

TOWN OF BERWICK, ME

TOWN MANAGER RECRUITMENT

Invitation to Qualified Candidates

INTRODUCTION

Berwick ME (8,000 pop.) is seeking a creative, proactive, community leader to serve as its next Town Manager. The current Town Manager is retiring after several years of establishing an excellent track record working with the Board of Selectmen, Town Boards, and the community.

Berwick is situated on the Salmon Falls River, a tributary of the Piscataqua River, which is the border between Berwick and the City of Somersworth, NH. The Town is served by State Routes 9 and 236.

Berwick is an extremely desirable destination for the right Town Manager candidate. Portland is an hour away, while Boston is less than an hour and a half. The Maine and NH seacoasts are a short drive. The Kittery Outlets offer lots of shopping while the City of Portsmouth NH is a tourist destination offering numerous dining and shopping opportunities. The entertainment, business, health, educational and cultural opportunities offered in the region are exceptional. The Seacoast area has often been named to the list of top tourist destinations and places to live in the U.S.

Established in 1713, Berwick is home to an actively engaged community working together to cultivate its unique strengths and small-town character by:

- Promoting small business & creative outlets where local talent, entrepreneurship, & agriculture flourish;
- Fostering a healthy relationship with land and river through conservation, environmentally minded development, substantial and functional green space, & responsible recreation;
- Creating a safe, friendly town where youth, families & community come together.

Berwick is recognized for its excellent schools, small town charm, quality of life and an engaged citizenry.

The Town Manager is the CAO/CEO and reports to a five-member Board of Selectmen. Like many towns in Maine, it is a Town Meeting form of government. The annual Town operating budget is \$8M, excluding schools. The Town employs 40 FT and approximately 20 PT and seasonal staff.



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The successful candidate will have strong experience in local government operations, labor relations, and community-based problem solving. Strong interpersonal, listening, written, and verbal skills required. Experience in managing large scale, downtown redevelopment projects is desirable. BA/BS required in a related field is required. A Master's Degree and seven (7) years of relevant progressively responsible management experience preferred, or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Residency is not required, but preferred. Salary range up to \$120,000 with excellent benefits. Starting salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. Berwick is an equal opportunity employer.

For further information candidates are directed to Municipal Resources' website or to contact Alan Gould at agould@mrigov.com or by phone at 603-279-0352 ext. 320. To apply, submit a resume and cover letter in PDF format to recruitment@mrigov.com.

DEADLINE: 9 AM EST; Monday, June 14, 2021



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

This Profile is intended for use as a resource in the search for the Town of Berwick's next Town Manager, both to provide prospective candidates with key information and to provide a framework for discussions between individuals involved in the search process and prospective candidates. Although it is expected that candidates with a sincere interest in the position will do their own research, this document provides valuable information and links for candidates considering their 'fit' with the Town of Berwick as a place to work and live.

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The Ideal Candidate to serve as Berwick’s next Town Manager will have the following demonstrated strengths and personal characteristics:

Strong preference will be given to candidates with an appropriate graduate degree or undergraduate degree that combines work experience and education. The candidate should have a minimum of seven years of direct work experience as a senior level public manager in a position such as Town Manager or Town Administrator, Assistant TA/TM, Public Finance director or other relevant, transferable experience within the public sector.

Have an unblemished history of integrity and a strong public ethic.

A record of thoughtful financial management and strategic capital planning, including a proven ability to accurately prepare and project sustainable municipal budgets and Capital Improvement Plans over a 3–5-year horizon.

Possess a good understanding of Maine State Laws, regulations and local Boards statutory authority.

Have strong written, verbal, and public presentation skills.

Proficiency in the use of all current platforms in social media to promote the messaging of Town Government within the community.

Be an engaged Manager who leads the community by example and promotes coordination and cooperation across the organization and community.

Have significant understanding of and success with community economic development and community visioning.

Be creative, collaborative, innovative, and entrepreneurial.

Have experience with labor contract negotiations & administration.

Have demonstrated experience working with diverse groups, and skills as a facilitator & consensus builder.

Help facilitate and support creative individual Department initiatives. Strongly promote a “team” concept involving all staff members.

Willingness to manage Town affairs in an open and transparent manner. Be accessible to all residents and show a willingness to reach out and solicit input from the community.

THE TOWN OF BERWICK

Berwick has an estimated population of 8,000 residents. The Town has a total area of 37.86 square miles of which, 37.52 square miles of it is land and 0.34 square miles is water. Berwick is situated on the Salmon Falls River, a tributary of the Piscataqua River, which is the border between Berwick and the City of Somersworth, NH. The Town is served by state routes 9 and 236.



Originally part of Kittery, the area later comprised by Berwick was settled about 1631 and called Kittery Commons or Kittery North Parish.

In 1713, it was incorporated by the Massachusetts General Court as Berwick, after Berwick-upon-Tweed, England. The first schoolhouse in the state was built here in 1719. Berwick was once considerably larger in size, but South Berwick was set off in 1814, followed by North Berwick in 1831.

For decades, manufacturing was the primary driver of the economy in the area. Berwick was home to Prime Tanning, located on an eleven (11) acre site in the Town center, while General Electric operated a manufacturing plant next door in Somersworth NH.

Prime Tanning at its peak employed 300 people. They operated a hide tannery from 1930 until 2007, when they closed and filed for bankruptcy. The site lay dormant for nearly a decade. During that time the Town applied for and received several Brownfield grants which allowed them to clean up any contamination on the site.



Berwick is currently working with a developer, who purchased the site, on a mixed-use plan for 200 apartments and 100,000 square feet of commercial space, currently called The Edge. The developer has received all of the needed Town approvals and demolition work on the site has begun. It is an approximately \$50 million-dollar investment that has generated a lot of positive energy and excitement in the community.

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The Noble School District, SAD #60, is comprised of three towns; No. Berwick, Berwick and Lebanon. There are three schools in Berwick:

- Vivian E. Hussey School (K–3)
- Eric L. Knowlton School (4–5)
- Noble Middle School (6–7)

Students in grades 8–12 from Berwick attend Noble High School in the neighboring Town of North Berwick.

Highly respected Berwick Academy, a private educational institution, is situated on an 80-acre campus just over the town line in So. Berwick. It serves 600 students, Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12, from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine.

Residential and commercial real estate market pressures stemming from the both Portland and Portsmouth areas, have made its way to the Berwick area. Berwick’s appeal of affordability and location creates an attractive allurements to potential new homeowners and business owners.



Residents value the small-town character, the culture of the community and are actively engaged in planning for the future. With the support of town government, several committees have provided valuable planning input towards creating a vibrant community while retaining its small-town appeal. They include the Envision Berwick Committee, Berwick Community TV, Berwick Historical Society, and the Recreation Master Planning Committee.

The next Town Manager will need to be able to step into the shoes of the former Manager and lead the Town’s role in developing The Edge, while maintaining the residents’ vision for their downtown. The new Manager will be challenged to help the Town’s engineering firm in identifying a new water source for the community. Berwick’s primary water source is the river, which is subject to many municipal and county jurisdictions. Although safe to use, seasonal droughts, discoloration and high manganese levels have led to citizen concerns about the quality of their drinking water.

Departments reporting to the Town Manager include:

- Assessing
- Code Enforcement
- Community Development & Planning
- Finance
- Fire and Rescue
- Highway/Public Works
- Library
- Police
- Recreation
- Town Clerk
- Transfer Station
- Water Department

FINANCE/BUDGET

The Town's finances are strong as a result of solid financial management and planning. The FY 21 operational budget is 8.4M, 3.3M of which is for Public Safety. Debt service is 7M. Estimated revenues for 2021 are 2.5M, not including reimbursements. The upcoming Capital Budget is \$1M. The Water Dept. is the only department that is an Enterprise Account, funded by users.



In 2020, Revenues for the Town's governmental activities increased by 10.09%, while total expenses increased by 14.35%. The biggest increase in revenues was in property taxes. The largest increase in expenses was in capital outlay. Revenues for the Town's business-type activities increased by 3.54% and expenses increased by 14.76%

According to the Town's 2020 audit it "has steadily maintained a sufficient unassigned fund balance..., while also maintaining significant reserve accounts for future capital and program needs". The Town renovated or replaced a number of public facilities during the last several years, to include updating the Police Department and building a new fire station. They have placed an emphasis on expanding their paving program and improving town roads.

Maintaining or improving Berwick's financial strengths and bond rating while keeping property tax increases to a minimum will be a priority in the years ahead. Seeking and securing public and private grants, especially to fund energy conservation projects such as solar power, is an important part of the job of the Town Manager.

The Town's budget documents can be viewed [here](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING

The Town has a Full Time Planner and an active citizen group called Envision Berwick.

Over the last five to six years they have researched, authored and commissioned a number of studies which have provided valuable guidance for the Town's elected officials. The cornerstone being the 2022 Town of Berwick Comprehensive Plan. This wide-ranging document covers keeping the town affordable, protection of farmland and natural resources, open space, fiscal well-being, the revitalization of the downtown area, and environmental sustainability.

The Downtown Vision Report and Implementation Plan, compiled by the Envisioning Downtown Berwick committee is a comprehensive report that "conveys the need to build a strong economic

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center without sacrificing the small-town feel, provide outdoor recreation while protecting natural resources and the rural landscape, and strengthen and sustain community ties, town pride, and quality of life far into the future”.



In 2020 the Selectmen adopted the Berwick Master Recreation Plan which lays out a road map for improving and developing recreational activities for towns people for the next several decades. These various reports and plans will be a valuable resource for the new Town Manger. These documents can be accessed on the Town website at <https://www.berwickmaine.org/>.

The Town of Berwick has a lot of things going for it. It has retained its traditional New England character and culture. It has a very active citizenry that cares deeply for the community and is willing to volunteer their time and effort to keep Berwick an affordable place to live and work while reimagining downtown, supporting local businesses and offering recreational activities for all ages.

It is strategically located between Portland and Boston. It is close to a number of outdoor recreational activities including the Maine and NH seacoasts and White Mountains.

The Town is looking for a Manager that will bring with him or her a high level of community engagement. The successful candidate must have excellent communication skills and be able to work with both elected officials and an active, engaged citizenry. Taking the helm from the retiring Manager and continuing two major projects; the downtown development and finding a new water source for the Town, will provide exciting opportunities for the new person to positively impact the Town and its residents.