

THE TOWN OF WINCHESTER/CITY OF WINSTED TOWN MANAGER RECRUITMENT

Invitation to Qualified Candidates

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Winchester/City of Winsted, CT is seeking an experienced, collaborative, engaging, and enthusiastic professional to serve as Town Manager and Chief Executive Officer for Winchester. The community has had an established Town Manager/Mayor/Board of Selectmen form of government since 1962. The Town is the second largest community in Litchfield County with a population of 10,200 encompassing 33.8 square miles of land with numerous recreational



opportunities mainly around the very large, desirable, and picturesque Highland Lake. The Town center in Winsted is at the crossroads of Route 44 and Route 8 and has a well-defined downtown that supports many businesses in this corridor. The Town has a highly respected local school system and is home to Northwestern Community College.

The recently approved budget for FY2024 is \$39.1M with approximately \$24M of that total to support the local School district. The Town has also approved an allocation of \$2M from the General fund to pay for Capital improvements. In 2023, the S&P bond rating agency upgraded the Town to AA rating for future debt service obligations. There are a total of 60 FTE employees and numerous part-time staff.

The Town of Winchester offers its Town Manager a competitive salary, currently budgeted at \$130,000-\$150,000, and a benefits package. The starting salary level is dependent on experience, education, and qualifications. Benefits include an offering of health insurance (including dental and vision), life insurance, generous employer-matching contributions to a defined contribution plan, 14 paid holidays, sick and vacation leave accruals, paid ICMA and CTCMA membership fees, and more. The ideal candidate will have a Bachelor's degree, MPA or MBA preferred, and five years of demonstrated, progressive management experience in public administration or relevant fields. The Town of Winchester is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is actively searching for a diverse candidate pool.

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 **8 AM, Monday, December 4, 2023**.

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ABOUT THE TOWN

Winchester is in Litchfield County at the crossroads of Route 44 and Route 8. With a population of approximately 10,200, it is the second-largest municipality in the county. The Town is just 25 miles from Hartford, an hour to the coast, and a little over a two-hour drive to either New York City or Boston. Winchester is surrounded by the towns of Barkhamsted, Colebrook, Torrington, Goshen, and Norfolk. The Town was incorporated in 1771 and includes the City of Winsted, the name historically attributed to the downtown, more-developed portion of Winchester. Winchester's total area is 33.8 square miles with a grand list of \$1.03 billion.

In 2022, Winchester was ranked #4 on Realtor.com's Top 10 List of Affordable Lake Towns in America. Highland Lake, Winchester's crown jewel, has a surface area of 445 acres with an



average depth of 24 feet. The lake is accessible through a public State boat launch and two Town-owned beaches. The Town has also been featured in the Wall Street Journal as a town that has recently seen significant economic gains. The Town prides itself on both its natural beauty and its access to more urban amenities.

Winchester has a high-quality school system that consists of the recently renovated as-new Hinsdale School, Pearson Middle School, and the Gilbert

School (a privately endowed academy that serves as the Town's high school). The Town is also home to Northwestern Community College, the only institution of higher education in Litchfield County.

THE PROFILE

The duties of the Town Manager are defined by the Town's Charter and a job description that is updated periodically by the Board of Selectmen. These duties include, but are not strictly limited to the following:

The ***Ideal*** Candidate for the position of Winchester, CT Town Manager will:

Ensure that all laws and ordinances governing the Town are faithfully executed.

Attend regular Board of Selectmen meetings and make regular reports to the Board. Make professional recommendations to the Board of Selectmen concerning the affairs of the Town and facilitate the work of the Board in developing policy.

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Keep the Board of Selectmen fully advised as to the financial condition and anticipated future financial needs of the Town.

Acts as the Town's Human Resources Director; oversees and manages a staff of 60 FTE employees and numerous part-time employees. At the time of an emergency or disaster, be present and expend the necessary funds to ensure the smooth operation of Town business and the health, safety, and well-being of the Town and its residents, consistent with the Charter.

Prepare and submit to the Board of Selectmen a proposed annual Town Budget and Capital Improvement Plan.

Assist the Board in developing long-term goals including economic development for the Town and strategies to implement such goals.

QUALITIES & TRAITS

Winchester is seeking candidates that have the following traits and qualities:

Commitment to an open-door policy and an ability to listen respectfully to a variety of opinions and suggestions, carefully consider what was heard in arriving at a decision that is best for the circumstances and community, and stand firm behind decisions once they are made.



Ability to convincingly communicate a decision or course of action so the community, Board, and staff understand the logic and support the effort.

A mature, and self-confident individual who can communicate administrative insights to the Town's boards, committees, staff, and other stakeholders with an ability to firmly and diplomatically present professional views and carry out administrative decisions in a timely, fair, and impartial manner.

Commitment to create a collaborative team environment that is dedicated to accountability and the empowerment of staff through professional input and recommendations, establishing a course to follow with clear expectations, and supporting continuous improvement personally and professionally. Someone who will acknowledge the team's accomplishments and take responsibility when things go amiss.

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Ability to appreciate and trust the competence of the professional staff, to support and guide their performance, and to assist with their continued development and advancement.

Ability to identify evolving issues and develop responses, articulate a vision for the organization, and work with a diverse group of stakeholders. Willing to actively listen to new, innovative, and creative ideas when incorporating those ideas into solutions and projects and be able to effectively communicate with the public across a variety of mediums.

Commitment to professionalism, transparency, community engagement, and accountability; not afraid to share information with all stakeholders and engage in discussion in a sincere effort to achieve consensus.

Possesses a sense of humor, a positive attitude, and the ability to be flexible with the Town's stakeholders. Someone who follows through and does the right thing for the right reasons.

A reputation of personal and professional integrity, trustworthiness, ethical behavior, and open-mindedness. Leading an organization by example and conducting all personal and professional interactions honestly, fairly, humbly, and with a willingness to admit when mistakes are made.

A willingness to form a deep commitment to the community and its stakeholders.

THE CHALLENGES

Main Street Corridor Developments: The Town has focused considerable efforts on the reinvigoration of Main Street in downtown Winsted. This has involved extending forgivable loans to help start-up new businesses and refresh the facade of existing businesses; obtaining a \$1.7 million Communities Challenge Grant to invest in public art, signage, and sidewalks; sharing



business information through our website and social media channels; and more. Main Street is on the rise, and the newly selected Town Manager will help continue its growth and development.

Housing Opportunities: Winchester is currently in the process of seeking to sell a 118-acre property known as Mountainside Drive that is ripe for a single-family housing development. An affordable housing adaptive reuse project is progressing at the former Batcheller Elementary School site, and another hopeful housing project is taking place at 10 Bridge Street, Building #1. Winchester is

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well positioned to grow and play its part in resolving the housing crisis, and the next Town Manager will be responsible for helping all of these projects over the proverbial finish line.

Industrial & Commercial Development: The Town has invested a significant amount of time and attention on its manufacturers, a sector that comprises nearly a third of all jobs offered within the Town of Winchester. To grow the grand list, efforts are now being made to attract new industrial and commercial firms to Winsted and assist existing firms with growth opportunities in areas where it makes sense. This is a primary goal of the Board of Selectmen, and the new Town Manager will work with staff and other stakeholders to grow the grand list in this area.

Marketing & Communications: To grow Winsted's business base and tourism industry, more demand is needed, which means we need to get Winsted on the map. Efforts have been made to make Winsted a marketable destination for tourists and visitors, and it is time to take the next step in these efforts.

Recruitment & Retention: Like many organizations post-pandemic, the Town has faced many retirements and other staff departures that have resulted in departments having staff members who are fairly new on the job. The Town Manager will be tasked with creating recruitment and retention plans and campaigns to address this challenge.

Healthy, Livable, & Sustainable Community: Winchester has recently been recognized as a Sustainable CT Bronze Certified community, and the Town has put a renewed focus on making the downtown area a more vibrant, walkable, and livable area. The Town has also focused on preserving open space and the natural character of the northwest hills. The next Town Manager will work to further sustainability and health efforts while balancing preservation with development.

Critical Infrastructure Needs: In 2022, the Town estimated that it has over \$60 million in needed road repairs. That same year, the Town authorized \$24.7 million to be bonded and invested in critical infrastructure between the years 2023 - 2027. This work has begun, and the newly appointed Town Manager will oversee the project's completion.

Financial Success & Growth: Over the past decade tremendous strides have been made to improve the Town's financial position. In 2023, the Town received a double bond rating upgrade to AA with S&P, and the Town has won over \$5.5 million in competitive state and federal grants in 2022 and 2023 alone. The Town expects the Town Manager to continue this positive financial trend while understanding the importance of grants and decreasing our reliance on residential property taxes to accomplish the Town's goals.

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IMPORTANT LINKS

MRI provides information about the Town of Winchester/City of Winsted, however, the candidates are encouraged to do their own research and learn more about the community and the position by visiting the links below:

Town's Website: <https://www.townofwinchester.org/>

Town Charter & Ordinances: <https://www.townofwinchester.org/subpages/charter-ordinances-regulations>

Town Budget: <https://www.townofwinchester.org/subpages/town-budget>

Plan of Conservation and Development: <https://www.townofwinchester.org/entities/planning-community-development-8>

