

# Tiffin City Council Work Session

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## May 05, 2026 05:30 pm



**May 5, 2026**

**@ 5:30 PM**

**City Council**

**Work Session**

**Tiffin City Hall**

**300 Railroad Street, Tiffin, Iowa 52340**

**[www.tiffin-iowa.org](http://www.tiffin-iowa.org)**

<b>Mayor:</b>	Tim Kasparek	<b>Public Works Director:</b>	Brian Detert
<b>Council At Large:</b>	Tim Orris – Mayor Pro-Tem	<b>Water/WW Superintendent:</b>	Brett Mehmen
<b>Council At Large:</b>	Tony Johnson	<b>Building Official:</b>	Brian Shay
<b>Council At Large:</b>	Skylar Limkemann	<b>Recreation Director:</b>	Grant Weber
<b>Council At Large:</b>	Chris Olney	<b>Library Director:</b>	Liz Petersen Grier
<b>Council At Large:</b>	Eric Schnedler	<b>Fire Chief:</b>	VACANT
<b>City Administrator:</b>	Doug Boldt	<b>City Engineer:</b>	MSA Professional Services
<b>Asst. City Admin.</b>	Ashley Platz		
<b>City Attorney</b>	Crystal Raiber		
<b>City Clerk</b>	Abigail Hora		

1. **Call to Order**  
File: [WS Agenda](#)
2. **A. Roll Call**

File: [WS Notes](#)

**3. B. Agenda Additions/Agenda Approval**

**4. C. Discussion of Interim Fire Chief**

File: [Proposal](#)

**5. D. Questions from Council Members regarding items on the Regular City Council Agenda or Reports**

**6. E. Other Business**

**7. F. Adjournment**

# City of Tiffin, Iowa

**Meeting:** Tiffin City Council Work Session  
**Place:** Tiffin City Hall, 300 Railroad Street, Tiffin, Iowa 52340  
**Date/Time:** May 5, 2026 – **5:30 PM**  
**Web Page:** [www.tiffin-iowa.org](http://www.tiffin-iowa.org)  
**Posted:** May 1, 2026 (website & front entry of City Hall)

<b>Mayor:</b>	Tim Kasparek	<b>W/WW Superintendent:</b>	Brett Mehmen
<b>Council At Large:</b>	Tim Orris – Mayor Pro-Tem	<b>D. of Public Works:</b>	Brian Detert
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## Call to Order – 5:30 PM

- A. Roll Call
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**CITY OF TIFFIN  
CITY ADMINISTRATOR  
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL – NOTES FOR WORK SESSION ITEMS  
May 1, 2026**

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- Tom Hartshorn, Battalion Chief for the City of Iowa City, will be at the work session to present and discuss with the council his attached proposal which is aimed at supporting both the City and the Fire Department through the transition to a full-time Fire Chief.

# **CITY OF TIFFIN, IOWA FIRE DEPARTMENT**

## **Interim Fire Chief Proposal**



Prepared by:  
Tom Hartshorn

April 2026

# Interim Fire Chief Strategic Plan – City of Tiffin, Iowa

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## Executive Summary

Tom Hartshorn is a proven command-level fire service leader currently serving as a Battalion Chief with the Iowa City Fire Department, with extensive experience in incident command, training development, and organizational leadership.

This interim plan is designed to provide immediate stability, rebuild response reliability, strengthen leadership accountability, and position the Tiffin Fire Department for long-term success. The focus is not on large-scale change, but on restoring consistency, improving communication, and reinforcing a culture of participation and professionalism.

Over a 3–6 month period, this plan prioritizes improving response rates, aligning officer expectations, enhancing training effectiveness, and creating a clear operational structure. The end state is a stable, accountable, and engaged department prepared for a successful transition to a permanent Fire Chief.

## Strategic Priorities

- Stabilize leadership and rebuild trust
- Improve response rates and accountability
- Strengthen communication, internally and with city administration
- Assess personnel and leadership structure
- Create a unified vision, supporting a mission first culture
- Support strategic planning and transition

## 30-60-90 Day Action Plan

### 0–30 Days: Stabilize & Assess

- Establish leadership presence and clear expectations
- Conduct listening sessions with all members and officers
- Analyze response data, focusing on increasing response reliability
- Review command structure and expectations for officers
- Review policies and guidelines

### 30–60 Days: Build Structure & Improve Performance

- Align officer roles and expectations
- Implement consistent, hands-on training program
- Reinforce response expectations

- Identify organizational and leadership gaps
- Recognize high-performing members

### **60–90 Days: Strengthen & Transition**

- Implement targeted improvements
- Facilitate strategic planning if City of Tiffin pursues it
- Improve operational consistency
- Support hiring process
- Prepare transition documentation

### **Key Performance Metrics**

- Response participation rates
- Training attendance
- Member engagement
- Administrative efficiency

# Interim Fire Chief Leadership Expectations – City of Tiffin, Iowa

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## Leadership Philosophy

Future – Growth – Engagement

To build a high-functioning department that sets the standard for operational response, training, and culture. These expectations are grounded in proven leadership principles and prior success in building successful teams.

## What You Can Expect of Me

- Accountability and ownership
- Willingness to have hard conversations
- I will model the behavior and performance I expect
- Respect and fairness
- Intentional listening
- Transparency in mistakes and continuous growth

## Department Expectations

### Operational Excellence

- Train consistently and with purpose
- Set the operational tempo – response matters
- Take action when needed; we will learn and improve
- Prioritize response readiness

### Culture & Accountability

- The standard is what we actually allow, not what we say
- Create an environment that is psychologically safe
- Own failures and build on success
- Support growth in others
- Hold each other accountable daily

### Administrative Standards

- Reports completed accurately and on time
- Training documented thoroughly
- Equipment, apparatus, and station readiness maintained
- Attention to detail in all responsibilities

## **Officer Expectations**

### **Accountability**

- Own decisions and actions
- Hold others to the standard
- Address issues early

### **Competence**

- Strong operational knowledge
- Understanding of modern firefighting operations
- Commitment to leadership and command development

### **Communication**

- Keep leadership informed
- Clearly communicate expectations
- Address issues proactively
- Build trust and alignment

### **Consistency**

- Fair and predictable leadership
- Steady demeanor
- Reinforce standards consistently
- Recognize positive performance

### **Closing Principle**

What is your percentage of impact on this department? Every member contributes to the culture, performance, and success of the organization.

# Interim Fire Chief Compensation Proposal – City of Tiffin, Iowa

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## Compensation Structure

- Monthly Retainer: \$4,000
- Take home vehicle (command car)
- Structure reflects executive-level leadership responsibilities rather than task-based work
- No request for healthcare, pension, or long-term benefits
- Initial term 3-6 months, optional extension based on mutual agreement

## Defined Scope of Work

- Stabilize department operations and leadership
- Assess personnel and organizational structure
- Strengthen communication and culture
- Support administrative functions and operational efficiency
- Strengthen relationships with mutual aid partners
- Assist with strategic planning and transition to permanent Fire Chief

## Time Expectations & Availability

- Estimated commitment: 12–18 hours per week
- Includes in-station presence, meetings, training oversight, and leadership engagement
- Availability outside scheduled hours for:
  - Emergency response and incident command
  - Phone consultation, after-hours communication, and administrative work
- Ongoing accessibility to City leadership, officers, and personnel beyond office hours

## Authority & Role Expectations

- Full operational authority consistent with the role of Fire Chief
- Alignment with City leadership on major decisions while maintaining day-to-day command authority

## Summary

This compensation structure reflects the responsibility, accessibility, and leadership required to stabilize and guide the department during this interim period. The focus is on delivering immediate organizational impact, improving reliability and culture, and positioning the department for long-term success.