

KENOSHA NEWS

Man on the move

Kenosha City Council OKs new transit director
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The new man in charge of making Kenosha move hopes to see increased public transit services and choices in the near future.

Ron Iwen was appointed Monday as the city's new transit director by the City Council. The role involves overseeing and directing the city's bus, streetcar and other public transportation functions.

Iwen, 44, has served as the interim transit director since the start of the year and was supervisor of transit operations for the last seven years.

Iwen began working for the city as a waste collector in 1992, but moved through the city's ranks and earned a college degree during that time. He joined the Transit Department in 2003, shortly after Len Brandrup, Iwen's predecessor as transit director, was hired by the city.

"I had a good teacher," Iwen said of Brandrup, who retired at the end of last year. "He basically showed me the ropes. I was glad to get this. I enjoy working with transit, and I think this is an integral part of the community."

The department moved into a new \$13.3 million transit garage and headquarters, which allows the city's entire bus fleet to be stored indoors, in 2006.

That change has been a significant help for the department, Iwen said.

"We needed this probably 10 or 15 years ago," Iwen said.

Iwen also takes over as discussions of the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter rail line continue. Iwen said rail development could provide a significant boost for Kenosha.

"I think Kenosha will be a bigger hub," Iwen said. "I think it will mean a lot of development and growth for Kenosha."

Iwen said he would also like to see more bus routes and more weekend and night hours in the city. He would support expanding the city's streetcar services through more of the downtown area, if that plan was supported by city administration and aldermen.

"I think downtown can develop a lot better with more streetcar service," Iwen said.

Iwen's appointment was approved unanimously, with several supportive comments from aldermen and Mayor Keith Bosman.

"I want to heartily endorse the appointment," Alderman Don Holland, chairman of the city's Transit Commission, said. "He's a very knowledgeable person in terms of transit operations."

The city received 18 applications for the position and seven people were interviewed. Iwen will have a

starting annual salary of \$73,068.

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