

CITY OF SACO, MAINE

CITY ADMINISTRATOR RECRUITMENT

Invitation to Qualified Candidates

INTRODUCTION

The City of Saco, Maine, is seeking a proactive, energetic, innovative, and experienced leader to serve as its next City Administrator. The City adopted the Mayor, seven-member City Council, Administrator form of government in 1973. This full-service City is financially stable and is one of the most attractive and desirable municipalities in the State of Maine in which to live, work, and raise a family.

This Profile is a resource in the search for the next City Administrator, although candidates with a sincere interest in the position are encouraged to do their research to determine if Saco is a good fit.

Much information is provided herein but candidates are encouraged to learn more about the position by can be found by visiting [Municipal Resources' website](#) or the [City's website](#).



ABOUT SACO

Saco has a population of approximately 20,000 residents with 8,200 households and a land area of 53 square miles. Located on the beautiful southeastern Maine coast in York County along Route 1 and Interstate 95,

Saco is just 20 miles south of Portland and 100 miles north of Boston. The City is on the scenic Saco River and had its beginning as a thriving mill town manufacturing iron, lumber, and textiles. Today, Saco a predominantly residential community made up of attractive older New England neighborhoods and new single-family and multifamily housing developments. The business district on Main Street is classic New England with a charming mix of Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival and Victorian styles of architecture. Saco City Hall is one of nine properties in the City that are on the National Register of Historic Places.



Saco Main Street, a non-profit organization, is dedicated to revitalizing and promoting Main Street and hosts a variety of events like Music in the Parking Lot, Pumpkin Harvest Festival, and Holiday Festival & Parade of Lights. The community welcomes young families with open arms, offering a quality school system and vast recreational

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opportunities. Saco also values its older residents and pride itself on being an age-friendly community, encouraging resident to make Saco their community for a lifetime. It's no wonder the City is “friendly by nature.”

The City of Saco has a diverse business community with a revitalized mill district, mixed-use downtown, three industrial parks, an expanding business park, and available developable land. Saco is home to entrepreneurs, family-owned businesses, seafood manufacturing facilities, biotechnology businesses, and medical facilities, to name a few.

The Saco Public Schools are amongst the best in the State with a student body of approximately 2,700 in grades pre-K to 12. The City provides pre-K to 8th-grade education in the community center, three elementary schools, and one middle school. High school students attend Thornton Academy, a private co-educational boarding and day school and the oldest public/private school in the country. Thornton Academy also has a private middle school available to Saco students on a tuition basis. Within a 50-mile radius of the City, there are 15 institutions of higher education ranging from community colleges to colleges and universities. The Dyer Library and Saco Museum provide the residents and visitors with an excellent public library and historical museum. The Dyer Library Association owns these resources and funded in part by the City and with grants/private donations.



Saco offers abundant natural resources, an attractive oceanfront location, and a comfortable year-round climate that encourages an active outdoor lifestyle. In the summer, some of the best beaches, parks and hiking trails in New England are minutes away. In the winter, some of the best skiing spots on the east coast are less than a two-hour drive. Additionally, Saco is served by Amtrak’s popular *Downeaster*, which brings visitors and tourists to the City every day to shop and enjoy the beautiful Maine coast.

Saco has a fascinating history, founded and settled soon after the Pilgrims landed on Cape Cod. In 1630, the Plymouth Company granted two settlers land along the Saco River and created Winter Harbor, later to

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be named Biddeford. This region suffered greatly during the King Philip's War and Dummer's War because of raids and battles between the Native Americans and the settlers. In 1763, the land north of the Saco River separated from Biddeford to become Pepperllborough. In the 1800's, the area became a manufacturing center for textiles, lumber with 17 sawmills, and ironworks with foundries and machine shops on Factory Island. The residents of Pepperllborough changed the name of their town to Saco in 1805 and became incorporated as a city in 1867. The City, once a thriving mill town, is now thriving again as one of the State's fastest-growing and economically stable municipalities.

GOALS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

- 1) Review, Fund, and Develop a Strategic Recruitment, Retention, and Succession Plan;
- 2) Work Towards Increasing Recycling Rate to 35% or Better through Targeted Education and Outreach;
- 3) Research School Campus by Middle School + Review/Decide to Move Forward on Future School Construction Regardless of our Positioning on the State "List";
- 4) Amend Policy on TIFs and CZs to Institute a Policy of Annual Performance Reporting of TIFs and CZ;
- 5) Consider New Business Park to Create Infrastructure that Attracts and Retains Business;
- 6) Bringing Natural Gas to the Mill Brook Business Park and the Route 1 North Corridor;
- 7) Work Collaboratively with Saco Main Street to Expand and Promote Downtown Saco in its role as a Commercial, Cultural, and Residential city;
- 8) Continue to Increase our Efforts in Energy Efficiency and Sustainability by Exploring Renewable Energy Projects.

Adopted January 2018



SACO FINANCES

Saco's finances are healthy based on a vibrant local business economy, growing real estate tax base, and conservative fiscal management. Annually, the Mayor, City Council, and staff go through a thorough, multi-month budget review process. For FY-2020 the City budget is \$56.1M, an increase of one half of one percent over the FY-2019 budget of \$55.8M. The City's property taxes are subject to the State's real estate tax cap, known as LD 1. The City also complies with its policy to have an unassigned fund balance between 8.3 and 10.0% of the general fund expenditures.



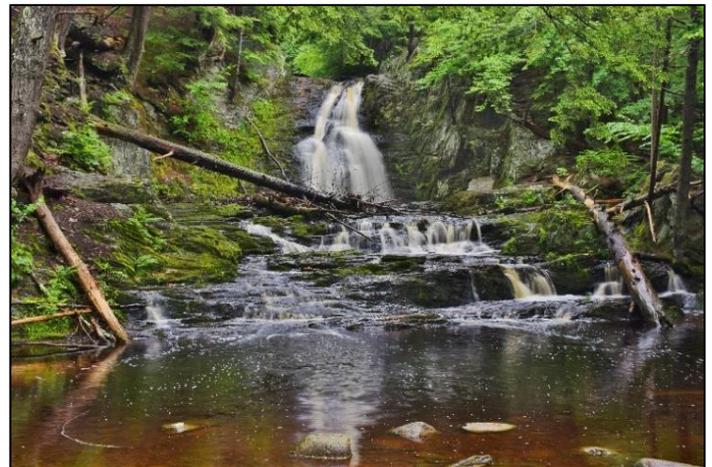
In addition to the annual operating budget, the City has a formal five-year capital improvement plan that gets revised annually depending on the changing capital needs of the community. There

are two major facility and infrastructure needs on the horizon for the municipality: a new public safety sub-station north of Route 1 to address the development activity in that area and preparing and mitigating flooding risks due to the Water Resource Recovery Facility's proximity to low elevation on the Saco River. Additionally, Saco will need to explore options for a new school facility in the coming years.

Based on the City's impressive financial history and outlook, both Standard and Poor's and Moody's bond rating agencies have awarded the community with investment grade bond ratings: Standard and Poor's - AA Stable and Moody's - Aa3.

In terms of labor relations, all six unions have approved contracts within the past year.

The City's Comprehensive Plan is currently going thru an update. It will provide the next City Administrator and management team with a blueprint for Saco's planning and development for the next 5 to 10 years.



IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

The *Ideal* Candidate for the position of Saco’s City Administrator will possess these core competencies, characteristics, and traits which are essential for success:

- Ability to delegate and effectively utilize the human resources to include his/her staff and others as appropriate.
- The successful City Administrator must be strategic and thoughtful with respect to decision making and not act in an expeditious manner. Be aware of how decisions impact on others and the community at large.
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to engage and explain issues in a clear and consistent manner to all levels within the Saco community. There needs to be 100 percent transparency.
- Ability and associated skills in dealing with tension and conflict both internally with staff, City Council and Mayor as well as the various issues within the greater community.
- Being respectful toward all members of the Saco Community to include the Mayor, City Council and staff and other constituents. Showing deference toward everyone!
- Having the ability to take constructive criticism and feedback and learn and grow from critical feedback.
- Proven ability to develop and grow strong teams that are highly competent as well as personally satisfied in their respective position.
- Must have a strong moral and ethical compass.
- Excellent administrative skills to include time management, high level of detail and accuracy and a sense of urgency and setting priorities.
- High level of personal and professional motivation with respect to performing at the highest level. Self-motivated and ability to adjust leadership style to achieving the best results.
- Ability to self-manage the day to day activities and to set appropriate personal and professional boundaries so as to accomplish projects and work responsibilities in an efficient and timely manner.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

The successful candidate for the Saco City Administrator position must have a proven record of positive internal and external relationships, and demonstrate and encourage the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and accountability. The City Administrator must also be fully committed to transparency and openness in government and ensure that these concepts are practiced throughout the organization. Nurturing positive relationships throughout the community, listening to the various constituencies, and working with the Mayor, City Council, city staff, boards and committees will be vital to success. She or he will be unbiased, having the diplomacy and patience to seek and value input/opinions from all sides of an issue.

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Given Saco's expectation for quality and responsive municipal services, the City Administrator is expected to lead, direct, and mentor a motivated team of professional managers to meet those needs. She/he must seek to identify and understand the vision and the needs of the City and give the necessary professional, technical, and management support to the staff in their effort to efficiently and effectively provide the



services, programs, and activities to the residents and businesses. The ideal candidate must be able to anticipate and recognize potential problems or opportunities and then work with the management team to develop recommended solutions.

A significant challenge for the City and the City Administrator is planning for and managing the residential and commercial/industrial growth that comes with the good regional economy and Saco's desirability. The City is working to attract and retain businesses in its industrial parks, downtown, and Route 1 business districts. The transportation and

roadway network are experiencing stress due to the increase in traffic as a result of residential growth and economic development. Currently, the Maine Turnpike Authority, Maine DOT, and the City are working on the *Saco Route 112/Exit 36 Area Transportation Study* to evaluate a variety of short- and long-term options to address the traffic congestion along Rt.112 and related roadways. The parties agree that transportation demand and system improvements are required to better support and accommodate the increase in trucks and passenger vehicles. Additionally, the Saco and Scarborough communities are partnering with the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) and the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) to make Route 1 safer and more accessible for all modes of travel, including motor vehicles, public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. The study will create a plan for a business-friendly road that encourages people to walk, bike, and use transit.

The new City Administrator will need to have a positive working relationship with the Superintendent of Schools. Not only is the School Department budget about 50% of the entire City's budget, but it is also school facility construction needs that will have a significant impact on the City's debt service. Many young families move to the City because of the great reputation of the school system. These pressures will require an Administrator experienced in municipal-school relations.

Financial and budgetary priorities will be in the forefront as the new City Administrator manages within the FY-20 budget and develops his/her FY-21 fiscal plan. The strict controls by the Mayor and City Council have presented challenges. The next Administrator will have to work with the department managers to turn these challenges into opportunities. They will need to determine the "right-size" of the staff and budget to meet the growing needs of the community while keeping in mind the elected officials mandate to control the mil rate.

The City will require the next Administrator to be a skillful negotiator and adept at working with regional, State, and Federal officials and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Saco Bay coast has experienced very severe erosion since the installation of the jetty, including the loss of 38 homes, a railroad bed, dunes, and private and public property. The City has been reviewing the Army Corps of Engineers' recent *Camp Ellis Beach Mitigation Project Report*. The Mayor and City Council are interested finding a complete federal resolution.

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POSITION ADVERTISEMENT

The City of Saco, Maine (approx. 20,000 pop.) is seeking an experienced, collaborative, and forward-thinking municipal manager to serve as its next City Administrator. Saco is ideally situated on the mouth of the Saco River in Southern Maine along the Atlantic Ocean, less than 20 minutes south of Downtown Portland, and less than two hours north of Boston, Massachusetts. Saco is home to a growing population, a thriving economy, and vast recreational opportunities.

Saco is a community that has it all with a picturesque downtown, top-tier schools, and varied housing options. Saco's workability and livability are possible due to its proximity to Interstate 95, US Route 1, as well as the Amtrak *Downeaster* passenger rail and Pan Am freight rail. The City Administrator oversees city services and operations. Hired by the Mayor and seven City Councilors, the City Administrator directs and supervises the city departments, prepares and submits the annual budgets, and has primary responsibility for City operations. The City Administrator is responsible for carrying out policies as instructed and to refer all political decision making to the Mayor and Council. The City Charter reflects the ICMA Council-Manager form of government.

The City has a General Fund budget of approximately \$56 million (including education and county appropriations) and has about 200 FTEs and an additional 150 seasonal employees. The successful candidate will have a bachelor's degree in public administration or a related field (master's preferred) and a minimum of seven years of progressively responsible experience in public administration, or an equivalent combination of education and demonstrated senior-leadership or related business experience. Current Administrator's salary is approx. \$128,000. Starting salary is negotiable commensurate with qualifications and experience plus an excellent benefits package and highly competent staff. The City of Saco is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Additional information including the City Charter & Job Description can be found by visiting [Municipal Resources' website](#) or the [City's website](#). Specific inquiries may be directed to Alan Gould, President, Municipal Resources Inc. at 603-279-0352, x320 or at agould@mrigov.com

To apply send cover letter and resume in confidence as PDF attachment to:
recruitment@mrigov.com

Deadline to apply is Monday, September 9, 2019 at 8 AM EST

