

# THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, MA

## TOWN ADMINISTRATOR RECRUITMENT

### *Invitation to Qualified Candidates*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Blackstone, MA (9,300 pop.), seeks creative, proactive, community leader, committed to in public service, to serve as its next Town Administrator. The previous Town Administrator retired after ten years of dedicated service to the community. This fiscally stable community, with a rich history and hometown feel, is located in the beautiful Blackstone River Valley, birthplace of the Industrial Revolution. Blackstone was settled in 1662 and incorporated as a Town in 1845. The community is recognized for its excellent schools, quality of life, and for providing exemplary services to its residents and business community. Led by a five-member Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator and Open Town Meeting form of government, the Administrator is the chief administrative and operating officer of the Town and oversees a municipal operating budget of approx. \$28 million (including \$11.4 million for educational expenses) and 70 full-time and 40 part-time employees.



The ideal candidate will have a Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree in Public Administration or in a related field is preferred, and a minimum of 3 years' experience as municipal administrator or assistant administrator. Salary range to \$150,000 commensurate with qualifications and professional experience. The Town Charter requires the Administrator to establish a residence in Blackstone within one year of his/her appointment, however, the Board of Selectmen have submitted a Warrant Article for the May Town Meeting to remove this residency requirement from the Charter. Blackstone is an affirmative action and equal opportunity employer. For additional information related to the search contact Alan Gould, President, Municipal Resources, Inc. at 603-279-0352, x320.

**DEADLINE: 9 AM EST; Monday, March 29, 2021**

**Resume and cover letter, in confidence, as PDF attachment to:** [recruitment@mrigov.com](mailto:recruitment@mrigov.com)

This document is intended for use as a resource for the next Town Administrator. The candidates are encouraged to do their own research and consider their fit for the position. Information about this position and the Town can be found on the Town's website [www.townofblackstone.org](http://www.townofblackstone.org)

## The Profile

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

A minimum of a Bachelor's degree with a Master's in Public Administration/Finance preferred and at least 3 years demonstrated experience in a senior public management position or in a relevant field. Massachusetts Certified Public Procurement Official, MCPPO, designation preferred.

A proven record of thoughtful financial management and strategic capital planning. Demonstrated ability to engage all interested parties in the development of the annual budget process.

A leader by example who is decisive, effective and has strong ethical standards and personal integrity. Must be committed to total transparency in all town operations.

The ability to be creative and identify innovative solutions to complex municipal issues while helping to guide an inclusive decision making process. Be an engaged leader who interacts with the community at large and is visible to the residents.

Must possess strong public speaking and presentation skills using the latest technology tools to improve communication between elected officials and citizens. Should exhibit excellent written skills.

Extensive knowledge of and experience with the collective bargaining process and also should possess significant expertise in all aspects of human resources management.

The ability to listen, engage and vet all sides in local government discourse while providing unbiased guidance to elected/appointed officials in a totally objective and transparent manner.

A proven record of nurturing a positive culture in a community by supporting town employees as well as providing logistical assistance to many volunteer Boards and Committees in the community.

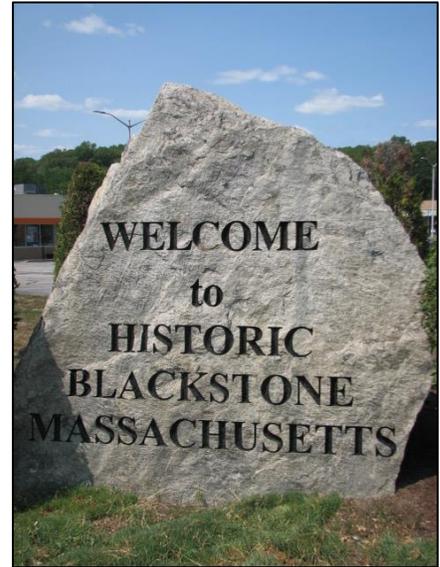
The ability to lead, organize, inspire and manage people. The Town Administrator should trust and empower Department Managers while holding them accountable for their operations.

Demonstrated skills in working collaboratively and building consensus with many disparate constituencies to arrive at a positive result. Emphasize civility in all public forums.

A leader who can articulate a vision and work with elected and appointed officials to implement change in the community through collaboration, consensus building and focused leadership.

## The Challenge

The successful candidate for the Blackstone Town Administrator position must have a proven record of establishing positive internal, as well as external, relationships while holding her/himself and others to the highest standards of ethics, integrity and accountability. The Town Administrator must also be fully committed to the concept of transparency and openness in government, ensuring those concepts are practiced throughout the organization. Nurturing positive relationships throughout the community, listening to the various constituencies, and working with the Town’s Board of Selectmen and committees will be a key to success. He or she must be unbiased, having the patience to seek and value input from all sides of an issue.



Given Blackstone’s high expectation for quality and responsive services, the Town Administrator is expected to lead, direct, mentor, and motivate a professional team that will consistently deliver these exemplary core community services. He or she must seek to identify and understand the vision of the community for its future and provide professional, technical, and management support to the elected and appointed officials in their effort to efficiently and effectively provide for the collective needs of those who live and work in the community. The ideal candidate must be able to anticipate and recognize potential problems, and then work with staff and other officials to develop solutions. The Board of Selectmen will depend on the Town Administrator to present unbiased information on important matters in a relevant, meaningful way that provides the appropriate perspective.

Blackstone is served by well-respected elected and appointed officials and department heads. It is important for the new Administrator to value these officials and maintain a professional, positive and productive working relationship.



The Town Administrator will have the benefit of a current Master Plan and Housing Production Plan. The Town’s Master Plan was completed in 2018 and sets forth a great blueprint for the new administration. The plan outlines six implementation priorities with specific goals in these areas: economic development, housing, natural and cultural resources, open space and recreation, circulation and public facilities and services. In particular, the Town has economic development opportunities in three parts of Town: the industrial district, Main Street/Route 122 and sections of East Blackstone. In addition, the Housing

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Production Plan was completed in 2019 and set forth a plan with recommendations to bring the Town's subsidized housing inventory from the current 3.4% to the Commonwealth's goal of 10%.

Blackstone is a very desirable and affordable community in which to live and raise a family. A significant part of the challenge facing the new Town Administrator will be to balance the costs of providing a high level of Town and education services at a sustainable tax rate during a time of fiscal uncertainty. Blackstone has a long tradition of strong financial planning and fiscally conservative budgeting of both revenues and expenditures. The FY '21 budget is \$28M of which \$ 11.4M is for education. Both the water and sewer operations are run on an Enterprise Fund. Approximately 80% of the tax base comes from the residential sector and the remaining 20% from commercial, industrial and personal property.



Standard & Poor's assigned Blackstone with its AA+ bond rating and stable outlook. This is a noteworthy achievement for a municipality of 9,300 residents. S&P recognizes that the Town has a history of healthy financial positions, conservative management, low debt burden and manageable pension and OPEB obligations. In fact, the Town's unassigned fund balance in the General Fund was \$6.2M as of 6/30/20 and it has grown steadily in the past few years. Free Cash was certified at \$2.1M. The Town also has a Stabilization Fund of \$3.2M and a Capital Projects Stabilization Fund of \$5.6M. Blackstone has a PILOT Agreement with ANP Blackstone Energy that provides \$2.7M annually until 2030 and 90% of the PILOT payments are directed to the Capital Projects Stabilization Fund and 10% going to the operating budget. Also, the Town has been making considerable efforts to fund its OPEB obligations.

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The Town is well served by the Blackstone-Millville Regional School District with its three elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. The total enrollment for this year is approximately 1,650 students. The Administrator must maintain the existing positive relationship with the School Superintendent and the District. There is discussion about the need for a new high school at some point in the future.

The Town Administrator plays a significant role in negotiating and administering the Town's five labor unions/collective bargaining agreements, which all

expire on June 30, 2021. He or she must be an experienced and effective negotiator with demonstrated skill and success in managing and administering collective bargaining agreements while balancing the needs of the employees with the ability of the residents to pay.

Finally, the ideal candidate must possess outstanding verbal and written communication skills. It is imperative that the Town Administrator be able to communicate effectively with town leaders, staff, and the public. In order to do this, he or she will need to have a high level of community engagement. It is the Administrator's responsibility to keep the public informed, so he or she must be committed to operational transparency and possess the ability to communicate clearly and use social media to present Blackstone's message. The Town Administrator must leverage emerging technologies and other creative ways to promote community involvement. Customer service is a high priority for this community, which means the successful candidate must place great value on listening and providing accurate information to all members of the community.

