and as needed.
- Perform and/or review and submit monthly conservation reporting for State.
- Participate in Capital Project status meetings.

### Quarterly

- Perform quarterly conservation reporting for State.
- Update progress of 5-Year Strategic Plan Priorities and Department Operational Priorities and Projects
- Check in with all direct reports about their performance and progress toward goals.

### Annually

- Complete Annual reporting for State Water Board.
- Complete Annual reporting for Water Rights.
- Complete annual performance review for three direct reports.
- Create and present annual operating budgets, department capital and vehicle capital budgets.

### Ongoing and as needed:

- Represent District and Department at various levels of local, state, and federal agencies, organizations, and stakeholder groups.
- Provide timely performance feedback to direct reports.
- Communicate with District legal counsel.
- Communicate with utility customers to address and resolve challenging issues or concerns.
- Attend continued education/training to stay updated on industry best practices, emerging trends, and innovative strategies.
- Oversee department procedures and implement changes to improve efficiencies.
- Review fleet operations for overall safety and efficiency as well as compliance with all current and future federal, state, and local regulations.
- Budget oversight and preparation.
- Problem-solve: analysis, research, decision.
- Communicate with District Board Members.



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### **EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EXPERIENCE**

A successful candidate for this position should have a combination of education and experience which would likely provide the necessary knowledge and abilities as described above.

The information below should be viewed as providing more detail to and complementing the current job description.

#### **EDUCATION:**

It is highly recommended that the candidate possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major work in civil engineering or a related field. Obtaining such a degree would provide foundational preparation in essential critical and analytical thinking, technical processes, oral and written communication, organizational skills, self-management skills, initiative, and self-confidence.

#### **TRAINING:**

Significant training in the following areas is desirable:

- Water and sewer operations and systems management.
- Specific technology and systems used by the district.
- Leadership and management training, including teambuilding, communication, self-awareness, and conflict management.
- Strategic planning and analysis.
- Problem analysis and problem-solving.
- California water and wastewater regulations, regulatory processes, and reporting requirements.
- Occupational safety regulations and best practices.
- All areas identified as certification requirements in the current job description.

#### **EXPERIENCE:**

The following professional experience has been identified as ideal for a successful candidate for this position. This list should be viewed as providing more detail to and complementing the current job description.

- 3-5 years reviewing, implementing, and reporting on regulations and working with regulatory agencies.
- 5 years leading a water or wastewater utility department with a similar level of autonomy and with minimal direct oversight or direction.
- 5 years supervising and managing work crews in a similar area of work (e.g., water distribution, water treatment, wastewater, stormwater, water collection, roads, construction, public works).
- 5 years developing and managing operating and capital infrastructure budgets.
- 2-4 years participating in the technical design and engineering of water and wastewater systems and in managing infrastructure projects related thereto.



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### **CRITICAL COMPETENCIES: Director of Utilities**

The following competencies have been identified as essential for the individual in the Director of Utilities position to demonstrate effectively and consistently. Each competency includes a definition and the observable behaviors that may indicate the existence of a competency in a person. This list may be utilized to evaluate potential candidates for and incumbents in the position.

**Analytical Thinking, Problem-Solving & Decision-Making:** The ability to tackle a problem by using a logical, systematic, sequential approach, identifying, seeking out and evaluating relevant and critical information, and making a quality, timely decision.

- Identifies the specific information needed to clarify a situation or to make a decision.
- Gets more complete and accurate information by checking multiple sources.
- Makes a systematic comparison of two or more alternatives.
- Notices discrepancies and inconsistencies in available information.
- Identifies a set of features, parameters, or considerations to take into account, in analyzing a situation or making a decision.
- Approaches a complex task or problem by breaking it down into its component parts, considering each part in detail, and exploring multiple possible causes.
- Weighs the costs, benefits, risks, and chances for success, in making a decision.
- Carefully weighs the priority of things to be done.
- Anticipates possible problems and develops contingency plans in advance.
- Notices trends in the industry or marketplace and develops plans to prepare for opportunities or problems.
- Anticipates the consequences of situations and plans accordingly.
- Demonstrates ability to evaluate decision consequences and changing business needs and willingness to modify course as appropriate.

**Technical Expertise:** The ability to demonstrate depth of knowledge and skill in a technical area (specifically the area of water and wastewater systems' design, management, and operations).

- Effectively applies technical knowledge to solve a range of problems.
- Possesses an in-depth knowledge and skill in the technical area.
- Develops technical solutions to new or highly complex problems that cannot be solved using existing methods or approaches.
- Is sought out as an expert to provide advice or solutions in this technical area.
- Keeps informed about cutting-edge technology in this technical area.

**Stress Management:** The ability to keep functioning effectively when under pressure and maintain self-control in the face of hostility or provocation.

- Remains calm under stress.
- Can effectively handle several problems or tasks at once.
- Controls their response when criticized, attacked, or provoked.
- Maintains a sense of humor under difficult circumstances.
- Manages own behavior to prevent or reduce feelings of stress.
- Demonstrates openness to new organizational structures, procedures, and technology.



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**Empowering Others:** The ability to convey confidence in employees' ability to be successful, especially at challenging new tasks; delegating significant responsibility and authority; allowing employees freedom to decide how they will accomplish their goals and resolve issues; and providing feedback and coaching to help employees develop their capabilities.

- Appropriately delegates assignments to direct reports that will help develop their abilities and provides sufficient guidance and support to enable their success.
- Gives people latitude to make decisions in their own sphere of work.
- Is able to let others make decisions and take charge.
- Encourages individuals and groups to set their own goals, aligned with business goals.
- Expresses confidence in the ability of others to be successful.
- Encourages groups to resolve problems on their own; holds back on immediately prescribing a solution.

**Strategic and Forward Thinking:** The ability to analyze the organization by considering community, environmental, and industry trends, existing and potential customers (internal and external), and strengths and weaknesses in capability to achieve its mission; ability to anticipate the implications and consequences of situations and take appropriate action.

- Understands the organization's strengths and weaknesses.
- Has an in-depth understanding of trends and developments within the field.
- Accurately anticipates how trends and developments may affect the organization and develops a strategy for leveraging opportunities or contingency plans in advance of problems.
- Anticipates how individuals and groups will react to situations and information and develops or adapts plans accordingly.
- Develops and proposes a long-term (3-5 year) strategy for the department based on an analysis of the community, environment, industry, regulatory affairs and marketplace and the organization's current and potential capabilities.

**Managing Performance:** The ability to take responsibility for one's own or one's employees' performance, by setting clear goals and expectations, tracking progress against the goals, ensuring feedback, and addressing performance problems and issues promptly.

- Ensures that employees have clear goals and responsibilities.
- Works with employees to set and communicate performance standards that are specific and measurable.
- Supports employees in their efforts to achieve job goals (e.g., by providing resources, removing obstacles, acting as a buffer).
- Stays informed about employees' progress and performance through both formal methods (e.g., status reports) and informal methods (e.g., management by walking around).
- Provides specific performance and behavior-focused feedback, both positive and corrective, as soon as possible after an event.
- Deals firmly and promptly with performance problems; lets people know what is expected of them and when.



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- Builds trusting partnerships with individuals and teams to identify and achieve growth objectives.
- Coaches individuals and team members to grow skills and accomplish objectives.

**Self Confidence and Decisiveness:** Faith in one's own ideas and capability to be successful; ability to make difficult decisions in a timely manner; willingness to take an independent position in the face of opposition.

- Is willing to make decisions in difficult or ambiguous situations.
- Is confident of own ability to accomplish goals.
- Presents self crisply and impressively.
- Is willing to speak up to the right person or group at the right time, when he/she disagrees with a decision or strategy.
- Approaches challenges with a "can-do" attitude; takes charge of a group when it is necessary to facilitate change, overcome an impasse, face issues, or ensure that decisions are made.
- Willing to make tough decisions (e.g., closing a facility, reducing staff, accepting, or rejecting a high-stakes deal).

**NOTE:** The competencies associated with the five TCPUD Core Values have intentionally **not** been included in this list, as there is an expectation that all TCPUD leadership and team members must be able to effectively and consistently demonstrate competencies and behaviors associated with those Core Values.





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### **APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL DETAIL ABOUT RESPONSIBILITIES, CHALLENGES, AND UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE POSITION**

The Director of Utilities position is a challenging role that requires an experienced, self-confident leader with exceptional communication, staff management, and technical skills. The Director must balance long-term planning with emergency management, oversee a large team with diverse personalities and unique challenges, navigate an ever-changing regulatory landscape, and build and sustain key stakeholder relationships, and manage competing priorities, all while demonstrating professionalism, integrity, and personal credibility. It is a critical role that is integral to ensuring a high functioning Utilities team, protecting the health and safety of the team, and ensuring safe and uninterrupted access to water and sewer services for the community.

The following information offers an overview of the position's complexities and challenges that necessitate the skills, experience, and competencies outlined above.

#### **AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISIONS AND ACTIONS**

- While this position reports to and receives general policy direction from the General manager, it is expected to make and be responsible for numerous, critical strategic and operational decisions that have significant financial, health and safety, and environmental implications, with little or no direction.
- The expectation is that the Director of Utilities owns and is responsible for their area of expertise and responsible for its management so that there is little need for support or input from the General Manager. Therefore, the person assuming this position would need to come into the role with the immediate ability and the confidence to make decisions and act very independently.
- To be successful in this position, the Director must be able to balance their autonomous decision-making with appropriate communication expectations of the General Manager. They should proactively bring issues regarding safety, strategy, stakeholder relations, and public relations to the GM's attention and present solutions that drive collaborative problem-solving. The Director should know when and how to bring issues to the GM, taking calculated risks when necessary and seeking their input when appropriate. It is crucial for the Director to earn and maintain the trust and confidence of the GM and Board of Directors to gain their support for critical decisions and actions.

#### **HIGH-RISK AND CONSEQUENCE OF ERRORS IN DECISION-MAKING**

- The Director of Utilities plays a crucial role in upholding the organization's mission of providing safe drinking water and ensuring the environmentally responsible collection of sewage. Any lapses in judgment, mistakes, or failure to perform preventative maintenance can result in far-reaching and severe consequences. Such errors may lead to acute health risks, substantial property damage, and significant environmental impact. Given Lake Tahoe's highly regulated status and its significance as a cherished community asset, the Director's responsibility becomes even more critical in avoiding mishaps or errors that could harm this vital resource.



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- Decision-making errors may also lead to significant financial implications in the form of penalties and fines and may undermine TCPUD's reputation with customers, whose support is crucial to maintaining revenues necessary for the District's provision of service and ongoing infrastructure upgrades.
- The Director must also make decisions regularly that could put staff at risk, necessitating a thorough analysis of situational factors and the implementation of measures to minimize risks, even if they may be unpopular with team members.
- The role can be highly politicized, demanding that the individual in the position possesses the ability to anticipate potential landmines. The position requires the capacity to bear the weight of responsibility for key decisions and actions, along with an understanding of when it is critical to inform and seek input from the General Manager and other key stakeholders.

### **OPERATING WITHIN A DYNAMIC AND RAPIDLY CHANGING ENVIRONMENT**

- The work of the TCPUD Utilities Department occurs within the context of a regulatory environment that continues to rapidly change, requiring that the Director of Utilities remain vigilant, adaptable, and responsive to these changes.
- The Director must regularly monitor financial, political, environmental, and regulatory trends, be aware of changes, quickly analyze and strategize how they will impact their goals, and plan and execute necessary changes to comply.
- This vital analysis and strategizing also must take into consideration the constant fluctuations in weather and drought.
- In monitoring and implementing these changes, the Director must also understand the implications of operating near Lake Tahoe, a federally regulated lake, and be knowledgeable about TRPA (Tahoe Regional Planning Agency) requirements and code compliance.
- Balancing long-term planning with emergency management is a significant challenge for the Director, particularly when the staff is faced with unplanned repairs in the field while simultaneously being asked to maintain routine operations and maintenance activities.

### **COMPLEX PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

- The Director of Utilities leads one of the District's largest full-time, year-round teams, responsible for critical operational work in challenging environmental conditions, and in emergency and high-stress situations.
- The Director must effectively lead a team that consists of both classified and exempt team members, with strong and distinct personalities, backgrounds, and experience, and that is divided into two main crews that conduct different types of work with distinct skill sets and in starkly different working conditions.
- To succeed in this role, the Director must be an experienced leader who can effectively motivate the team to achieve the Department's mission, effectively address interpersonal



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challenges within the team, and maintain clear communication with Superintendents about strategic direction, priorities, and why tasks are important.

- Although the Director is not directly involved in day-to-day supervision of the Utilities' crews, they provide guidance and support to the Superintendents as they address personnel and team issues, make difficult decisions regarding discipline, set clear standards, communicate expectations, provide feedback, deal with issues promptly and decisively, and coach, mentor, and support their direct reports to enable them to do their work independently.
- Managing and maintaining staffing for the department will continue to present a challenge for this position given the cost of living in the area and difficulties finding qualified and certified staff.

### MANAGING AND BALANCING IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

- To be successful in this position, the Director of Utilities will need to develop, maintain, and foster positive, open, and trusting relationships with several key stakeholders, both internal and external to the District. Ultimately, the Director's success will be measured by their ability to build and maintain strong relationships with all stakeholders and create a culture of open, honest, and respectful communication within and outside of the District.
- Key internal stakeholders for the Director of Utilities include:
  - ✓ TCPUD General Manager: regular communication about strategic, personnel, safety, accidents, or other issues with community impact, with ownership for problem-solving.
  - ✓ Board of Directors: the Director must be able to respond well to challenges and questions and provide answers without taking it personally and build credibility over time. While the GM often assists with and manages relationships with the Board, the Director should expect to receive questions directly from them, in Board meetings and individual interactions.
  - ✓ TCPUD Management Team: the Director is first and foremost a member of the senior management team of the District and must support the priorities of the District, organizational strategic and cultural efforts and act as a role model of the Core Values. Collaboration, communication, and mutual understanding are crucial for successful project implementation, financial management, strategic planning, and administrative support.
  - ✓ Utilities team: build relationships with all team members, provide guidance, support, and coaching to develop and empower direct reports, and foster teamwork and mutual respect among team members.
  - ✓ Director of Finance: be available to discuss critical data (customer, billing, budget, rate adjustments) and project status and budgets (e.g., Smart meter upgrade)
  - ✓ Engineering Team: recommend capital projects, consult on construction projects; support implementation.
- Key external stakeholders for the Director of Utilities include:



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- ✓ Customers and the public: the Director is responsible for interacting positively with customers to resolve high-level issues with water and sewer service, or changes in service or cost. The Director will need to interact with customers and contractors and manage potentially contentious situations in a manner that sustains community trust in and support for the District.
- ✓ State and federal regulatory boards and related organizations (water, wastewater, forest service, Lake Tahoe): the Director must build relationships of respect and trust that support collaborative problem-solving and engender their support when needed.
- ✓ Peer agencies at Lake Tahoe and within California: the Director should be actively engaged in joint efforts around advocacy and build a reputation as a trusted community and regional partner.
- ✓ Local agencies, organizations, and associations, including community, neighborhood, and homeowner's association: it is critical that the Director maintain a positive standing and reputation and support collaborative problem-solving.
- ✓ Vendors and contractors: these relationships are critical for prompt access to materials, parts, maintenance, and other support.

### **HIGH ENTRY-LEVEL EXPECTATIONS FOR TECHNICAL EXPERTISE**

The Director of Utilities is viewed as the technical expert on all matters related to the water and wastewater systems of the TCPUD. The person assuming this position would need to come into the position with the experience and knowledge necessary to immediately fill that role and manage complex systems. The expectations are that this individual would have the following upon entry or within a very short period of time following assumption of the role:

- Registration as a Professional Civil Engineer in the State of California is desirable.
- Experience with regulatory requirements, interacting with regulatory agencies, and writing regulatory reports.
- Quick learning ability to understand the nuances of the TCPUD systems.
- Familiarity with the unique climate and environmental conditions of the area.
- Ability to oversee segmented elements of the system and seek help from experienced team members when necessary.
- Technical problem-solving skills within the infrastructure they oversee.
- Proficiency in identifying and correcting data errors and identifying trends.
- Safety management skills to protect employees and infrastructure.
- Effective decision-making skills to determine when to seek help and when to make independent decisions.
- Fluency with financial and budgetary concepts, including building and maintaining capital infrastructure within budgetary parameters, monitoring cash flow, and the facility to communicate effectively with members of the Finance team.
- Ability to thoroughly and sufficiently analyze information and evaluate solutions and courageously make decisions in uncertain or emergent situations.