

TOWN OF BOXFORD, MA

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR RECRUITMENT

Invitation to Qualified Candidates

INTRODUCTION

Boxford, MA (8,500 pop.), seeks dynamic, proactive and innovative municipal leader to replace its long tenured Town Administrator who is retiring after 22 years of dedicated service. Boxford has a rich history and heritage, with a strong sense of community, embracing the small town lifestyle with its semi-rural quality of life. It is a well-run, financially stable community, as evidenced by its AAA bond rating, with conservative budget practices and strong financial reserves. In addition, this municipality is known for its excellent schools and for providing exemplary public services to the residents. Boxford is located in the beautiful Merrimack Valley, just 24 miles north of Boston, 15 miles from the picturesque beaches of the North Shore and 120 miles from the world famous White Mountains.



Incorporated in 1685, this classic New England community is governed by a five-member Select Board, Town Administrator, and Open Town Meeting. The Town Administrator serves as the chief procurement officer and oversees a FY 2021 operating budget of approximately \$35.6M and a workforce of 56 non-school employees. Boxford is part of the “Tri-town” District which includes neighboring Topsfield and Middleton. The Masconomet Regional School District consists of a middle and high school (located in the same complex) serving students from the Tri-town area.

The ideal candidate will have a bachelor’s degree and (preferably) a master’s degree in Public Administration or an equivalent degree in a related field. The candidate should have a minimum of 5-years progressive experience as municipal administrator, assistant administrator or an equivalent combination of education and relevant paid professional management experience. The Town will negotiate a competitive compensation package commensurate with experience (salary range \$117,000 to \$155,000) and an employment contract with the selected candidate. Boxford is an equal opportunity employer.

Resume and cover letter should be emailed in PDF format (confidential) to: hire@boxfordma.gov

Responses must be received no later than: April 12, 2021 @ 8AM EST

This document is intended for use as a resource in the search for the next Town Administrator. Candidates are encouraged to do their own research and consider their fit for this position. **For additional information see “Town Administrator Search” at www.boxfordma.gov**



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate for Town Administrator must be able to identify with and embrace the small-town bucolic lifestyle of Boxford. The candidate must also possess the following demonstrated professional strengths and personal characteristics.

Approachable - engage with elected and appointed officials, department heads, staff and community. Be a Town Administrator who leads the community by example and promotes coordination and cooperation across the organization. Must possess the highest ethical standards both personally and professionally.

Strong Communicator – consistent, meaningful and effective written and oral communication with the elected and appointed officials, department heads and staff. The ability to listen and to provide advice and counsel in a measured, non-biased manner. Provide prompt, accurate and unfiltered information to elected and appointed officials in the community. Must be able to articulate the Town's vision and mission for the community.

Collaboration - ability to balance department head autonomy while providing leadership/support/mentoring when needed. A Town Administrator who can nurture a positive culture by supporting and empowering employees to perform their jobs in an exemplary manner and help facilitate and support creative department initiatives. Strongly promote a team concept involving department heads and staff members while also holding them accountable to performance and action standards as Town employees.

Strategic Thinker - ability to develop and implement revenue growth strategies while improving Town services and programs, retaining Town employees and funding capital projects and needs. An individual with a record of thoughtful financial management and strategic capital planning. This should include a proven ability to accurately prepare and project sustainable municipal operating budgets and Capital Improvement Plans over a 5-year rolling period.

Strong Municipal Background - experience in municipal administration and management with a meaningful and working knowledge of municipal law, labor relations, public procurement, land use, zoning, etc. The candidate should have a minimum 5-years of progressive direct work as a senior level public sector manager in a position such as a Town Manager/Town Administrator, Assistant TA/TM, Municipal Finance Director or other relevant, transferable paid experience within the public sector. MCPPO certification is required or must be obtained within 1-year from hire (2 years if hired from out of state).

Regional Connections - ability to foster positive working relationships with state and federal officials, state agencies, regional planning agencies and officials from other cities and towns.

Transparency - ability to manage Town affairs in an open, honest and transparent manner. Be accessible to all residents, show a willingness to reach out and solicit input from the community and be proficient in the use of social media to promote the message of the Town.

THE TOWN OF BOXFORD

The Town of Boxford was settled in 1646 by families from Boxford, Suffolk, England, just a few short years after the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock, and incorporated as a Town by the General Court in 1685. This historic community is located in beautiful Merrimack Valley. The climate and soil in the lowlands and ponds along the Merrimack River provided this region with well-drained fertile farmlands. Over the years, the Town has been known for growing a variety of fruits and vegetables, most notably apples. Today, thanks to its location and its rich agricultural heritage, Boxford still has working orchards and farms. The Town's Annual Apple Festival draws folks from all over New England to celebrate this valued crop.

The community has worked diligently to save their family farms. Boxford has the distinction of being a municipality with some of the most farm acreage in eastern Massachusetts. The Town also values open space to protect its ground water supply and provide recreational opportunities for its residents. Twenty-five percent of Boxford's total acreage is in protected open space owned either by the Town, State forests, private land trusts, as MGL, Ch. 61 or 61A forest, agricultural/horticultural lands or in Conservation Restrictions. Most of the dwellings in Boxford rely on private wells as their source of potable water.



Boxford is an attractive semi-rural bedroom community with a thoughtful blend of farmland, protected open space and residential subdivisions. This community's quality of life has benefited from its location, its agricultural heritage and its proximity to Boston. Boxford is a small town and has the wonderful distinction of being 24 square miles in size, with 100 miles of public roads and no traffic signal in the entire community! Heavily forested with many scenic hiking trails, Boxford is also home to numerous lakes,

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ponds, streams, wildlife, flora and fauna and has received the prestigious Tree City USA award for the fifth consecutive year. Further reflecting its strong historic ties to agriculture, it is noteworthy that Boxford is one of only two towns in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that has designated all of its residentially zoned districts as also being suitable for broad agricultural uses (so-called R-A or Residence-Agricultural zoning).

THE CHALLENGE

The successful candidate for the 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. He or she 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 boards and committees will be a key to success. The new Town Administrator must be unbiased, having the patience to seek and value input from all sides of an issue.



Given Boxford'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 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 Select Board depends on the Town Administrator to present unbiased information on important matters in a relevant, meaningful way that provides a well-rounded perspective. Boxford is governed by a five-member Select Board, Open Town Meeting and Town Administrator. The Town also has several well-respected, long-tenured department heads. It is important for the new Town Administrator to value these elected and appointed officials and employees and maintain a positive working relationship.

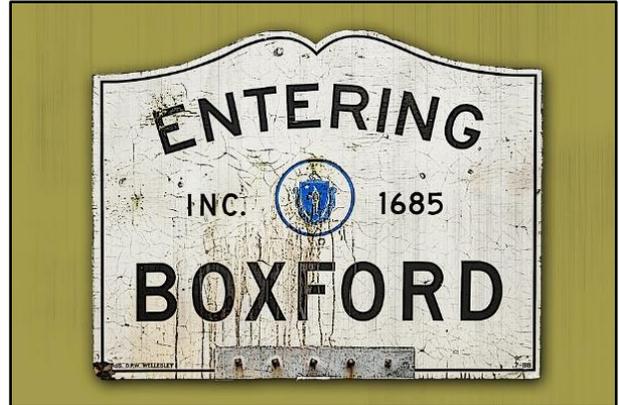


Boxford is a very desirable community in which to live and to raise a family. He or she will need to help guide the Town in its desire to balance economic

development and planned residential subdivisions throughout Town in keeping with the desire to maintain the Town's open space, historic agricultural heritage and quality of life. An important part of maintaining this rural quality of life in Boxford has been the Town's commitment to open space and recreational opportunities for its residents.

FINANCE/BUDGET

The biggest challenge for the new Town Administrator will be to balance the cost of providing the high level of municipal and educational services and programs at a sustainable tax rate during a time of fiscal uncertainty. Boxford has a long tradition of strong financial planning and fiscally conservative budgeting of both revenues and expenditures. The FY 2021 budget is approximately \$35.6M including \$24.0M for education and \$743,000 for capital improvements. Approximately 97.0% of the tax base comes from the residential sector and the remaining 3.0% from small commercial entities.



Standard & Poor's ("S&P") Global ratings assigned Boxford with its AAA bond rating and stable outlook. This is a noteworthy achievement for a municipality of 8,500 residents. However, S&P recognizes that the Town has a history of healthy financial positions, conservative management, low debt burden and manageable pension and OPEB obligations. The Town's available fund balance, also known as Free Cash, has averaged more than \$3.5M (roughly 10% of the operating budget) over the last several years while the unused levy capacity is in the range of \$1.7M every year. The Community Preservation Fund has a balance of approximately \$3.0M. S&P Services did not view the Town's OPEB liability as a credit risk as the Town has established an OPEB Trust Fund and has been pre-funding the liability.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



Given the current economic conditions, the planning, maintaining and funding future building improvements and projects will be a challenge for the next Town Administrator. Boxford has a 5-year Capital Improvement Program and funds annual capital expenditures and small projects out of Free Cash. Recently the Town undertook a comprehensive review of all non-school facilities and the report titled "One Town One Plan" recommended \$23.0M in needed capital projects for the DPW, Council on Aging/Community Center,

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Library/Town Hall and several other facilities. The warrant article to fund the entire \$23.0M did not pass at a Special Town Meeting and the Select Board decided to fund these needed projects on an annual basis. For FY 2021 and FY 2022 there are several projects the new Town Administrator will have to oversee. In addition, the Town was designated a Green Community and received grant funding for several important energy related projects. The next Town Administrator will have the Capital Improvement Plan as a blueprint for future capital projects, however he or she will need to be skilled at capital planning and funding as well as public procurement and project management.



BOXFORD'S ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

This community places a high value on environmental sustainability by acquiring open space for public enjoyment and protecting its ground water supply. The Conservation Commission has acquired and manages over 800 acres of open space and over 70 acres in Conservation Restrictions. Town Meeting has provided funding for open space acquisition with appropriations into the Conservation Fund. Plus, the community was designated a Municipal Vulnerability Planning (MVP) Community and created a Climate Action Plan to identify hazard weaknesses and areas of environmental concern. The challenge for the next Town Administrator will be to take advantage of being a MVP community, seek out grant funds that come with that program and continue to prioritize the purchase of land to add to the community's open space.

PERSONNEL/LABOR RELATIONS

Several key department head positions may become vacant due to retirement over the next few years and it will be crucial for the next Administrator to develop a succession plan for each department. In addition, he or she will need to have a proven record recruiting, selecting and grooming high-performance



teams. The Town Administrator plays an important role in negotiating and administrating the Town's collective bargaining agreements. He or she must have experience in handling all manners of personnel issues and concerns, as well as performance appraisal, grievance arbitration, discipline and termination as may be needed.

Finally, Boxford is a community that exhibits all the characteristics of a traditional New England town. The next Town Administrator must bring passion, energy, and commitment, as well as excellence, integrity and the confidence to guide the community in the years ahead. The ideal candidate must possess outstanding verbal and written skills to be able to communicate effectively with elected and appointed Town officials, department heads, staff and residents. It is expected that the Town Administrator will have a high level of community engagement. He or she will need to 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.

Important Links

- [Town Code](#)
- [One Town One Plan](#)
- [Facility Master Plan](#)
- [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#)
- [Standard & Poor's Credit Rating](#)
- [Town Meeting Election Results and Annual Reports](#)

Addendum Town Administrator Job Description and Functions

GENERAL PURPOSE

High level administrative, technical and professional work coordinating the activities of town departments, under the jurisdiction of the Select Board, in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations; supervisory work in the management of overall town services under the jurisdiction of the Select Board; all other related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Works under the policy guidance of the Select Board with considerable independence while receiving general administrative direction only; works under the jurisdiction of federal, state and local laws and procedures.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED

Direct or general supervision of all department heads reporting to the Select Board which includes approximately ten or fewer full-time employees. Responsible for coordinating the work and administrative activities of those employees not reporting directly to the Select Board. Direct supervision of Assistant Town Administrator.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.)

- ✓ Supervises department heads appointed by the Select Board which includes aiding in program planning, grantsmanship, and budget development; makes recommendations to the Select Board in conjunction with department heads.
- ✓ The job involves highly complex administrative and staff work of a professional nature which concerns such matters as analyzing difficult administrative problems and recommending solutions, project management, recommending long and short range goals, motivating managers, and coordinating the activities of many independent boards, committees, commissions and departments.
- ✓ Establishes and maintains appropriate administrative procedures for the conduct of all affairs under the Select Board's jurisdiction, and when appropriate, to facilitate the coordination of all town activities.
- ✓ Acts as Chief Administrative Officer for the Select Board; prepares the agenda and attends all meetings of the Select Board, and acts for the Select Board in accordance with established policies. Administers the Select Board's office by receiving and making appropriate disposition of all correspondence and communications; makes all procedural and substantive preparation for the meetings of the Select Board; anticipates needs of the Select Board for information and background material for setting policy and making decisions by the Select Board. Ensures that all decisions of the Select Board are carried out. Informs the Select Board and other appropriate boards of all relevant statutory and regulatory changes.

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- ✓ Provides leadership and direction in the development of short- and long-range plans; gathers, interprets, and prepares data for studies, reports and recommendations; coordinates department activities with other departments as needed.
- ✓ Provides professional advice to the Select Board and department heads; makes presentations to boards, commissions, civic groups and the general public; communicates official plans, policies and procedures to staff and the general public.
- ✓ Investigates and makes recommendations on questions coming before the Select Board for a decision; initiates special studies with the approval or at the direction of the Select Board.
- ✓ Supervises, directs and coordinates town services under the jurisdiction of the Select Board; coordinates and cooperates with the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, and other boards, commissions, and committees. Coordinates activities of department heads not reporting to the Select Board including: School Superintendent, Library Director, Director of Assessment, Director of Public Health, Director of Conservation/Planning Board Administrator, etc.
- ✓ Represents the Select Board with various community groups, including but not limited to the Boxford Athletic Association, BTA/BOLT, Garden Club, YMCA organizations, local churches, etc.
- ✓ Keeps the Select Board fully advised regarding all departmental operations, the availability of federal funds, grants, fiscal affairs, problems, administrative actions and long-range needs of the Town.
- ✓ Supervises the issuance of licenses and permits and schedules all hearings.
- ✓ Engages in a variety of public relations and town-wide coordination activities to ensure support from appropriate public and private constituencies and other institutions and government entities; works with local, county, state and federal officials to identify and resolve problems, gain support or exchange information. MMA membership required.
- ✓ Administers the Town's personnel system; consults with the Personnel Board and proposes to the Select Board personnel policies; participates in labor negotiations and grievance procedures as directed by the Select Board, acts as collective bargaining agent. MMPA membership required.
- ✓ Makes recommendations regarding vacancies in town offices, and department head positions to be filled by the Select Board; in cooperation with department heads, recommends hiring and firing and disciplining of town employees.
- ✓ Conducts regular staff meetings with department heads; reviews program goals and objectives with department heads; evaluates performance and effective utilization of equipment, manpower and other records.
- ✓ Coordinates litigation and legal opinions between the Select Board, Town Counsel, and various boards, departments, committees and commissions. Oversees all legal research conducted by Town Counsel, Labor Counsel and any Special Counsel; responsible for coordination of all work to Counsel and for the legal budget; manages all legal actions by and against the Town, including insurance claims.
- ✓ Responsible for the preparation and presentation of the Select Board's annual operating budget. Responsible for the preparation of annual and special town meeting warrants and the annual town report.
- ✓ Prepares applications for grants, administers grants received, works with appropriate state and private officials on projects.

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- ✓ Prepares bid specifications, analyzes bids and acts as Chief Procurement Officer pursuant to MGL Chapter 30B. MCPPO designation required within 1 year of appointment.
- ✓ Responsible for all purchasing decisions under the direct jurisdiction of the Select Board.
- ✓ Serves as the Town's public relations officer in addressing complaints, criticism and suggestions. Attempts to resolve the more difficult customer service complaints.
- ✓ Prepares a variety of studies, reports and related information for decision-making purposes.
- ✓ Coordinates town activities on workers compensation prevention and management and health insurance policies. Coordinates town activities with all utility companies.
- ✓ Attends meetings, conferences, workshops and other events as needed; required to provide frequent public presentations.
- ✓ Performs similar or related work as required, directed, or as situation dictates.

(This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.)