

THE TOWN OF BERLIN, MA

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR RECRUITMENT

Invitation to Qualified Candidates

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Berlin, MA (pop. 3,158), is seeking a candidate experienced in all phases of small-town local government qualified to be the community's second Town Administrator. Governed by a three-member Select Board, Berlin operates under an open town meeting structure and is governed in accordance with a recently adopted Select Board and Town Administrator Act. The next Administrator will be the second professional Administrator in the community and works under the policy guidance of the Select Board. The Town Administrator supervises, manages, and coordinates the day-to-day activities of all town departments and employees under the jurisdiction of the Board and acts as chief procurement officer, budget director and human resources manager for the Town. With 26 FT employees and approximately 50 PT employees, the Town's budget for FY23 is \$14,728,485.



The community of Berlin recently became a part of a fully regionalized school system. Candidates should have a collaborative, effective leadership style grounded in personal and professional integrity while managing local governance in a transparent and open manner. The candidate should possess excellent verbal and written skills, be proficient in financial, communication, and presentation software applications. The Town of Berlin is a classic New England town with a rural heritage but has developed a strong commercial component at its borders with potential for further increasing its CIP tax base. Route 62 runs through Berlin which is also strategically located on the I-495 corridor, near I-90, I-290, and Route 2. Berlin is uniquely located to be an easy day trip to Boston or Worcester with all the educational, health, and cultural opportunities found in those cities, as well as within easy reach of all the New England states. Bachelor's degree in a related field (Master's preferred), and at least 5 years progressive municipal management and leadership experience, or relevant combination of experience and education. MCPPO certification or the ability to obtain this designation is a primary consideration for the successful candidate. Salary range to \$150,000 will be offered commensurate with qualifications and experience. The community offers a standard municipal benefits package. Equal Opportunity Employer. For additional information related to the search, contact Municipal Resources Inc. at 603-279-0352, x330.

Resume and cover letter in confidence as PDF attachment to: recruitment@mrigov.com

DEADLINE: Monday, June 6th, 2022 at 8 AM

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR – TOWN OF BERLIN, MA

The *Ideal* Candidate will have the following characteristics and skill sets:

A graduate degree in public administration or a closely related field is preferred.

At least 3 years (5 years preferred) of progressive municipal management and leadership experience, or a combination of education and experience with similar responsibilities in a state/federal government, a not for profit agency or a higher education system.

Knowledge of municipal law with demonstrated competency in budgetary and complex financial matters including procurement, with a strong emphasis on labor/management issues, MCPPO certification is highly desired as is a strong background in HR.

A proven record of long-term financial management and strategic planning including the ability to manage public projects and develop creative and innovative funding scenarios for a sustainable CIP. Someone who understands and promotes the small town budgetary process of engagement and participation of all affected parties.

A person who is passionate, clearly understands small town government and the important role played by committed volunteers who serve the Town in various ways.

A creative thinker able to bring new perspectives and provide innovative solutions. An individual who will listen to varying points of view before determining a course of action.

The ability to lead by example with a commitment to public service, belief in public ethical standards, and willingness to manage Town affairs in an open and transparent manner.

Experience as the principal negotiator for collective bargaining agreements and in the grievance process, arbitration and dispute resolution.

A proven record of nurturing a positive culture built on mutual respect, teamwork, and trust. Someone who will empower the dept managers and not micro-manage while holding all employees accountable for their responsibilities.

A demonstrated ability to provide guidance based in research and past experience without being dismissive of conflicting viewpoints.

Strong and confident public speaking and presentation skills before diverse groups within the community. Proficiency in the use of electronic media to reach out to the community members and provide accurate and timely information about the community.

Demonstrated ability to see projects brought to fruition from policy directives received from the Select Board.

A leader who has the ability to encourage open dialogue, build trust and work collaboratively while still being decisive with the ability to say no when necessary.

The ability to provide responsive customer service in a small town with an engaged and participatory citizenry.

The ability to recognize, embrace and support the passion of people who volunteer to serve their community working on committees, boards and civic organizations.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR – TOWN OF BERLIN, MA

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the Town of Berlin Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator Form of Government Act approved on January 7, 2019, the Town Administrator fills a vital professional role in balancing the varied goals and needs of this growing community. This will be the second Town Administrator for Berlin and the Town seeks to continue the progress made under the first Town Administrator by enhancing and improving upon the work of establishing a supportive and accountable structure within the town's overall organization. The current Town Administrator will be retiring in the summer of 2022.



The Town of Berlin is a classic New England town, primarily a residential community with significant well planned commercial segments at its borders. It has a strong sense of pride in its rural farming heritage. Route 62 runs through Berlin which is strategically located on the I-495 corridor, near I-90, I-290, and Rt 2. In addition to being within easy reach of the New England states, Berlin has easy access to both Boston and Worcester with all the educational, health, and cultural opportunities found in those cities.

Berlin is bordered by the Towns of Bolton, Boylston, Clinton, Hudson, Northborough and the City of Marlborough. While it is a quiet, bedroom community by night and vibrant by day with two major malls located at its borders, much of the town retains its agricultural and open space character which is a source of pride for the majority of residents in the community.

The town has a history of open space land conservation (over 1,300 acres preserved/protected) with a total landmass of 12.9 square miles and 42.21 miles of roads. There is no public water or sewer and the Town has no desire to expand access to these utilities in order to preserve its rural character. Effective July 1, 2019, Berlin became part of the regionalized Berlin-Boylston Regional School District. The town also is a participant in a regional 911 dispatch center for public safety responses. The community is interested in exploring other regional cooperation agreements with neighboring communities to add efficiencies in delivering services. Additional government online information can be found in the [2021 Annual Town Report](#).





Among its many accomplishments, Berlin has achieved the Commonwealth's 10 percent local affordable housing threshold and in fact has approached 16+% of its housing stock as affordable allowing the town to chart its own course relative to housing development and preserving undeveloped conservation land. As a further testament to the community's commitment to progressive local government initiatives, the town achieved a Green Community designation in 2012. In addition the adoption of the Community Preservation Act, has allowed the Town the opportunity to assure the

long-term protection of affordable housing and open space, historic preservation the restoration of buildings within the community like the Bullard House and the old Town Hall as well as upgrades to recreation facilities. The Town Administrator must have an understanding and affinity for these efforts, as they are key to the identity of Berlin. Recent development includes but is not limited to 55+ townhomes, single family homes, and a 204-unit apartment complex creating new opportunities and challenges alike. The Town has a robust history of negotiating favorable development agreements that are financially beneficial to the community and help support the increased demand for services especially within public safety departments that are directly impacted by development in the community.

Municipal Finances

The Town has a strong tax base and in spite of its rural nature it derives approximately 30% of its tax levy from the Commercial, Industrial and Personal Property sector (CIP). Additionally, the community has a split tax rate and the Select Board has adopted this policy for the past few years to help lessen the residential burden while maintaining sustainable exemplary service delivery to the local taxpayers. The Town has ample reserves in free cash which has been certified at \$2,114,636 for 2022 and has pro-actively created various stabilization accounts totaling well over \$1,000,000 for different needs.

The leadership in the community continues to take pride in conservative revenue forecasting to build its annual budget and set the groundwork for a predictable and sustainable budget for the foreseeable future. Because of this conservative approach, the town has secured a very strong bond rating of AA+. The Town also had a Division of Local Services financial report (2021) performed for the town and has begun to implement many of the financial policy suggestions contained within the document.



TOWN ADMINISTRATOR – TOWN OF BERLIN, MA

The Town

Berlin’s residential population ranges from multi-generational families to recent “nighttime only” working commuters. Town services encompass not only the expected wide range of government services to its permanent residents, but also a robust emergency response to large commercial malls and developments and an interstate highway.



Berlin has an engaged public with expectations of quality and responsive services. The Town Administrator will be expected to lead, direct, mentor, and motivate a caring and efficient professional team. The Administrator must seek to identify, understand, and help collaboratively guide the current vision of the community, and provide professional, technical, and management support to elected and appointed officials as well as numerous

volunteer boards and committees in their efforts to effectively deliver on the community’s high expectations. The ideal candidate must be a forward thinker who can anticipate and recognize future potential issues through the development of strategic initiatives and then work with staff and other officials to develop solutions together.

The Challenges

A) Given the limited number of specialized Town staff positions, the successful candidate must have extensive knowledge of all facets of small-town management. Direct experience in municipal budget development, procurement, human resources, land use, and long-range capital and strategic planning are essential.

B) In recognition of some of the weaknesses in the current pay structure, the town has recently conducted a comprehensive Pay and Classification Study in job titles, staffing levels, compensation, and job descriptions to address perceived inequities in the overall organizational structure. In addition, within the next year, the town will experience two significant retirements in the Dept manager staff and recruitment for these positions will certainly be a challenge in today’s municipal environment. A major task for the new town administrator will be to continue the work of implementing many of the suggestions working with the employees, the union representatives and the elected officials.

C) Because of the regional approach many small towns find advantageous, the new administrator should be experienced in collaborating with other municipalities, state agencies, and regional and private entities to provide quality services in the most efficient manner possible. Experience in nurturing and leading the discussion and also having the skills to bring people together with a goal of providing efficient and measurable success in regional cooperation will be expected of the new Town Administrator.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR – TOWN OF BERLIN, MA

D) The Town has had a recent analysis of its Fire Dept. operations and staffing requirements and more specifically whether moving to an ALS ambulance service would be beneficial to the community which currently operates with a predominantly “Call Dept” for Fire operations and EMS services at a Basic Life Support (BLS) level. The Administrator will be expected to be very engaged with the Chief, elected officials and all interested parties in this important discussion for the community.



E) Growth and Budget sustainability will be an important issue for the next Town Administrator to address. Berlin has had a 36% increase in population from 2000-2019. This rate of growth is faster than many neighbors in the region like Bolton, Boylston, Sterling, Lancaster and Harvard. Balancing smart development while listening to the vast majority of people in town who desire to retain the rural character of the community will be a significant challenge for the new Administrator regarding balancing the future operating budgets for the community. This is especially true in Berlin which depends heavily on taxes from the primary developments in town such as the Highland Commons and the River Bridge mixed use complex. Both these developments have been affected by the shifts in retail and commercial expectations. There are concerns in the community that some of the mitigation funds in development agreements signed with the town may be in jeopardy because of the changing nature of how these private sector developments will be sustained and the expected revenue sources diminish.

As previously stated, The Town is an ideally located “commuter” town for the larger metropolitan areas and therefore growing in population, and yet many people choose to settle here with a strong desire to preserve its natural beauty and rural character. The recent updated Open Space and Recreation plan for 2020 highlighted this fact through its resident survey that showed nearly 80% of all respondents agreed with preserving the rural character of Berlin and open space! This will be an important blueprint for the Town Administrator to use in addressing these challenges through collaboration with all stakeholders in the community and should be an important focus of the next Town Administrator.

LINKS OF INTEREST

- [Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator Form of Government Act](#)
- [2021 Annual Town Report](#)
- [About the Town of Berlin](#)