

THE TOWN OF WENHAM, MA

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR



IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE & CHALLENGE STATEMENT

The Ideal Candidate for the position of Wenham Town Administrator will have the following qualifications:

At least 5 years of progressive municipal management and leadership experience or a senior manager position in a not for profit organization, governmental or business environment.

An MPA or related graduate educational degree.

Demonstrated expertise and understanding of the operation and complexity of all aspects of municipal government. General knowledge of Public Safety and Highway operational service delivery with an emphasis on creative but pragmatic Municipal Financial planning.

Knowledge of MA municipal law including experience with land use issues, labor issues and MGL Procurement regulations (MCPPO).

The willingness and ability to commit to the position for 3 or more years.

Experience in current Human Resources regulations and demonstrated direct experience successfully negotiating and administering collective bargaining agreements.

Strong public speaking and presentation skills using the latest technology tools to communicate effectively to disparate populations. Excellent written communication skills.

The ability to listen, engage and vet all sides in local government discourse while providing unbiased guidance to elected/appointed officials in an objective and transparent manner. Must show an ability to build consensus through a collaborative approach to problem solving.

The ability to trust and empower department managers to organize and manage people within a collegial working atmosphere.

Belief in a strong ethical approach to local government. Ability to lead by example while sharing credit for success in the community with elected officials, other volunteer Committees/Boards and with professional staff.

Ability to oversee large scale public projects and where appropriate seek out and manage grant funding for major community needs.

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The successful candidate for the Wenham Town Administrator position must have a proven record of maintaining and/or establishing positive internal as well as external relationships while holding her/himself and others to the highest standards of integrity and accountability. As the “face” of the Town and Board of Selectmen, he or she must have a



strong background and demonstrated commitment to the highest standards of public administration, thereby maintaining a high level of credibility and trust throughout the organization and the community.

The Town Administrator fills a vital role within the community, and therefore must quickly assimilate into a broad and complex social structure that includes families, senior citizens, local and state government agencies, and regional service delivery partners. Wenham is recognized for its outstanding schools and is committed to preserving its historic character and

tranquil rural setting. The town is host to Gordon College, the Wenham Museum and a host of other significant historic places and environmental assets.

Wenham has an engaged public with high expectations for quality and responsive services. The Town Administrator is expected to lead, direct, mentor, and motivate a professional team that will consistently deliver those exemplary core community services in coordination with the Board of Selectmen. The Administrator 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 efforts to efficiently and effectively provide for the collective needs of the community. The ideal candidate must be able to anticipate and recognize potential problems and then work with staff and other officials in a collaborative manner to develop solutions. Given the limited number of specialized Town staff positions, the successful candidate must have general experience in all facets of municipal management. Experience in municipal finance, procurement, human resources, land use, and long-range capital and strategic planning are essential. In addition, the administrator should be experienced in collaborating with other regional, municipal, and private entities to provide quality services in the most efficient manner possible. The town has been a leader in exploring and implementing a number of innovative Inter-Municipal Agreements to share services in areas such as a combined public library with Hamilton, shared services in the delivery of recreational programs, regional dispatching for public safety delivery and shared inspectional services. The Town is also a partner with Hamilton in forming the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

Wenham Challenges

Wenham is experiencing the same fiscal challenges so many small communities in the Commonwealth are dealing with to balance their operating budget while dealing with inflationary factors that are increasing beyond the 21/2 % tax levy limitation. The town recently approved an operating budget override of approximately \$500,000 for the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District which is the second consecutive year in passing an

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operating budget override. The Town has consistently utilized free cash to balance its operating budget and faces a “structural budget” deficit entering the next budget cycle. A challenge for the new Town Administrator will be to manage the discussions around the budget/demands and keep all parties informed with the best information available. The Town does have a 5 year CIP which has defined revenue sources to maintain a commitment to investing in the communities Capital needs. Facilities such as the Iron Rail complex, additional recreational field use and an upgrade for the existing Highway complex are items the new TA will need to address as he/she deals with future Capital needs.

The community has a need for the new Town Administrator to help develop a “succession planning” model for expected senior staff retirements. The Town will likely see turnover in the Police Chief, the Highway Supt., and the Fire Chief over the next few years and has recently hired a new Library Director and Finance Director. Although a separate entity, the School District will be seeking a new Superintendent over the next year or so. The Town Administrator will be responsible for helping engage, support, guide and lead the new staff members in team building within the organization.



Courtesy of Nicole Roebuck



Courtesy of Michael Porta

Longer term, the community will continue to deal with pressures around the Affordable Housing issue (both the aging in place phenomenon and the new homebuyer dilemma), the rising cost of Health Insurance, the OPEB obligations and the issue of trash disposal in light of the lack of value of recycling materials in the world market. The TA should play a significant role with the BOS, Planning Board, Planning Director and staff in leading an effort to develop a community-wide Master Plan.

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. It is the Town Administrator’s responsibility to keep the public informed, so he or she must be committed to operational transparency and exploring creative ways to promote community engagement. “Customer service” is a high priority for this community which means the successful candidate must place great value on listening and providing ready access to hear the concerns of individual members of the community.