

*Town of Johnson Vermont*  
*Community and Position Profile*  
*Town Administrator*



**Introduction:** This Community and Position profile is to provide baseline information about the position being advertised and the Community where the successful applicant would be working. It is intended to provide information to the candidates about the position and the community it serves.

**The Community:** The Town of Johnson is located in the center of Lamoille County, in the state of Vermont. It has a population of app. 3491 (2020 census data) which includes an incorporated Village, pop. 1332 (2020 census data). The Village of Johnson owns and operates a small Municipal Electric Utility, Water and Sewer Utilities and a Fire Department. The Village has a separate governing body (Trustees) and their own Municipal Manager.

The town is bisected by the Lamoille River and is therefore a beautiful mix of river valley and mountainous terrain. It is also bisected by the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, a four season multi use recreational trail. The trail is one of the longest in New England at app 97 miles long, originating in Swanton Vermont and crossing the state to St Johnsbury Vermont. Johnson is located approximately halfway on the trail. The Long Trail also crosses the town, which is a renowned hiking trail offering more wonderful hiking and recreational opportunities.

The natural features and rural nature of Johnson provide multiple recreational opportunities including hiking, walking, biking, swimming, canoeing, hunting and fishing, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, snow shoeing and a host of other activities. It is also close to Stowe, Smugglers Notch and Jay

The town owns or maintains Journey's End (remote swimming and natural area on Foote brook), Beard's Recreation Area (popular swimming hole on the Gihon River), The Ted Alexander Welcome Center (welcome center, access and parking for the Rail Trail), The Talc Mill Recreation Field, an Arboretum, Legion Field (Tuesday Night Live Music venue, Community Oven and winter skating), two Town Forests and access points on the Lamoille River for canoes and kayaks.

Johnson has a vibrant "downtown", but like many small-town communities, it struggles with attracting and retaining businesses. That said Johnson is home to the Johnson Woolen Mills, the Vermont Studio Center (a world renowned arts center), a Gallery, a grocery store, a couple restaurants/cafes, a Bank, Butternut Mountain Farms Maple Products and a host of other small businesses offering goods and services, catering to local needs.

It is also home to Northern Vermont University (Formerly Johnson State College). Currently NVU is the result of a merger between Johnson State College and Lyndon State College. There is a further merger planned for this year with Castleton State University and Vermont Technical College, which in sum will comprise a new entity, Vermont State University. The college has been an important part of the community for decades and we hope it will continue to be into the future.

**The Position:** As mentioned, there is an incorporated Village, with it's own governance and Manager. The Town is governed by a five member Selectboard. The town does not have a "Manager" form of government and the Town Administrator has only those powers and duties granted in a Job Description. There is some administrative assistance available but no "Assistant Administrator" or dedicated administrative personnel.

The Town Administrator carries out the duties and responsibilities of the Town and other work as assigned by the Selectboard. In coordination with the Selectboard, the Administrator plans, organizes, directs, and coordinates the affairs of the Town in areas not directly the responsibility of others.

Important tasks include assisting the Selectboard in developing policies and procedures, budget development and administration, and coordinating long-range programs for Town departments. The Administrator is the “public face” of the town and must be adept at interfacing with residents, committees, and other stakeholders on behalf of the Town.

Attendance at twice monthly meetings with the Selectboard, and in advance of the meetings providing a report of correspondence and issues, with detailed information for any issues needing action are a critical part of the job. Directed follow-up on action items, effective time management, responsiveness to the Board and the public and maintaining a time due date calendar are essential requirements.

The town has contracts for police (Lamoille County Sheriff’s Dept), fire (Village of Johnson FD), and emergency medical services (Newport Ambulance Service). The town has a Public Works Department of five full time employees, including a Public Works Foreman, who is responsible for day to day operations. The town owns and maintains all of the highways, including those within the Village. The Village is responsible for sidewalks (including snow removal) and storm drains within the village limits.

The town provides recreation programs (mostly for youth) and Recreation areas, has an active Historical Society (including a building and collections), a Skate Park, a Public Library, and has numerous Commissions, Committees and volunteer groups. These include: Beautification Committee, Community Oven Committee, Racial Justice and Equity Committee, Skate Park Committee Recreation Committee, Rail Trail Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Development Review Board, Tree Board, and Tuesday Night Live Committee.

Johnson has a Form Based Code, primarily in the Village area, but does not have zoning or subdivision regulations. The Town Administrator has acted as the Form Based Code Officer. Johnson has a Flood Plain Zoning Regulation (with it’s own administrator). It also has numerous other ordinances including” Animal Control, Dilapidated Buildings, Solid Waste, ATV, Noise, E-911 Road Naming, Speed Limit, and by virtue of state statutes enforces Health Regulations. For most of these ordinances, the Administrator may be required to provide some basic support, administrative and coordination services, but is not directly responsible for enforcement.

The town has a part-time Recreation Coordinator (24 hrs/wk), which is under the general supervision of the Town Administrator. There is an elected Town Clerk and Treasurer (no oversight by the TA or SB) The TC/TT has oversight responsibility for the Assistant Clerk/Treasurer, and an Administrative Clerk. The Administrative Clerk provides limited administrative support to the Town Administrator.

The town is in the process of searching for a part time Community and Economic Development Specialist (CEDS), The current plan is to find both a qualified Town Administrator and a qualified CEDS, but it is possible the two positions could be combined into a 40 hr/wk position, if a there is a strong candidate (with emphasis on the skills of CEDS).

The Municipal Office building is jointly owned by the town and village and serves as the main administrative office for both entities. The town and village are also joint owners of app. 200 acres of land (the former Talc Mill), which includes a Village Public Works Garage, a Town Public Works Garage, a shared “cold storage” building (for storage of tools, supplies and equipment for the town and village) and a “Mill House” which currently serves as a local Food Shelf and office space.

The town operates on a fiscal year of July 1 to June 30. The most recent approved budget (FY 24) is \$3,392,820.00 with an estimated municipal tax rate of \$0.8743. The town has numerous Reserve Funds, including: Tax Anticipation, Highway, Buildings and Grounds, Recreation, Historical Society, Grant Match, Arboretum, Skate Park, Reappraisal, Bridge and Culvert and a couple small Cemetery Funds.

The position is being advertised at 32 hours per week (with the possibility of 40 hr per week, combining additional duties of Economic and Community Development. This possibility is highly dependent on candidate qualifications and interest). The pay range is between \$40.00 and \$50.00 per hour (but would be salaried), contingent on qualifications and hours.

Benefits include Health Insurance based on a town contribution of 90% of the value of a BCBS Gold Plan, ranging from single to family. A lesser or better plan may be selected, but the town contribution does not change. Current town contribution (annual): single \$8980.00 couple \$17,960.00 parent/child \$17,331.00 family \$25,234. A payroll deduction would be applied for any plan costs above the town contribution. A “cash in lieu of insurance” payment is available for those that opt out of insurance and can show they are covered under another policy.

The town offers a pro rata share for Delta Dental. At 32 hrs. (annual): single \$345.00 two person \$691.00 family \$1036.00

The town offers Long Term Disability Insurance and has a very attractive Personnel Policy which is designed to allow the person to accrue hours to meet short term health issues.

Participation in the Vermont Municipal Retirement System is mandatory. The town contributes app 6.5% of employee salary. There is an employee contribution of 5.875% of salary.

Federal mileage rate offered for use of personal vehicle, when using the vehicle for town business.

**Important Personal Qualities:** Above all, the successful candidate must be self-motivated, able to follow and carry out board directives, have strong “people skills”, be energetic, creative, and enthusiastic, and able to work collaboratively and effectively with the Selectboard, other community groups/players and the public.

Technical skills may be slightly less valuable than people skills but are nonetheless very important. A candidate with strong skills in economic and community development, grant writing and administration will be highly valued. Experience with human resource issues, financial management, budget development and administration (annual and capital), knowledge of state and federal laws and regulations affecting local government. Excellent oral, communication and written skills are highly valued.

**Challenges and Opportunities:** Johnson is a small rural community with a limited tax base. Therefore, leveraging other funding sources for projects is very important.

One challenge is merger discussions between town and village. There has been a merger study done and the voters of both entities instructed their respective boards to continue investigating options. This effort seems to have stalled.

The town owns a parcel of land that was purchased five years ago, with the goal of creating a small Light Industrial/Commercial Park. An Engineering study is being updated with the goal of filing for an Act 250 permit. A “letter of interest” has been submitted to the Northern Borders Regional Commission. If accepted an actual application can be developed and submitted. There may still be funding shortfalls, so developing a funding plan is a challenge.

It seems there may be significant opportunities for state and federal grants in the next couple of years. The town would like to be poised to take advantage of as many of those opportunities as possible.

A general challenge is to support and improve opportunities for local businesses in our downtown area. This could involve planning ways to capitalize on the full opening of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.