

Barnstable County, Massachusetts

County Administrator

Profile



EDWARD J. COLLINS JR. CENTER FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT
JOHN W. McCORMACK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
GLOBAL AND POLICY STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

Introduction

Barnstable County has retained the services of the Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston to assist in the County's recruitment of a new County Administrator (Administrator). The Profile draws upon discussions with Commissioners, key staff and knowledgeable officials on Cape Cod. It 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 Barnstable County please consult the County's web site (www.barnstablecounty.org).

Barnstable County

The County, which dates back to earliest part of the colonial era, is comprised of fifteen towns and covers all of the land area typically identified as Cape Cod (Cape). Generally the County is not a direct service provider to citizens and unlike most counties outside New England all of its land area is a part of an incorporated municipality. Historically, the County provided court, incarceration, and land recordation services. However, over recent decades most counties in Massachusetts have been abolished and these and similar services have been absorbed by state agencies. Barnstable County is one of the few remaining counties in Massachusetts. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the County was significantly revamped. Its planning powers were strengthened through the establishment of the Cape Cod Commission, which is a regional land use planning and regulatory entity. The County became fiscally independent of the state through the enactment of a series of laws that led to the establishment of a Home Rule Charter for the County, a charter approved by the voters.

The median income for a family is recently estimated at \$61,000, modestly lower than the statewide average of \$67,000. Data on the County's demographic trends can be obtained from Cape Cod Commission web site (www.capecodcommission.org).

The Cape, bounded on three sides by the Atlantic Ocean and its estuaries, has long drawn tourists and in the post war years development of second homes and retirement homes have been major economic drivers. The population currently is approximately 215,000, which has been stable since 2000, however the over sixty-five portion has been increasing. Currently the over sixty-five portion of the population is 27%. Seasonal swings in population are significant, during the peak summer months the population increases by an estimated 500,000.

Organizational Design and Governance

The County governance structure consists of a three member Board of Commissioners and a fifteen member Assembly of Delegates. The Commissioners are elected at the state biennial election countywide for four year staggered terms on a partisan basis. One Commissioner is

elected at gubernatorial elections and two Commissioners are elected at presidential elections.

The Delegates are elected for two-year terms at the state biennial election. Each Delegate is elected to represent one of the towns.

The Commissioners function as the County's executive but the Charter explicitly authorizes them to delegate any of their powers and duties to the Administrator. The current Commissioners have expressed a willingness to formally delegate authority to the new Administrator including placing all County staff that are subordinate to the Commissioners under the jurisdiction of the Administrator and grant the Administrator authority for administering personnel policies. Significant additional delegation is expected with the appointment of a new Administrator, and additional delegation, both formal and informal, is anticipated as the new Administrator gains experience and insight into the County's needs.

The County has two discrete kinds of functions: mandatory functions and discretionary functions. Mandatory functions include the Cape Cod Commission which has a well-defined independent statutory basis, a dedicated revenue stream and its own Board, the Registry of Deeds led by an elected Register, and landlord functions which are inherent in the leasing of County facilities to the Trial Court. Discretionary functions include the County Health Department, which provides health services to Towns, the regional fire academy and the dredging service. The County also operates grant in aid programs and provides a "roof" for a number of Cape wide initiatives (Cape Light, Broadband, the Wastewater Collaborative, Human Services, etc.)

A significant portion of the County's revenue is derived from the rental of facilities to the Trial Court. Most of the Commonwealth's courts are owned directly by the Commonwealth. Barnstable County is one of the few counties that continue to supply court facilities to the Commonwealth.

Public Finance

While the County is not a particularly large organization its finances are complex. There are multiple revenue streams, some of which are dedicated. Major revenue sources include: the Town assessment of almost three million dollars, the County Deeds Excise of almost eight million dollars, the Registry of Deeds Excise of almost two and a half million dollars, and the rental income from court facilities of almost one million four hundred thousand dollars. In addition the dedicated Environmental Protection Tax of over three million dollars funds the Cape Cod Commission in large measure, and the County Deeds Excise similarly funds the Registry of Deeds. Detailed financial statements can be found in the FY 2014 financial audit which is posted on the County's website.

Challenges for the County

Administrator

- **Establishing the Position.** Although the position has existed for more than twenty years it has been seen as having a focus on internal administration and finance. In fact, for a considerable period the Administrator also served as the Finance Director, which will not be the case with the new Administrator. As Chief Administrative Officer for the County, the Administrator must establish the position as the key management leader of the County. The status of the Administrator will derive not only from the laws that created the position and formal and informal delegation of responsibility by the Commissioners, but from the professionalism, demeanor, and superior substantive knowledge the Administrator displays. The new Administrator must know or quickly learn “how things are done” on the Cape.
- **Managing Relationships with the Trial Court and Commonwealth.** The Trial Court’s facilities on the County’s campus in Barnstable are in sub-optimum condition, especially when compared to the Trial Court facilities in other parts of the state that are financed and built by the Commonwealth. The new Administrator needs to play a role in the development of a concrete and realistic plan to bring the Trial Court facilities in Barnstable County up to contemporary standards while remaining cognizant of the County’s dependence on court rental income to fund its operations. The County cannot easily sustain its current operations without the free cash flow from court rental.
- **Professionalism, Staff Development and Morale.** The County has well-regarded, highly skilled and professional department heads and key staff. Some of which function autonomously by statute and some of which will be directly subordinate to the Administrator. The County has benefited from having a blend of professionals who have served the Cape community for many years. Fully utilizing the considerable talents of staff, integrating and coordinating departmental operations and maintaining staff morale will be critical to the success of the new Administrator. Establishing a more collaborative management environment will be key.
- **Communication.** Well-developed communication skills in Barnstable County are essential. Open, accurate and timely communication by the Administrator with all County government entities including the Assembly of Delegates, key officials in the county’s municipalities, and the many volunteers and employees is a prerequisite to success. In addition, the Administrator must be able to engage the Commissioners in an on-going dialogue about the most critical issues facing the County.
- **Financial Management, Budget Planning and Preparation.** Like all Massachusetts public entities, Barnstable County is facing revenue constraints and growing cost pressures. The Administrator must build

and direct a strategic planning process that strikes an appropriate balance between long-term goals and short-term budget requirements. A significant amount of the Administrator’s time will be required to help forge countywide strategies to bring these into balance. This task must be addressed in the context of multi-year plans that consider the conservative fiscal values of the Cape community, the demographic trends affecting the county and unmet capital requirements. The Administrator must be comfortable and adept at presenting and sheparding the budget through the Assembly of Delegates.

- **Making County Government Visible.** The two hundred thousand plus residents of the Cape are not keenly aware of the services supplied by the County because the County is not generally a direct service provider. The Administrator must genuinely raise the profile of the County in collaboration with elected officials and partner organizations.
- **Planning.** The Cape Cod Commission, which operates largely independently in accordance with its statute, is the County’s most prominent arm and is well regarded. However, service delivery planning, technology planning and planning for joint service delivery by Cape towns will be the source of opportunities for planning initiatives that will require County leadership.
- **Strategic Plan Implementation.** In 2013, the County completed and approved a Strategic Plan. The plan, which is available on the County’s website, specifies an agenda to be implemented in the 2014-2018 period. The new Administrator, together with the Commissioners, needs to review and refine this agenda in light of current conditions and move toward implementation of the top priorities.

The Ideal Candidate

The Barnstable County Commissioners seek an Administrator who is a seasoned manager in an environment of similar complexity who is a creative and analytical thinker and possesses strong leadership, interpersonal communication and organizational skills.

The County seeks an Administrator willing to commit to a tenure long enough to build a multi-year approach to strategic planning and ensuring the sustainability of the County’s service levels. The new Administrator must support regional solutions to municipal service problems. Barnstable County needs an Administrator who can help set the stage for approaches that address the Cape’s needs, approaches that produce sound outcomes and avoid polarization within the County, while recognizing, respecting and involving towns and citizens.

Personal Attributes

The following attributes are important in Barnstable County’s next Administrator. The next Administrator needs to be:

- Able to demonstrate leadership internally and externally.

- Able to demonstrate unquestioned integrity in interactions with officials and citizens.
- Able to communicate effectively in all aspects of the position and with all constituencies in the community. The successful candidate must be direct, facilitative, and clear.
- Able to direct a budget process that develops a sound comprehensive budget for consideration.
- Able to use the status inherent in the Administrator's position to advance the County's agenda.
- Able to delegate many of the routine administrative and communication tasks to subordinates, so that time is available for longer range project and strategic planning.
- Able to create and sustain a goal-oriented and performance based environment by establishing, maintaining and promoting effective policies and initiatives. The Administrator will be a genuinely inclusive leader who is capable of exerting influence and direction in a manner that shares successes with elected officials, professionals and volunteers.
- Able and willing to work openly with community groups and employees. A direct, collegial, facilitative style that fosters joint problem solving is needed. The Administrator cannot be a micromanager and can have no agenda beyond being a professional.

Professional Attributes

The Administrator must be:

- A seasoned leader of a comparable organization with extensive personal experience in finance, budgeting, capital and operational planning, expenditure management, labor relations, public facilitation, and staff development. Excellent public and interpersonal communication skills are essential.
- A professionally stable person with a record of tenure and consistent career growth. The County seeks a committed management professional willing to stay for a significant period but who is also willing to take risks to improve the organization.
- Able to demonstrate a background in guiding the development of a shared strategic vision for the region. The ideal candidate must be a coalition builder, equally at home with private sector and community leaders. The ideal candidate must be able to exercise leadership within the organization and the community.
- Both strategic and tactical. He/she must be experienced in working effectively in a political environment providing impartial guidance to elected officials to identify and address the long-term strategic needs of the community and the short-term tactical steps necessary to deliver services.
- Capable of keeping elected officials comprehensively informed, while staying detached from the political process and ensuring that staff maintains a similar detachment.

- Comfortable managing in an environment where management and administration is, to a significant extent, shared by the Commissioners and Administrator. Being able to navigate in such a complex environment will require a sophisticated understanding of the diffuse nature of political power in the New England context.
- Familiar with partnering arrangements with non-profit land preservation and cultural institutions, which have been key to carrying out Barnstable County's natural resource, cultural preservation and sustainability agendas.
- Familiar with highly participative local government environments with dynamics similar to those within Barnstable County.
- Comfortable working with and managing an organization in a political context often characterized by vigorous debate among regional and local political actors and citizens.
- In possession of a Bachelor's Degree and experience as a County or City/Town Manager/Administrator. A person who has senior level administrative experience in the public sphere and demonstrated experience brokering public policy decisions among parties with varying interests may be considered. The knowledge typically gained by obtaining a graduate degree in Public Administration, Public Policy, Business Administration, or law is preferred. Five years executive experience, managing a transparent organization similar in scale and complexity to the County, preferably in a municipal setting is preferred. Experience working for an elected Board and having worked in a similar environment is preferred.
- Possess a track record of professional behavior consistent with the ethical tenets of the International City/County Management Association.

Salary and Schedule

Applications should be received by July 29, 2015. Anticipated salary up to the mid one hundreds, depending on qualifications. The County is willing to negotiate a competitive compensation and an employment contract with the selected candidate.

How to Apply

Applications are preferred electronically. Please send your resume with a cover letter addressing the job requirements to this email address: recruitment.umb@gmail.com. Please combine all of your documents in a single pdf file, if possible. **Barnstable County_CA** and the applicant's **Last Name** must be included in the subject line.

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, please visit: www.collinscenter.umb.edu