THE CITY OF LYNCHBURG

CITY OF LYNCHBURG

Fire Chief

RAFTELIS

The Position

Lynchburg is a city where service meets excellence, and we are looking for a Fire Chief (Chief) who embodies both. The Lynchburg Fire Department provides a full range of emergency and non-emergency services to a vibrant community through a team of 220 full-time personnel operating from eight stations, a central administrative office, a training facility, and a logistics center addressing approximately 19,000 annual calls for service. Additionally, a new station is coming online in the summer of 2027 through a private-public partnership. The next Chief will build upon Lynchburg's reputation as a well-managed city that delivers premier services to all residents and businesses.

The Chief provides leadership and direction to an integrated team of professional staff, firefighters, and emergency medical professionals with responsibility for fire suppression and prevention services, fire investigations, emergency medical services, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, confined space emergency response, and emergency management operations. The Chief also assists with coordinating the fire defense of the region by collaborating with volunteer rescue agencies and neighboring departments through mutual aid agreements. This position ensures the consistent delivery of emergency services and the maintenance of all department facilities, apparatus, and equipment.

The Chief works very closely with the City Manager on developing the department's annual budget, and monitoring expenditures to ensure fiscal stability. Duties include the development and implementation of major departmental policies, the review of operational activities to ensure compliance with standards, and the preparation of long-range plans for the department. The Chief also prepares technical reports for City officials and state and national organizations on departmental compliance and needs.

The Chief reports directly to the City Manager and serves as a member of the City Manager's Leadership Team. The Chief guides the department through long range planning, plan implementation, and daily operations with a focus on administrative efficiency. The Chief is responsible for overseeing all personnel functions within the department, including recruitment, hiring, promotions, and staff performance evaluations. Additionally, the Chief is responsible for developing and maintaining standard operating procedures, providing technical assistance and presentations to City leadership, and coordinating with other City departments to ensure the continued implementation of seamless service delivery throughout the City of Lynchburg.

Priorities

- Develop and maintain positive relationships with the City Manager, City leadership, regional partners, and department personnel as the next Fire Chief.
- Implement the department's Strategic Plan and use data-driven performance metrics to ensure continuous improvement in service delivery.
- Oversee the continued design and construction of a new fire station while managing a facilities study to modernize the department's eight existing stations.
- Work in partnership with the City's Fleet Department to implement a sustainable fleet replacement plan that equips personnel with modern, reliable engines, ladder trucks, and medic units.
- Lead the organization through the national reaccreditation process to maintain high standards of administrative and operational excellence.
- Prioritize workforce development and recruitment strategies to support the health, wellness, and professional growth of the department's 223 personnel.
- Enhance progressive emergency medical services through the continued expansion of the Advanced Practice Paramedic program.
- Develop and implement consistent departmental standards, policies, and procedures that foster a fair, professional, and inclusive work environment.

The Successful Candidate

The ideal candidate will be an established professional in the field of public safety who is a visible and approachable leader. This accountable and consistent administrator demonstrates extensive experience in fire suppression, emergency medical services, and complex incident management. The successful candidate has a strong understanding of departmental administration and the ability to manage diverse functional areas while maintaining a reputation for fairness and integrity. As a leader of over 200 personnel, the Fire Chief will foster a collaborative work environment and be honest, dependable, and trustworthy in all interactions with staff and the community.

The successful Chief will possess advanced interpersonal and leadership skills with a proven track record in conflict resolution and negotiation. The ideal candidate has exceptional communication skills and can make data driven decisions. This forward-thinking and innovative professional will use reasoning skills to define problems and draw valid conclusions while presenting technical information to the public and City leadership. They will also demonstrate a high level of ability to analyze complex data for the purpose of making operational decisions and long-range planning.

The next Chief will be a proactive and collaborative leader who is fully committed to strategic management practices and organizational growth. The successful candidate will have a strong foundation in personnel administration, including performance evaluation and staff development, and will work to create professional goals that support the City's overall mission. They will also be technologically savvy, ensuring the systems used for fire operations and data management are effective for the department's needs. This courageous leader will proactively address workplace challenges and ensure consistent treatment of all employees within the organization.

The ideal candidate will be a confident and skilled communicator who is comfortable conveying the department's mission to community members, elected officials, and the media. The successful candidate will be principled and firm in their decision making while serving as a supportive member of the City Manager's leadership team. As a dedicated and committed professional, the Chief will build trust throughout the organization and advocate for the resources necessary to ensure safety. By leading with a strong work ethic, the successful candidate will influence and support a positive and professional work culture within the Lynchburg Fire Department.

Qualifications

Minimum requirements include any combination of education and experience equivalent to a bachelor's degree with major work in fire science, public administration, or a related field. A comprehensive history of progressively responsible administrative experience in fire and emergency medical services is also required.

Additionally, candidates must possess a valid driver's license issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the ability to meet the requirement to reside within the City of Lynchburg within six months of appointment. Relocation assistance may be provided. Candidates must satisfactorily complete all required background checks.

Required credentials for this position include certifications as an Emergency Medical Technician II, Fire Officer II, and Fire Instructor II. The Chief must also successfully complete IS100 and IS700 National Incident Management (NIMS) training within 90 days of employment. The City values a leader committed to advanced emergency management standards and may require the completion of higher levels of NIMS training as determined appropriate for the position.

Inside The City of Lynchburg

The City of Lynchburg has operated under a Council/Manager form of government since 1920. The City Council, comprised of seven members, is elected for four-year staggered terms of office. The City Manager is responsible to the City Council for the effective operation of all government functions. The City of Lynchburg's mission and values are shaped by the City Council's vision, internal strategies, and the goals of its various departments. At its core, the City is committed to fostering innovation, upholding integrity, and expanding opportunities to enhance the quality of life for its residents.

For Fiscal Year 2026, the City of Lynchburg's government is managed with a General Fund budget of about $250.5 million, serving a population estimated to be just over 80,000. The following are City Council's identified priorities: Public safety, targeted growth, infrastructure, community development, lifelong learning, economic development, and quality of life.

View the Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

Inside the Fire Department

The Lynchburg Fire Department (LFD) celebrated its 140th anniversary in 2023. Established in April of 1883, the LFD provides fire suppression and prevention services, emergency medical services, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, and confined space emergency response for approximately 80,000 Lynchburg residents, as well as the thousands who come into the City every day for work, education, or recreation. With a team of 223 personnel, including professionals, firefighters, and emergency medical staff, the department efficiently serves the community through eight stations, a central administrative office, a logistics shop, and a fire training facility.

Our Vision
To be a leading public safety agency in the Commonwealth, providing superior services that promote life safety and minimize property damage.

Our Purpose/Mission
First in Safety. First in Service. First in Community.

Our Values
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Trust
- Compassion

The City is committed to ensuring that its personnel operate with modern resources and in optimal environments. The fire department manages its response through eight fire stations and over 81 fleet assets. To support the continued growth of the community and the safety of its staff, the department is making a significant investment in its infrastructure and equipment. This includes the acquisition of new apparatus to maintain a modern fleet and the addition of a new fire station to enhance response capabilities.

Lynchburg is also focused on the long-term health and efficiency of its facilities. An ongoing study of all departmental facilities ensures that stations are being updated with modern firehouse amenities and improved systems, such as updated heating and air conditioning, to ensure all buildings are operating optimally. These investments reflect the City's dedication to providing a high-quality work environment for its personnel and superior protection for its residents and visitors.

View the Fire Department Organizational Chart

The Community

Nestled against the eastern foothills of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, Lynchburg combines a rich historical heritage with the vibrant energy of a modern, forward-thinking community. Located at the geographic center of the Commonwealth and approximately 180 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., this city of 50 square miles is known for its picturesque landscapes and unique urban character. Often called the Hill City, Lynchburg offers an inviting blend of traditional charm and contemporary amenities that make it an exceptional place to live, work, and play.

An active community boasting friendly residential neighborhoods, Lynchburg has a tradition of civic pride, strong community engagement, and a dedication to fostering a high quality of life for its residents. The City is served by a public school system recognized for its innovative Partners in Education program, which fosters strong collaborations between local schools, businesses, and government agencies. Lynchburg is also a hub for higher education, serving as home to five public and private colleges and universities. This intellectual vitality contributes to a diverse and engaged population that values lifelong learning and a keen sense of community.

A city with outstanding cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities, Lynchburg operates 17 parks, 40 miles of recreational trails, and the historic Community Market which has been in continuous operation since 1783. The community takes pride in its active lifestyle, whether taking in a minor league baseball game at the City managed stadium or enjoying the revitalized downtown, with a new amphitheater opening this Spring. The James River flows through the heart of downtown, providing a stunning backdrop for waterfront dining, shopping, and community festivals that bring neighbors together throughout the year.

Beyond city limits, residents enjoy unparalleled access to the natural beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Appalachian Trail. Water recreation is readily available at Smith Mountain Lake, while world class snow skiing is just a short drive away at Wintergreen Resort. This abundance of natural beauty, paired with a low cost of living and a robust business environment, makes Lynchburg a premier destination for professionals and families alike. Welcoming residents and visitors from around the globe, the City remains committed to thoughtful planning while embracing the growth of its nuclear engineering, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing sectors. Lynchburg is a place where history meets opportunity, offering a vibrant and innovative atmosphere for all who call the Blue Ridge foothills home.

Compensation and Benefits

The City of Lynchburg offers a competitive salary package for the Chief position, which will be dependent on the qualifications and experience of the successful candidate. The hiring range begins at $165,000 depending on qualifications, with an excellent benefits package. In addition to a competitive salary, the City offers a robust benefits package to full-time employees, including medical, dental, and vision coverage; participation in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS); paid time off and holidays; and additional programs such as life insurance, deferred compensation, flexible spending accounts, parental leave, and tuition assistance—underscoring the City's commitment to employee well-being. Review the benefits brochure **here** and information about the cost of living as well as housing **here**.

How to Apply

Applications will be accepted electronically by Raftelis at **raftelis.com**. Applicants complete a brief online form and are prompted to provide a cover letter and resume. The position will be open until filled with a first review of applications beginning **April 27, 2026**.

Questions

Please direct questions to Pamela Wideman at **pwideman@raftelis.com** and Niayla Hairston at **nhairston@raftelis.com**.