

**TOWN OF NATICK, MASSACHUSETTS  
FIRE CHIEF RECRUITMENT  
JANUARY 2022  
IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE & CHALLENGE STATEMENT**



**Overview and Operational Information**

The Town of Natick is a suburban residential community, having a population of approximately 37,006 residents, and is in Middlesex County. The Town is approximately 20 miles west/southwest of Boston. The Town covers approximately 16 square miles, has approximately 12,700 households, and approximately 156 public road miles.

Development in Natick consists of a major commercial corridor along Route 9, including the Natick Mall – the largest retail mall in New England, as well as high-rise apartment buildings, historic neighborhoods, a thriving downtown business district, two commuter rail stations, two industrial parks, Natick Soldiers’ Systems Center, and several corporate headquarters.

The Natick Fire Department is typically staffed with one Fire Chief and five Deputy Chiefs. In addition, there are seven Captains, fifteen Lieutenants, and fifty-seven Firefighters. The Department and operates from four stations. The Department has an ISO rating of Class 3/3X. The organization employs 85 fulltime uniformed civil service

employees with an operating budget of approximately 9.0 million dollars. In 2020 the Department responded to 2,823 EMS calls, 2,010 fire calls.

The services of the Natick Fire Department include, but are not limited to, fire suppression, fire prevention, emergency medical care and advanced life support, technical rescue, emergency planning, disaster mitigation, and life safety education.

Uniformed personnel, with the exception of Fire Chief, are represented by either the Deputy Chiefs' Association, or the Firefighters Local 1707, International Association of Firefighters, AFL-CIO.

Central Fire Operations are located in the Public Safety Building, a modern facility located at 22 East Central Street, which also houses the Police Department and Central (civilian) Dispatch. In addition, there are three other stations; one each in South Natick, the newly constructed, \$15 million West Natick fire station (pictured above), and East Natick. Most personnel work two twenty-four hour shifts out of every eight days. The proposed Fire Department budget for Fiscal Year 2022 is approximately \$9.0 million dollars.

The Town operations through a Representative Town Meeting form of government and is also served through the elected Natick Select Board ("Board") and a Board appointed Town Administrator. The Fire Chief is appointed by the Board, while day-to-day administration and supervision is coordinated through the Town Administrator. The position is non-Civil Service.

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 Master's degree in public administration, fire science, or a closely related field;**

**7 to 10 years of municipal fire/rescue management *and command* experience;**

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

**Credentialed or ability to immediately obtain credentialing, as a Massachusetts Fire Chief;**

**Certification as a fire instructor along with experience providing fire service training;**

**Emergency medical services experience and certification;**

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

**A history of successful collective bargaining experience, including working with unionized personnel and organizations within a civil service system;**

**Imagination and creativity;**

**Strong finance and analytical skills;**

**A commitment to technology;**

**The ability to actively listen to other team members;**

**The ability to invite and engage partners;**

**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:**

To be successful, the next Natick Fire 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 next fire 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 fire chief must be capable of making decisions that are in the best interest of the public safety needs of the citizens of Natick.

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

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 fire 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 fire chief must have excellent 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 fire 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 fire 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. He/she should have a proven track record of inclusion, advancing equity and diversity within a fire department.

The next fire chief must have excellent management and leadership skills. One of the major challenges facing the new fire chief 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 fire chief must demonstrate the ability to manage staff resources within the confines of a collective bargaining agreement and a set overtime budget while handling increased and often more complex calls for service.

The next fire chief will face many challenges, foremost among them are those associated with limited fiscal resources. Consequently, it is essential that the fire chief possess the knowledge and skills to help guide the fire department through a period of constrained financial resources and economic pressures.

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 next fire chief to possess strong 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 Select Board 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 next fire 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 fire 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 Natick; embracing the notion of “living within our means” with sensitivity to external conditions affecting service levels and available resources. To achieve success, the next fire chief will need to develop and maintain positive, constructive labor/management relationships but at the same time be an agent of change and accountability.

Natick’s next fire 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 fire chief must be willing and able to coordinate these efforts with neighboring communities, Massachusetts Fire District Fourteen, and Metrofire, and must have the ability to include local businesses and private sector stakeholders in this effort. The fire chief 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.

Natick has a strong desire for its fire department to be progressive and innovative in meeting the needs of the community. The fire 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.