JOHNSTON-GRIMES METROPOLITAN FIRE DISTRICT

FIRE CHIEF

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JOHNSTON-GRIMES METROPOLITAN FIRE DISTRICT - FIRE CHIEF

THE POSITION

Johnston (24,064) and Grimes (15,392) are cities located in Dallas and Polk Counties in the northwestern portion of the Des Moines, IA metropolitan area. Through a joint consolidation initiative, the Johnston-Grimes Metropolitan Fire District was developed and operational in 2016 serving both communities plus Camp Dodge and unincorporated areas of both counties, covering a total over 54 mi^2. Johnston and Grimes are a great place to live, offering a blend of suburban comfort, recreational opportunities, and a strong sense of community.

The Fire Board for the Johnston Grimes Metropolitan Fire District is seeking qualified, strategically focused candidates for the position of Fire Chief following the announcement of the retirement of the current chief.

JOHNSTON AT A GLANCE:

Population: Approximately 24,064 as of the 2020 census.

Geography: The City covers a total area of 20.88 square miles, with the Des Moines River bordering on the east.

Recreation: Johnston boasts over a dozen parks and 45 miles of trails, making it a haven for outdoor enthusiasts. The City also features the Saylorville Lake Visitor Center and Camp Dodge, a military installation.

Education: The city is known for its excellent educational system and is home to the headquarters of Iowa Public Television.

Business: Johnston is home to Corteva Agriscience, John Deere Financial, and Fareway.

BY THE NUMBERS:

- The median household income was $103,430 in 2023.
- The median home price was $318,350 in November 2024.
- 9,552 households.
- 80.4% white, 8.6% African American, 7.2% Asian, 2.1% Hispanic/Latino, 3.1% two or more races.

GRIMES AT A GLANCE:

Population: Approximately 15,392 as of the 2020 census.

Geography: Grimes was founded in 1881 and incorporated in 1894. It is named after James W. Grimes, a former U.S. senator and the third Governor of Iowa.

Recreation: Grimes offers quality parks and recreation facilities, including Hy-Vee Multiplex, Waterworks Park Splash Pad, and the Grimes Public Library. .

Education: The city boasts and excellent school system and high median household income.

Business: Amazon

BY THE NUMBERS:

- The median household income was $104,497 in 2023.
- The median home price was $384.9K in November 2024. 6,133 households.
- 87.9% white, 2.3% African American, 3.6% Asian, 6.5% Hispanic/Latino, 5.2% two or more races.

Civic Organizations in Johnston and Grimes

- Johnston Partnership: A non-profit organization serving the community for 25 years.
- Johnston Kiwanis: A local chapter of the Kiwanis Club of America focused on serving children.
- Johnston Rotary: Part of the global Rotary Club dedicated to community service.
- Johnston Public Library: Promotes discovery, inspires creativity and engages the community with family, friendly programs.
- Governors District Alliance: Promotes the development and growth of the Downtown Business District in Grimes.
- Grimes Volunteer Support Services: Assists seniors and disabled people with transportation services.
- The Community Support Network: Supports people with behavioral health needs or other developmental disabilities.
- Grimes Lions Club & Johnston Lions Club: Focus on community service and support.
- Grimes Public Library - Encourages learning, sparks imagination, andconects the community through engaging programs for all ages.

EDUCATION IN THE REGION

Dallas County, IA

- **Dallas County Community College** – part of the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) system, offering various associate degree programs and continuing education courses.
- **Iowa State University** Extension and Outreach Dallas County - providing continuing education and professional development courses for working professionals.

Polk County, IA

- **Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC)** – with multiple campuses, including the Ankeny Campus.
- **University of Iowa – John and Mary Pappajohn Education Center** – located in Des Moines, this center offers various educational programs and professional development opportunities.
- **Drake University** – a private university in Des Moines known for its strong programs in business, law and the arts.
- **Grand View University** – also located in Des Moines, offering undergraduate and graduate programs in various fields.
- **Des Moines University** - a top medical university, educating the next generation of health science and medical professionals.

MEDICAL SERVICES

- Broadlawns Medical Center, 1801 Hickman Road, Des Moines
- Iowa Lutheran, 700 E. University Avenue, Des Moines (Unity Point Hospital System)
- UnityPoint Health - Iowa Methodist Medical Center, 1200 Pleasant Street, Des Moines
- Methodist West Hospital, 1660 60th St., West Des Moines (Unity Point Hospital System)
- MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center, 1111 6th Avenue, Des Moines
- MercyOne West Des Moines Medical Center, 1755 59th Place, West Des Moines
- VA Central Iowa Health Care System, 3600 30th Street, Des Moines

CRITICAL ISSUES AND CHALLENGES – (study completed in 2021, available for review)

ISSUES

- Enhanced strategic engagement and collaboration with the Fire Board.
- Creating a joint community fleet replacement plan that includes long-range planning

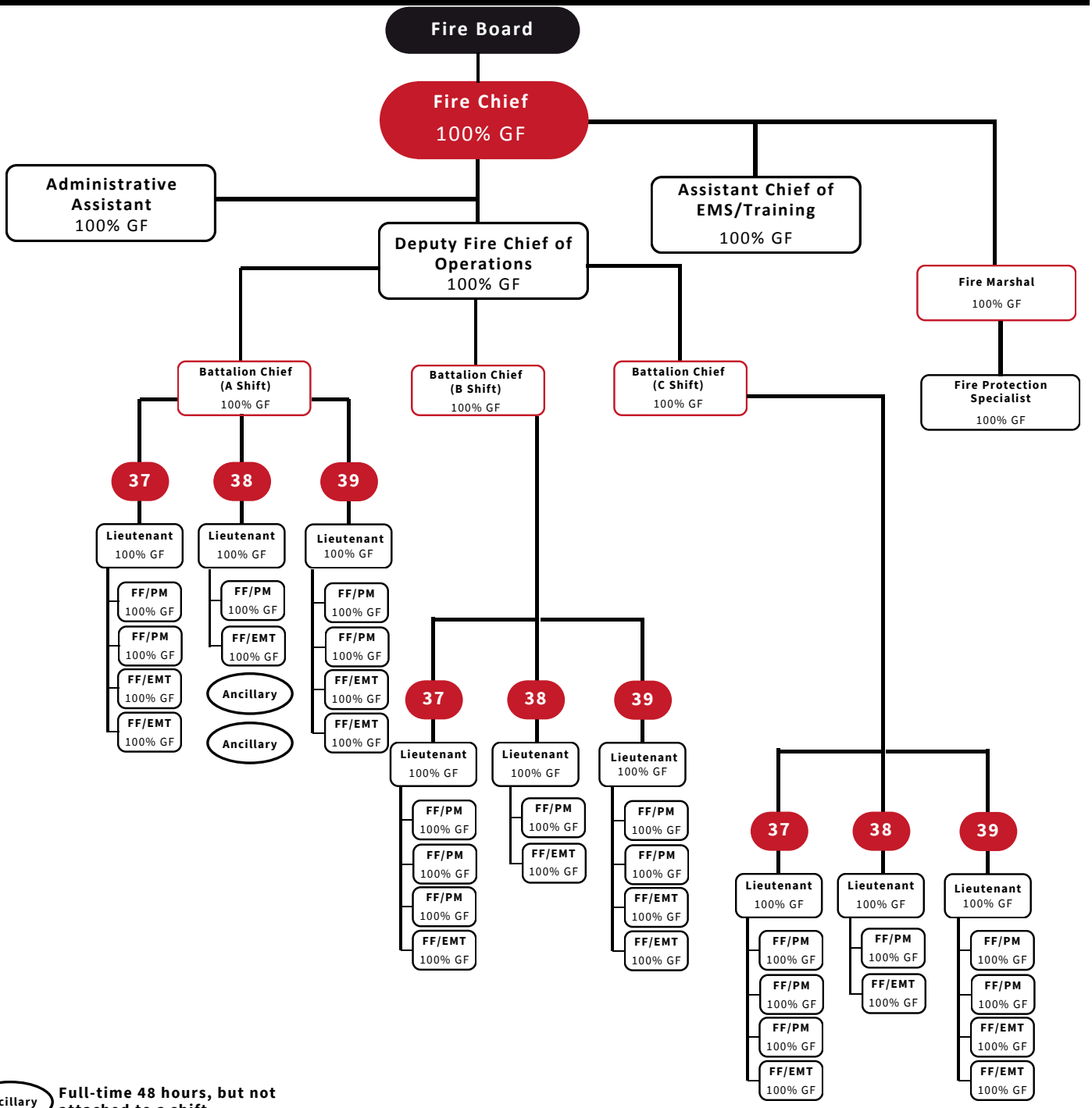
CHALLENGES:

- Population growth, especially in Grimes and associated organizational changes that may be required.
- With the updated 28E agreement transferring equipment ownership to the administrative city, a new replacement schedule is needed to align district equipment levels with available capital equipment program funding.
- Possibility of a future station in north Johnston.
- Right sizing staffing levels and response model to provide safe and effective response forces that coincide with population growth and services demand in an increasingly restrictive budgetary environment.

FIRE

Firefighters, Paramedics and EMTs

FY 2025/26



Ancillary — Full-time 48 hours, but not attached to a shift

FF = Firefighter
PM = Paramedic
EMT = Emergency Medical Technician

FIRE EMPLOYEES
Line staff: 45
Administrative staff: 6
Total: 51

THE FIRE DISTRICT

- The District is governed by a Fire Board comprised of three (3) officials from Johnston, three (3) officials from Grimes, with one (1) alternate per community. In 2023 the cities adopted a new 10-year agreement covering the operation.
- The District is currently staffed by one full-time Fire Chief, two full-time Deputy Chiefs, one full-time Fire Marshal, (1) full-time Fire Prevention Specialist, (3) full-time Battalion Chiefs, (9) full-time lieutenants, and (30) full-time firefighters. Firefighters and lieutenants are represented by IAFF Local 4835, and the current contract term is (2024 – 2028). The District functions through a community driven Strategic Plan (2024 – 2027).
- JGMFD receives its dispatching and 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) services through the Polk County Communications Center (PCCC). This service is a function of the Polk County Sheriff's Department. In addition to dispatching for the JGMFD, the center also dispatches for fourteen other fire agencies and sixteen law enforcement agencies. The JGMFD has a system in place to ensure consistent communication with portable, mobile, and fixed radio systems.
- The District serves the communities with three fire stations. Station 37 is located at 200 South James Street in Grimes (soon to be replaced with a new station at 2001 SW 6th Street), Station 38 is located at 10225 NW 62nd Avenue in Johnston, and Station 39 is located at 6373 Merle Hay Road in Johnston. All three stations are staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The District responded to over 4,400 calls in 2024. Shift operations work from a 48/96 schedule.
- The fleet consists of nineteen (19) apparatus including Personal Watercrafts and two Rescue Boats. Station 37 houses (1) ambulance, and engine, tender, brush units and reserve fleet. Station 38 houses a rescue unit and tower ladder (new in 2024). Station 39 houses the Shift Commander, an ambulance, engine, tender and water rescue. The district provides water rescue on Saylorville Lake as well as the Des Moines river.
- EMS, Extrication, or Rescue responses, operate from the closest rescue engine format from Station 38 and an ambulances from Stations 37 and 39. Structure fire responses include two engines, one ladder, and two ambulances responding from Johnston-Grimes stations along with mutual aid support with one engine, one ladder, and one ambulance for a total response of 19 personnel. A water rescue response is a collaboration between Johnston-Grimes and mutual aid neighbors depending on whether the response is to Saylorville Lake (assistance from Ankeny, Granger, and Polk City), the Des Moines River, or Beaver Creek (assistance from Des Moines).

THE FIRE DISTRICT

- In 2023, the EMS division introduced two new software programs to streamline the tracking of medications and supplies required for daily citizen care. In addition, a new online program was launched to simplify EMS supply tracking and ordering processes, reducing procurement time, while ensuring adequate stock levels.
- The Special Operations Team covers a variety of response specialties working with area agencies on specialized rescue responses. The District under a Iowa Code 28E agreement in that provides mutual aid collective service with 30 local agencies.
- The District is focused on Health and Wellness through a program that focuses on the health and safety of the personnel's physical and mental health. This is done through regular Physical Fitness Assessment, support from certified trainers (district personnel), cancer awareness prevention and more.
- The City of Johnston conducted a Community Survey in 2024 to receive feedback from residents, regarding the police department, fire district, parks, library, public works, communications, and community development. Out of the 416 residents surveyed, 84 percent indicated they were very satisfied with the overall quality of life in our community. In terms of safety, 94 percent expressed satisfaction with feeling safe, which is 45 percent higher than the national average in city quality-of-life rankings.
- The district currently is an ISO Class 3.

The Fire/EMS Chief position is a very visible member of the senior leadership team of the District and requires well-developed leadership abilities and management skill sets that are based upon consensus building and problem-solving. He/she must be a highly motivated, self-starting, and confident individual with excellent, genuine, and trustworthy interpersonal skills. The District is seeking progressive candidates committed to excellence in delivery of fire/EMS, Specialized Response and Emergency Management services.

- The District is seeking an experienced, innovative, collaborative fire/EMS leader with demonstrated managerial, interpersonal and customer service skills. Successful candidates will be able to demonstrate a balance of commitment to the organization with genuine confidence and approachable personality to residents, business, and governmental leaders.
- It is particularly important that the next Fire/EMS Chief be an integral and engaged leader of the Fire District. The best candidates should not only possess a strong background in modern fire, EMS, Community Risk Reduction, emergency management and all hazards' practices, but also a demonstrated record of success in change management, strategic planning, shaping public policy, and/or intergovernmental collaboration.
- The new Fire/EMS Chief must understand the need to use data for problem solving assessing community risk and vulnerabilities.
- The Fire/EMS Chief should have a positive track record of strong bargaining relations with proven experience in fostering collaboration with Bargaining Unit members.
- Qualified candidates must demonstrate the ability to mentor and foster leadership roles within the staff, succession planning, and a global vision of the community's needs and vision are critical. Creativity and the ability to guide and balance change is a must.
- Qualified candidates must have the capability to be an active participant in operations and training to safely function as a command officer on incident scenes including oversight of interior operations within IDLH conditions.
- Qualified candidates must demonstrate the ability to develop strong relationships with surrounding Fire/EMS agencies fostering a regional approach to emergency responses.
- The next Fire/EMS Chief will also have a demonstrated record of fairness, transparency, and consistency in the administration of District policies and procedures and the willingness to address issues in a positive and timely manner. The Fire/EMS Chief must possess well-developed writing and public speaking skills and the utmost integrity.

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES:

- Shall possess a bachelor's degree in public administration or related field from an accredited college or university. A master's degree is preferred.
- At least seven 7-10 years of demonstrated leadership in supervisory positions with career development as a chief officer.
- Candidate's successful completion of the Executive Fire Officer Program offered by the National Fire Academy, and or Chief Fire Officer Designation is desired.

The annual starting salary range for this position is $145,659 to $167,507.50 depending upon qualifications. The District also offers an attractive benefits package. Candidates should apply by **April 7, 2025 @ 1700 hours CDT** with **resume, cover letter and contact information for five work-related, or professional references** to govhrjobs.com **(electronic applications only)**. Questions may be addressed to the attention of T.E. Sashko, MGT, 790 Frontage Road Suite 213 Northfield, IL 60093, or (847)380-3240x123. The District is an Equal Opportunity Employer.