

Profile – Amesbury, MA Fire Chief

INTRODUCTION

The City of Amesbury has retained the services of the Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston to assist in the City's recruitment of a new Fire Chief. This profile describes our understanding of the organization, the challenges that lie ahead for the successful candidate, and the professional and personal attributes an ideal candidate will possess. For more information about the City of Amesbury please consult its web site (www.amesburyma.gov).

BACKGROUND ON THE CITY OF AMESBURY

Amesbury is located in the northeast corner of Massachusetts on the north bank of the Merrimack River which is tidal in Amesbury. The City is traversed by Interstate 495, which provides rapid access to the central part of the state and quick access to Interstate 95, which is the main North/South corridor in eastern Massachusetts. Boston is a 60-minute drive from Amesbury in off-peak conditions. The City consists of 14 square miles and is largely a residential community. Historically the main industries in Amesbury have been water related manufacturing and processing, textiles, and carriage building. A major asset that supported the development of the community was the waterpower available from the ninety-foot drop of the Powwow River. Currently the City is largely a residential community.

The City's population is approximately seventeen thousand. Median household income is approximately eighty thousand dollars compared to sixty-five thousand dollars for the state average. The City, through its School Department, operates a K – 12 school system. The City's fiscal affairs are managed prudently. Amesbury has an A+ bond rating from Standard and Poors.

Amesbury shares its northern border with New Hampshire. A mile or two outside the center the landscape is very pastoral. Amesbury is bordered on the east by the Town of Salisbury, which faces on the Atlantic.

ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN AND GOVERNANCE

In 1996 Amesbury changed its form of government from a Town form of government to a city form by adopting a new charter that is available through the City's website. The Chief Executive is a Mayor elected for a two-year term. The current Mayor, Kenneth Gray, was elected in 2013. The legislative body is the City Council, whose members are also elected for two-year terms. Municipal elections are non-partisan. The municipal next election will be in November 2015.

The City provides the full range of public services typical of a medium sized New England City. In general, city employees are unionized. The labor relations climate is considered positive.

As is typical of New England municipalities the city is responsible for the construction and maintenance of all municipal buildings including schools. School construction is also a municipal responsibility.

THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Full time professionals staff the Fire Department. Staffing consists of 28 fire fighters, four lieutenants, a deputy chief responsible for EMS and training, and an assistant chief for operations. The City does not use call firefighters. Generally there are four groups of seven firefighters headed by a lieutenant. Each of the groups serves a twenty-four hour shift. Twenty-two of the firefighters are trained at the paramedic level and six are trained at the EMS level.

The department operates out of two facilities. Administrative Offices are housed in a building that is close to, but separated from the main fire station. The department provides ambulance service as well as fire suppression. In 2013 there were approximately forty four hundred calls for service. Of these, the overwhelming majority (approximately twenty-five hundred) were for medical service

The fire stations have undergone comprehensive rehabilitation and modernization in the last 5-7 years. The Department's equipment list is available on the Collins Center web site.

CHALLENGES FOR THE FIRE CHIEF

The City recognizes that on a technical basis its Fire Department has a high level of capability. This is the result of many years of development under several Chiefs and several municipal political leaders. In recent years the department's facilities and equipment have undergone extensive modernization.

Major challenges for the new Fire Chief will include:

- Recognizing that for the foreseeable future the City of Amesbury will have limited financial resources, thus efficient utilization of existing resources will be of paramount importance.
- Recognizing that the colonial era legacy of relatively small compact independent municipalities and the custom and tradition that comes with this legacy continues to affect municipal operations of all types especially by placing limitations on achieving economies of scale.

- Taking a managerial approach to the Fire Department, one that brings internal operations to the next level and allocates resources to address critical needs. Securing maximum value from the City's participation in the regional dispatch service provided by the Essex County Sheriff's office will be of paramount importance.
- Maintaining a positive labor relations climate in day-to-day operations while supporting the City's collective bargaining team during negotiations.
- Sustaining a positive view of the Fire Department by the Public by serving as the ambassador of the Department at public functions and with the media.
- Strengthening formal and informal relationships with fire departments and with other public safety organizations in the region.
- Strengthening the Department's support and expectation for training.
- Maintaining a high level of morale and effective two-way vertical communication within the Department.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The following attributes have been determined to be important in Amesbury's next Fire Chief.

Personal

The next Fire Chief needs to be

- Able to demonstrate unquestioned integrity in interactions with officials, citizens and subordinates.
- Able to inspire, mentor and train subordinates at all levels to work as a team and engage in a process of continual personal and departmental improvement.
- Able to deal with management, scheduling and discipline issues in a manner that is fair, transparent and effective and also consistent with the labor contract.
- Able and willing to play a highly visible role in the community. The ideal candidate must participate broadly across the leadership structure of the community and region and be a champion of the Department and the City. The Fire Chief must be comfortable, engaging directly with citizens.
- Able and willing to work not only as the manager of a key department but also as a member of the City's senior management team. A direct, collegial, facilitative

style that fosters joint problem solving is needed. The Fire Chief can have no agenda beyond being a professional.

- Able to be a vocal and positive spokesperson and representative for the Department's and City's agenda at public forums, state agencies and with the media. The successful candidate must be able to use the status inherent in the Fire Chief's position to advance the community's agenda.

Professional

The Fire Chief should be

- A mature leader of a comparable organization with extensive technical and managerial experience in Fire Suppression, Fire Prevention and Emergency Medical Services. Excellent communication skills are essential.
- A professionally stable Fire Chief, Deputy Chief or Battalion Chief with a record of tenure and consistent career growth. The City does not seek a resume builder. It does seek a committed professional willing to stay for a significant period but who is also willing to take risks to improve the organization.
- A proven manager in the Fire Service. The ideal candidate will have a combination of formal education, technical training and operational experience. A minimum of five years of experience in a managerial role in a Fire Department is preferred. A record of professional development and training is important.

SALARY AND SCHEDULE

The search begins in February 2015 and will conclude in May 2015. The application deadline is March 20, 2015. Direct salary compensation of the retiring incumbent is in the mid 140s. The City anticipates negotiating a competitive employment contract with the selected candidate, DOQ.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications are preferred electronically. Please send a resume with a cover letter addressing the job requirements to: recruitment.umb@gmail.com. Please combine all of your documents in a single file and include **AMESBURY_FC** in the subject line. Kindly use PDF format, if possible.

Should you have any questions regarding this opportunity, or a recommendation of a colleague, please contact: Dick Kobayashi, Senior Associate 617-489-8812 or Mary Flanders Aicardi, Associate 508-215-8992.

To learn more about the Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at UMass Boston and to view relevant Chelsea documents, please visit:

www.collinscenter.umb.edu/cpm.

Fire	1992	E-One	Fire Truck -Ladder	L-1	4ENDABA88N10009707	MFB 744		
	1996	KME	Fire Truck	E-3	1K9AF4281TN058466	Fire 8327		
	*	1998	Ford	E350	ESU-1	1FDWE37L2WHA94854	MF 9675	
	1999	GMC	3500	U-1	1GDKL34F8XF043391	Fire 8216		
	2001	Pierce	Pumper	E-1	4P1CT02X11A001322	MFB 743		
	2003	Ford	F450	F-2	1FDXF47PO3EC61946	Fire 913		
	2003	Safeboat	25' Response Boat		EG000286A303T1745	DEC4c Only		
	2004	Custom	Trailer for Airboat		1S9BC18115M32030	Fire 921		
	2007	EZ Loader	Trailer		1ZEZACZM08A004578	MFB 541		
	2008	Ford	Expedition	C-3	1FMFU16548LA22984	MF 449A	Dep Mather	
	*	2008	Ford	Explorer	C-8	1FMFU73818UB13945	MF 9674	Command Car E.M.A.
	2009	Ford	Expedition	C-1	1FMFU16529LA00242	MF 450A	Chief Brickett	
	2009	Spartan	Rosenbauer -Pumper	E-2	4S7CT2D968C070118	MFB 742	5-yr Ln-10/01/2011-2015 Prov	
	2010	Scotty	Safety Trailer	Fire Safety	1SSTT35T6A11SS310	M63 141		
	2010	Ford	Drwsup-Box	A-1	1FDAF4HR2AEB01182	MF 252A		
	2010	Chevrolet	Tahoe	A-4	1GNUKAE02AR233828	MF 5000		
	*	2010	Ingersoll Rand	Light Source Trlr	EM Light Tower	4FVLSBDA3AU414263	MF 9671	
	2011	Bay Bridge	Trailer (Enclosed)		1B9BE1612BB944090	MF 258A		
	*	2011	TC Trecker	Utility Trailer	EM T-2	1WF200E1XB8078929	MF 405A	
	*	2012	Chicago	Pneumatic Portable	EM Light Tower	C1000321	MF A630	
	2013	Ford	Expedition SSV XL	C-2	1FMJU1G50DEF46639	MF 417A	AsstChf 3-yrLn- 06/10/13-16NB5	
	2014	International	Terra Star 4300 Amb	A-3	1HTJSSKK2EH785674	Fire 912	Paid 5300	