



Town Manager

Winchendon, MA (10,700 pop.), has been known for more than 100 years as “Toy Town, USA.” Famed for having been the home of the world’s largest toy manufacturer, Winchendon has evolved into a primarily residential community that provides an exceptional quality of life for its residents. Located in north-central Massachusetts, the Town of Winchendon is 16 miles northwest of Fitchburg, 20 miles southeast of Keene, N.H., 35 miles north-northwest of Worcester, and 60 miles northwest of Boston. The Town includes the villages of Waterville and Winchendon Springs. The Town has an A+ rating and an FY21 budget of approximately \$30.8 million (including public education). Winchendon’s current challenges involve maintaining a sound financial condition and a strong desire for additional economic development. Winchendon’s local government is led by a five-member Board of Selectmen.



To serve as Town Manager, which is the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town, Winchendon is seeking an experienced and proactive leader with exceptional financial acumen, demonstrable economic development experience, and strong communication skills. Thoughtful ideas regarding downtown revitalization, and experience in such a revitalization effort, would be beneficial. The next Town Manager should be a team builder, who is approachable and highly collaborative. Candidates should have strong management skills, including personnel management and project management, and have the ability to make tough decisions when necessary. The current Town Manager is transitioning to serve another Massachusetts community after successfully serving in the position for five years. Winchendon is fortunate to have talented department heads who will work collaboratively with the Town Manager to achieve goals and complete projects. Candidates should have a bachelor’s degree (master’s preferred) in public administration or a related field. A minimum of five years of progressive municipal management and leadership experience is a plus. Preferred candidates will have experience as a Town Manager/Administrator, a proven record of leadership, and be highly proficient in strategic planning and community-based problem solving. The next Town Manager should support transparency in government, be innovative and approachable, and have a strong work ethic.

Annual salary: \$135K+/- DOQ. The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package, including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Winchendon is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Government

Winchendon has a Board of Selectmen-Town Manager form of government with open Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen members serve as the chief executive officers of the Town. The [Board of Selectmen](#) is the chief policy making agency of the Town. The Board of Selectmen appoint a Town Manager, Town Accountant, the Registrars of Voters (but not including the Town Clerk) and other election officers, the Board of Appeals, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. The Board of Selectmen also serves as the licensing board for the Town.

Winchendon has a number of elected positions, boards, and committees including: Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Board of Health, Moderator, and Housing Authority. [Winchendon Public Schools](#), serving approximately 1,200 students, has a preschool program, two elementary schools, a middle school, a high school, and an academy for success. The next Town Manager must be skilled at collaboratively engaging with Winchendon's various elected and appointed positions, boards, and committees, including public school officials.

The [Town Manager](#) is responsible for executing the policy directives of the Board of Selectmen and for managing the operations and activities of the Town. Specifically, the Town Manager is responsible for the appointment and removal of all employees of the Town with the exception of the Town Accountant (although the Manager is responsible for regular oversight), collective bargaining and administration of a personnel system, preparation of annual and capital budgets, procurement, and the reorganization of Town agencies under the Manager's jurisdiction. The Town Manager appoints the Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Town Collector, Board of Assessors, Town Counsel, Chief of Police, Fire Chief, Superintendent of Public Works, and Building Commissioner.

Finances

Winchendon has an FY21 budget of \$30.8 million (with \$16.1 million for public education) and a Standard and Poor's rating of A+ with a stable outlook. Over the past six years, Winchendon has come into a position of financial stability from what had been a dire financial situation. In late 2014, the Town needed to receive emergency local aid advances and it was revealed that Winchendon's aggregate deficits for FY13, FY14, and FY15 totaled approximately \$3.5 million. The Town, which had been self-insured, had a health trust fund deficit of nearly \$2 million and other longtime financial management shortcomings were documented. Under the deficit legislation bill, the Town borrowed \$3.5 million to cover the deficit with the requirement it be paid back within 10 years. Following the revelation of these financial concerns, numerous new Town officials were put in place (including the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, Town Accountant, and Assistant Town Accountant). With new Town leaders, along with strengthened financial management policies and procedures, Winchendon repaid the obligation six years early as detailed in the [2019 management letter](#), which noted the Town has had *"a tremendous financial and operational turnaround that in future years will be looked back upon as historic."*

In FY21, free cash was certified at \$1.9 million and new growth was \$339,042. The FY21 tax rate is \$15.72 for residential, commercial, and industrial properties. The property tax base is approximately 90% residential, about 4.7% commercial, and 1.7% industrial. Slightly over 39% of the Town's revenue comes from the tax levy, with 42.21% from state aid, and 16.2% from local receipts. In FY21, the levy limit is \$13.29 million and there is \$179,124 in excess capacity. The next Town Manager should look to continue implementation of the Town's Capital Improvement Plan to maintain, repair, or replace infrastructure and equipment. Additionally, maintaining or improving Winchendon's current financial strength while keeping tax increases to a minimum are priorities.

Important Links:

- [Town of Winchendon](#)
- [Winchendon Town Charter](#)
- [Town By-Laws](#)
- [Master Plan Vol. 1](#) (Vol. 2 is being drafted.)
- [Master Plan presentation](#)
- [FY21 Budget Presentation](#)
- [2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan](#)
- [2019 Annual Town Report](#)
- [Audited Financial Statements](#)
- [DLS 2015 Financial Management Review](#)
- [2019 Management Letter](#)
- [Downtown Revitalization Strategy](#)
- [Annual and Special Town Meeting Warrants](#)
- [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#)



Economic and Community Development

While primarily residential, the Town still has several small to medium manufacturing companies, and a variety of small businesses that could be described as service industry oriented. There are opportunities for commercial development including a historic downtown business district tied to a large segment of the Town via bike/walking trails. The next Town Manager will need to make downtown revitalization a primary focus by striving to help fill vacant stores and continuing beautification efforts. The state is funding a reconstruction of Central Street, which is the Town's main thoroughfare, in the summer of 2022. This will include improvements to the roadway and sidewalks as well as compliance with ADA regulations. The Town will pay for upgrading water and sewer lines and decorative street lighting for the roadway. A new microbrewery is in the planning process to locate in a former warehouse and hopes to open for business in 2022. Winchendon is currently in discussions with a cannabis cultivation facility that could result in approximately \$2 million a year in revenue to the Town. There is a second cannabis cultivation facility and three retail establishments in various planning and approval stages. Additionally, Winchendon is home to the Winchendon School, a private co-ed college preparatory day and boarding school.

The Town has been focused on building upon its commercial resources to diversify its economic base, including new economy initiatives. There are hopes for the eventual redevelopment of a former mill building as well as recreation assets, a large industrial park with land for new business growth, and substantial areas of highway commercial frontage. The next Town Manager must be adept in attracting economic development projects and businesses that are appropriate for Winchendon. The Town Manager must be skilled in explaining the benefits of economic development projects and know how to achieve community buy-in.

Open Space and Recreation

Winchendon occupies 44 square miles and is home to an abundance of natural assets including the Lake Denison Recreation Area and Whitney Pond, and shares Lake Monomonac with Rindge, N.H., to the north. Millers River runs through the western part of Town. The Town is home to the Winchendon State Forest and two protected areas, the Birch Hill Wildlife Management Area and the Otter River State Forest, both have part of their lands within the Town. A bike trail runs from Winchendon to Gardner and there is talk of extending it to New Hampshire. Additionally, [Winchendon Community Park](#) offers residents and visitors opportunities for hiking, biking, boating, birdwatching, fishing, snowshoeing, etc. Residents are proud of Winchendon's many preserved open spaces and are committed to preserving, protecting, and enhancing its heritage and natural areas. Working collaboratively with the community to create a thoughtful and acceptable balance of open space and economic development is critical.

Current projects/issues

- In January 2021, the Town authorized the sale of two former school buildings to the MVOC which plans to convert the building to approximately 40 units of low-income veterans housing. Local approvals are still needed from the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals. The buildings, which are located just off the downtown, have been vacant for decades.
- Funds to upgrade the library's electrical and fire protection systems will be voted on at May's Town Meeting.
- Ongoing improvements to the Town's 135 miles of roads and sidewalks.

Upcoming/potential projects

- The reconstruction of Central Street, the Town's main thoroughfare, is planned for the summer of 2022.
- The current Senior Center (former Murdock High School) is in need of significant and costly renovations. A Proposition 2½ override to fund major renovations was not supported by the Town; however, \$90,000 has been allocated for emergency repairs. Other funding mechanisms will be considered in the spring to consider repair work to be conducted over three phases.
- Funding to study the possibility of expanding and constructing a new Fire Station will be discussed and voted on at the May Town Meeting. An earlier study resulted in a plan that was considered too costly and the Town is seeking a more affordable alternative.
- Maintenance to various Town facilities, including school buildings and the public works building.





The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree required (with a master's preferred), in public administration or a related field.
- A minimum of five years of progressive municipal experience, preferably as a Town Manager/ Administrator, is preferred.
- Exceptional skills and abilities in municipal finance and economic development.
- Strong skills and abilities in management, personnel administration, labor relations, strategic planning, community planning, and intergovernmental relations.
- A strong communicator, both internally and externally; active listener; honest.
- Skilled in grant acquisition and administration.
- Ability to analyze data and present the results to officials and citizens clearly and concisely.
- Team-oriented; morale builder; approachable.
- Strong leadership qualities and experience.
- Ability to coach and mentor staff.
- Knowledgeable of, and able to implement, municipal best practices.
- Ability to negotiate compromise or consensus.
- Proficient knowledge of municipal law.
- Excellent writing and presentation skills.
- Strong conflict resolution skills.
- Creative problem solver; proactive.
- Ability to build strong relationships.
- Professional, courteous, and respectful.
- Strong work ethic; confident and flexible.
- Strategic; diplomatic; patient.
- Innovative and forward thinking

How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by March 8, 2021, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

**Subject: Winchendon
Town Manager**

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

Bernard Lynch, Principal
Community Paradigm Associates
Blynch@communityparadigm.com
978-621-6733

*The Town of Winchendon, Mass., is an
Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.*