

THE TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH, MA

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR RECRUITMENT

Invitation to Qualified Candidates

INTRODUCTION

Northborough, MA. (pop. 16,000) is seeking an enthusiastic, proactive, community-oriented leader to serve as its next Town Administrator. This quintessential New England town is situated in eastern Worcester County and is primarily a residential suburban community with a growing high-tech, commercial, and retail business sector. Northborough is ideally located at the intersection of Interstate 495 and 290 and is just 10 miles from Worcester and 30 miles from Boston, not far from world class medical, educational, recreational, entertainment, and cultural assets while providing numerous employment opportunities for its residents. Led by a five-member Select Board, with a traditional open town meeting form of government and an established Town Charter, the Town Administrator is the Chief Administrative Officer and oversees 121 FT employees and an approved FY '24 operating budget of \$80M and an FY '24 capital budget of \$2.8M. This is a full-service community and is known for being well-managed and fiscally conservative as evidenced by its investment grade Aa1 bond rating by Moody's Investors Services. The successful candidate will have strong interpersonal, written, and verbal skills which are essential for success in this position with a commitment to providing excellent customer service. BA/BS is required, MPA/MBA preferred, with a minimum of 5 to 8 years of progressive municipal management and leadership experience or the equivalent in business, not-for-profit management, or higher education. The Town established a salary range of \$185,000 to \$210,000 to be negotiated by the Select Board and dependent on the specific qualifications and experience of the candidate. The Town also offers a competitive benefits package. Northborough is an equal-opportunity employer and is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion to create a diverse workforce. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply and will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.



For further information, potential candidates are directed to the Municipal Resources, Inc. website at www.mrigov.com/career or to contact Municipal Resources, Inc. at 603-279-0352 ext. 330.

To apply submit a resume and cover letter, in confidence, as a PDF attachment to recruitment@mrigov.com **by Monday, October 2nd, 2023 at 8 AM EDT.**

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IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

The *Ideal* Candidate for the position of Northborough, MA Town Administrator will have:

A graduate degree in public administration or a similar advanced degree in related fields is required.

At least 5 years of demonstrated senior-level leadership in public management or relevant, transferable experience in a large public or not-for-profit organization may be considered.

Demonstrated skills in HR/Personnel, facilities management, and public building construction will be important skills for the success of the new Town Administrator.

A career record of creative and innovative financial budget preparation and a CIP planning process that actively seeks to solicit input from elected officials and interested residents.

A collaborative and deliberative style of management that allows for and promotes community involvement by an engaged, caring, and active citizenry. A leader by example who empowers and trust managers and staff to run their Departments in an efficient and effective manner but avoids being a micromanager. Someone who will hold staff and managers accountable.

A manager who appreciates the hard work of all municipal employees and supports their efforts. A visible manager who gets out of the office and engages with staff and the community at large.

Ability to solve complex issues by researching and thoroughly understanding the matter before the community. Someone who will embrace and identify innovative, bold, and creative solutions.

Candidate must demonstrate a history of effective and persuasive public speaking while using the latest technology to enhance oral/visual presentations. Candidate must be committed to open and transparent government.

Extensive knowledge and experience in negotiations within a collective bargaining environment while also maintaining positive union and non-union relationships within the organization.

Ability to listen, empower and support the various volunteer boards and committees in the local government particularly those who help provide the highest level of customer service delivery.

Must be committed to the utilization of evolving IT tools to improve internal and external communications while building added efficiencies into the delivery systems of the community.

A record of nurturing and embracing a positive culture in the Town Hall while promoting civility and professional decorum in all public discourse.

Demonstrated ability to provide unbiased guidance to all elected and appointed officials.

A proven skill set that allows the manager to multi-task a myriad of complex issues while remaining focused on Select Board priorities.

Skills in working collaboratively, cooperatively, and building consensus with a strong emphasis on maintaining a positive, productive relationship between the School and Municipal Administrations. Demonstrated career-long foundation of impeccable professional and personal ethical standards, integrity, respect, honesty, and accountability.

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The New Town Administrator

The new Northborough Town Administrator will need to be a strong municipal leader with a track record of good communication and people skills who will be able to gain the respect of and work well with elected and appointed officials, employees, volunteers, residents, business leaders, and community organizations. It will be critically important that he or she demonstrates the ability to work with diverse groups, acknowledge and respect divergent views and communicate openly while remaining transparent and apolitical. The skill and ability to facilitate honest and respectful dialogue between various factions when dealing with controversial or volatile community issues is seen as essential. Transparency and openness of government must be a priority for the next Town Administrator.



The Community

The residents of Northborough are proud of their Town’s rural charm, open space, and agricultural history. Approximately one-fourth of the Town is considered protected open space, and this provides the residents with numerous opportunities for outdoor passive and active recreation including an extensive trail network for hiking, running, and biking. It is noteworthy that Northborough has five working farms of all sizes that provide a generous variety of locally grown fruits, berries, and vegetables. The Town is known for its “Applefest” in the fall.

Northborough is a very desirable community in which to live and raise a family due to its proximity to Boston and excellent schools. A significant part of the challenge facing the new Town Administrator will be to balance the cost to continue providing a high level of Town and education services at a sustainable tax rate during this time when young families, with children, and older residents, aging in place, are feeling the burden of residential taxes. The largest share, 75%, of the real estate tax base comes from the residential sector and the remaining 25% comes from the commercial/industrial and personal property sector.



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Town Finances

The Town has a long tradition of strong financial planning and fiscally conservative budgeting of both revenues and expenditures. The FY '24 operating budget is \$80M of which 59% is for educational expenses and 21% is for Town expenses. The capital budget is \$2.8M for FY '24. The Town Departments are well managed with seasoned Department Heads and employees. The public safety departments are particularly noteworthy. The Police Department is accredited, and the Fire Rescue and Emergency Management Department provides the community with advanced life support emergency services with two ambulances staffed by paramedics.

The Town's financial reserves are not only healthy but also outstanding: certified free cash has averaged \$2.6M over the past 5 years, the stabilization fund balance is \$5.5M, the CPA Fund balance



is approximately \$1.3M, the excess levy capacity is \$3.9M for FY 23, the ARPA funds have an available balance of \$2.5M. The OPEB Trust is funded at \$5.8M which is 12% of the \$49M liability. It should be noted that the Town's reserves as a percent of the adopted budget have averaged 8.8% for the past 5 years. The Government Finance Officers Association has presented the Town with its Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for ten consecutive years! Northborough has been a leader in assisting other communities in achieving this GFOA award by providing training sessions on budgeting best practices and long-range financial planning. Mood's Investors Services recognized the Town has a history of healthy financial planning, conservative management, low debt burden, and manageable pension obligations when they awarded Northborough with an investment grade bond rating of Aa1.



Challenges and Opportunities:

Master Plan and Open Space Plan:

There are two important documents for any well-planned community, one is a comprehensive Master Plan and the other is an Open Space & Recreation Plan. The Planning Board and Conservation Commission and staff updated both the Master Plan and the Open Space & Recreation Plan in 2020. These plans are the vision for the future of the Town and represent hundreds of hours of community meetings and input. They are blueprints for the new Town Administrator as he or she works to accomplish the goals and objectives of the community in the years ahead. Both reports have detailed implementation or action plans to guide the Town's investments going forward. These two newly updated documents will provide a unique opportunity for the next Town Administrator to help lead and guide the process of implementing the goals and objectives identified within the document which defines the direction of the community over the next decade.



Financial Stability:

The town currently has a stable financial position among Massachusetts communities. However, the challenge for the next Town Administrator will be how to guide the community going forward with the increasing demands for service, an inordinate amount of dependence on the residential taxpayer, the continued gentrification of the community, and significant infrastructure needs including large public building projects on the horizon. The Administrator will need to assist in addressing all these areas of concern with the Select Board and other interested parties in the community.

CIP Development and Funding:

Northborough has a history of providing a reasoned, well-thought-out Capital Improvement Plan as part of its annual budgetary process. However, as is the case in most communities, this document is a resource and planning tool that must be flexible enough to allow for the changing needs, requirements, and desires of the community. In this case, the Town Administrator may be faced with a number of potentially large capital building projects within the town including a possible new central fire station headquarters, a rehab/rebuild of the Peaslee Elementary School, and major investments in a number of facilities in the community. Identifying additional funding

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sources besides local taxation will be an important task for the Administrator in crafting a sustainable CIP for the future.

Development Opportunities:

The financial challenges mentioned above can provide an opportunity for the new Town Administrator to evaluate many existing and proposed development initiatives in the community to help offset the residential tax burden on Northborough residents. Initiatives around the White Cliffs site, the old Town Hall complex, the potential for downtown redevelopment, and many others could help the balance of taxation in the community by shifting more of the burden to a robust and growing commercial growth sector. The Administrator can assist and offer advice to the Planning Board, the Select Board, and all other agencies responsible for monitoring and approving many of the projects.

Retention and Recruitment of Staff for the Community:

The town is fortunate and is proud to have very competent department managers and staff working within the framework of the local organization. An important responsibility of the new Administrator will be how to work with and promote staff within the organization and most importantly how to retain excellent staff in the current work environment. Creative and new initiatives to retain and recruit new employees will be an opportunity for the next Administrator. Additionally, new recruitment techniques and tools will be necessary to obtain the goal of finding quality employees for the town of Northborough.



Northborough is a wonderful community that has all the characteristics of a traditional New England town. The next Administrator must bring passion, energy, commitment to excellence, ingenuity, integrity, and the confidence to be the leader who guides this quintessential community in the years ahead.

For More Information

MRI provides information about Northborough in this document, however, candidates are encouraged to learn more about the Town and the position by visiting Municipal Resources' website www.mrigov.com and the Town's website <https://www.town.northborough.ma.us/>. Candidates can also contact Alan Gould at agould@mrigov.com or by phone at 603-279-0352 ext. 320.