

TOWN OF BERLIN, MASSACHUSETTS (POPULATION 3,096)

FIRE CHIEF RECRUITMENT

MARCH 2019

IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE & CHALLENGE STATEMENT



Overview and Operational Information

The Fire Chief is formally appointed by the three-member Board of Selectmen. The Town utilizes the Open Town Meeting form of government.

The department recently transitioned from operating separate fire and EMS organizations to a full-service fire/rescue agency that offers emergency medical care and patient transportation. Berlin receives Advanced Life Support through a regional ALS intercept service. The new Fire Chief will be expected to build upon the work that has been initiated and lead a progressive fire rescue organization.



The Department operates 3 engines, 1 tanker, 1 ladder/quint and an ambulance responding out of a single centrally located

facility. The Berlin Fire Department is a combination department with both career and on-call personnel.

The department has 4 fulltime and 41 on-call fire/ems personnel of which 22 are EMTs that are asked to respond on a 24/7 basis. Reflecting the nationwide reduction in the availability of on-call and volunteer personnel, The Town is challenged to recruit and retain on-call personnel. As the organization evolves, the new Chief should expect that he/she will be a working chief and on occasion fill a first response fire/EMS role.

Target hazards within the response area of the Town of Berlin include the Solomon Pond Mall, the Shops at Highland Commons Shopping Complex and a growing commercial area. Also, the Town is adjacent to Interstate Route 290 and includes a portion of Interstate Route 495.

The **Ideal Candidate** will have the following experience, education knowledge, skills and abilities. It is understood that any individual qualified candidate may not meet all of these criteria.

A Bachelor's degree (Masters highly preferred) in public administration, fire science, or a closely related field;

A minimum of 10 years of municipal fire/rescue management *and command* experience;

A minimum of two years as a chief fire officer;

Knowledge and experience within an on-call or combination fire service agency. This includes a strong history of working within and developing on-call fire service agencies;

Emergency medical services experience and certification and experience as either a Basic EMT or Paramedic, including certification as a Massachusetts/Nationally Registered EMT;

A graduate of the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy;

Credentialed or ability to obtain credentialing, as a Massachusetts Fire Chief/Emergency Manager;

Certification as a firefighter, fire officer I - IV and fire instructor along with experience providing fire service training;

The willingness and ability to commit to the position for a minimum of 5 to 7 years;

Imagination and creativity;

Strong finance and analytical skills;

A commitment to technology;

The ability to actively listen and have empathy for other team members;

Strong public speaking, presentation, and promotional skills;

Desire to be active and visible within the community;

Demonstrated ability to organize, lead, and motivate people, and manage stressful situations;

Humility, integrity, and a strong public ethic;

A “Big Picture” orientation and the ability to create strategic long-range plans;

A sense of humor;

Demonstrated skills as a management team player and consensus builder;

Ability to advocate for the Fire Department and consider the needs and services of other agencies;

Respect and appreciation for broad and diverse opinions and attitudes.

Ideal Candidate Profile:

Berlin is seeking a Fire Chief that can continue the fire rescue transition and current on-call service model and help to bring the community together as a partner in an expanded recruitment and retention effort.

To be successful, it is critical that the chief collaborate with other departments especially the Police Department, Communications Center, Town Offices, and Elementary School.

It is essential that the chief work together with the Police Chief to determine the best way to maximize limited resources with the growing needs of the community.

To be successful, the chief will need to be an engaged, creative, and credible advocate and steward with the leadership ability and strength of character to rally the community and the fire department for the common good.

The chief must be a strong leader, able to nurture positive internal as well as external relationships, and demonstrate understanding, empathy, and caring while holding her/himself and others to the highest standards of integrity and accountability.

The chief must be capable of making decisions that are in the best interest of the public and the public safety needs of the citizens of Berlin.

The chief must establish and maintain a high level of credibility and trust throughout the department and the community, dealing with everyone, regardless of rank, with an even hand and a sense of fundamental fairness.

As the emergency manager and Chairman of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) he/she must develop and coordinate a team-based response to significant incidents that impact Berlin.

He/she must have a strong background and demonstrated commitment to contemporary concepts of public safety and community engagement. The community has an expectation of safety at levels that require the fire department to consistently endeavor to engage all stakeholders, including but not limited to schools, families, senior citizens, and businesses, in the planning and execution of fire, rescue and emergency medical management service strategies that will ensure a safe, resilient environment with the highest possible quality of life for all who live and visit here. The chief must lead this initiative by maintaining a visible and active presence in the community and conducting her/himself, personally and professionally, in a manner that is highly ethical and above reproach.

The next chief must have excellent written and oral communication skills and the ability to provide a clear and consistent vision of dedication and excellence in pursuit of public safety and service to the community. The chief must be able to accurately develop incident reports and other reports requested by the Town. The chief must be able to communicate effectively in a manner that inspires, motivates, and encourages cooperation and collaboration in pursuit of public safety within the department and throughout the extended community and the region.

The chief must foster teamwork and promote positive morale within the department and establish an effective rapport and cooperative relationships with elected community, state, and federal officials while remaining nonpartisan and apolitical.

The chief must have excellent management and leadership skills. One of the major challenges facing the new fire chief/emergency manager will be to manage the fire department budget during a period when the state and federal governments are cutting grants and local revenues are being stressed by increased health insurance, pension, and education costs. Specifically, the he/she must demonstrate the ability to manage staff resources within the confines of the allocated funding provided in the budget .

The individual selected for this position must be a creative and innovative “big picture” problem-solver who can work with others to identify and pursue ways to more efficiently and effectively organize, manage, and deliver core fire protection and rescue services. Experience with efforts involving inter-municipal cooperation and collaboration will be especially valuable.

The ideal candidate will possess the requisite skills to develop and achieve broad consensus on a future vision in ways that invite, recognize, acknowledge, and integrate contributions from within the fire department, from other municipal departments, and from stakeholders in the community.

It will be necessary for the chief to utilize his/her analytical skills with the ability to gather and organize data to facilitate meaningful analysis – interpret and present the “story in the data”, identify alternatives, and predict consequences. Quick establishment of rapport and credibility within the community will be achieved by providing candid, dispassionate, and professional counsel to the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen along with regular, accurate, and understandable reports regarding fire department operations and efforts to mitigate the Town’s fire protection and emergency medical vulnerabilities and risks.

The chief must also possess the leadership and organizational development skills needed to manage, groom, and coach fire department command and administrative staff to develop their full potential, while establishing an organization- wide effort to balance wants and needs in an environment of limited resources.

It will be vitally important that the chief have the foresight, along with the leadership and communication skills, to help unify and guide the fire department successfully within the reality of fiscal resources with an eye toward preserving the quality of life that distinguishes Berlin; embracing the notion of “living within our means” with sensitivity to external conditions affecting service levels and available resources. To achieve success, the chief will need to develop and maintain positive, constructive labor/management relationships but at the same time be an agent of change and accountability.

The chief will need to coordinate and assist others in developing and implementing a long-range municipal fire protection and emergency medical services master plan that incorporates progressive strategies for risk management, fire prevention, fire suppression, emergency medical response, community paramedicine, rescue services, and disaster preparedness and recovery. The chief must be willing and able to coordinate these efforts with neighboring communities within Middlesex County and must have the ability to include local businesses and private sector stakeholders in this effort. The Fire Chief/Emergency Manager must be capable of looking beyond the traditional fire service organizational and response models and identify and implement effective solutions that will improve service levels and agency productivity within the constraints of limited community resources.

Berlin has a strong desire for its fire department to provide a high level of quality service utilizing the resources provided. The chief should have appreciation and respect for the traditions of the department while pursuing the standards and technology that will provide superior fire protection and emergency medical services to the community for years to come. Towards that end, the successful candidate should be experienced in developing and implementing training programs, supervisory and performance

accountability systems, and departmental policies, standard operating procedures and standard operating guidelines that are consistent with nationally recognized standards and best practices.