Introduction

The Town of Cohasset has retained the services of the Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston to assist in the Town’s recruitment of a new Town Manager. The Profile draws upon our discussions with selectmen, department heads, elected officials, resident volunteers, and staff. It describes our understanding of the organization, the challenges that lie ahead for the successful candidate, and the professional and personal characteristics an ideal candidate will possess.

The Town of Cohasset

Cohasset is located approximately 21 road miles southeast of the center of Boston. It is a coastal community and is served by the MBTA’s Greenbush commuter rail line. The Town has a population of approximately 7,500. Commercial development has been modest and is concentrated along the Town’s sole arterial road: Route 3A.

The Town has had three permanent Town Managers since the position was established in 1997. An amendment to the Town’s special act charter has been approved by the Town Meeting and is currently under consideration by the legislature. A copy is available on the Collins Center web site. Additional information about the Town is available on its web site. (www.cohassetmass.org)

According to the 2010 census, the median income for a family was $100,000, significantly higher than the statewide average. Data on the Town’s demographic trends can be obtained from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (www.mapc.org).

Organizational Design and Governance

The Town governance structure consists of a five member Board of Selectmen elected for three year staggered terms and an open Town Meeting. The five-member School Committee is elected, as are the Library Trustees, Town Clerk, Assessors, Board of Health members, Water Commissioners, Sewer Commissioners, Planning Board members and Recreation Commission members. The Town Manager has significant appointment powers enumerated in the Town Manager Acts – both the current and proposed acts. The Town Meeting is the legislative body and exercises the functions of appropriating money and making local laws. The position of Town Manager is well established and the Town is committed to professional management. As in all Massachusetts towns the schools function as an autonomous entity, however the Town and schools share Information Technology and building maintenance functions.

Public Finance

In financial terms, Cohasset is currently managed conservatively as evidenced by its AA+ bond rating, a consequence of relatively recent financial reforms implemented to address deficits. The Town does not have a split property tax rate. Residential property generates over 95% of property tax revenue. Since FY2000 Cohasset has passed three operating overrides; the most recent was in 2004. There have been no debt exclusion referenda since 2000. Detailed financial information, including the date and purpose of debt exclusions, may be obtained at the web site of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Department of Local Services. In addition, a copy of the Town’s recent bond offering statement is on the Collins Center web site.

Challenges for the Town Manager

- Building on the Foundation. Boards of Selectmen, Standing Committees, Town Meeting and previous Town Managers have built a solid public administration foundation for the Town that emphasizes professionalism among the Town’s staff and administrators. Cohasset has well-trained professional department administrators and key staff, a value the current Board of Selectmen wants to maintain. The new Town Manager needs to sustain and build on this foundation.

- Reestablishing full confidence in the management of the Town. The extremely short tenure of the last permanent Town Manager, the pendency of litigation relative to his departure and the relatively long tenure of an Acting Town Manager combined with changes in the membership of the Board of Selectmen in the last two years has fostered some sense of uncertainty within the Town government. The new Town Manager needs to be able to foster a sense of stability, resolve lingering issues in a forthright and professional way, and focus the organization on the business of providing exemplary service to citizens in the future.

- Establishing and Maintaining a Positive Employment Climate. Most of the Town’s employees are members of collective bargaining units. Collective bargaining activities are the responsibility of the Town Manager and Selectmen. The labor relations climate is generally considered favorable. However, the Town lacks a well-developed Human Resource system and fashioning a solution to this issue will be a critical responsibility of the Town Manager.

- Medium and LongTerm Budget Planning and Service Delivery. Like all Massachusetts municipalities, Cohasset is facing revenue constraints and growing cost pressures. A significant amount of the Town Manager’s time will be required to forge town-wide strategies to bring these into balance. This task must be addressed in the context of multi-year plans that consider the new normal: constrained revenue combined with explicit recognition of pension and OPEB liabilities. Service expectations are high but resources in real...
dollar terms will be limited for the foreseeable future. Conservative budgeting and strict expenditure control will be required.

- **Communication.** Well-developed communication skills are essential. Open, accurate and timely communication by the Town Manager with the Selectmen, other Town government entities, department heads, the public, the many volunteers and the employees needs to be integrated into the normal operational practices of the Town. The next Town Manager must be skilled and comfortable serving as a major public spokesperson for the Town and actively participate in shaping a strategic message to citizens, stakeholders and the business and development communities.

The Town Manager plays an active role at Town Meeting. In addition, the Town Manager must be able to engage the members of the Board of Selectmen and committees/boards/commissions in an on-going dialog about the critical issues that face the Town. The public communication role of the Town Manager will be critical to sustaining a high level of confidence and trust by residents in the Town government.

- **Building a Management Team, Staff Development & Morale.** Cohasset has a well-regarded group of department heads that have made significant progress in engendering greater cooperation and collaboration among departments. Continued efforts by the Town Manager will be required to foster comprehensive interdepartmental approaches to problem solving and governance. These efforts need to include the schools (while respecting the autonomy of the schools), the Town's largest budgetary entity and a key determinant of the quality of life in Cohasset. Maintaining staff morale, fully utilizing the considerable talents of staff and establishing and then maintaining high performance standards will be critical to the success of the new Town Manager.

- **Joint Management of Enterprise Funds.** Cohasset has two enterprise funds: water and sewer. The Town Manager has joint financial management responsibilities with the elected Water and Sewer Commissions.

- **Managing Relationships with Boards and Commissions.** Cohasset has a large number of elected and appointed boards, commissions and committees that are integral to the governance of the Town. Many of the boards, commissions and committees possess defined statutory powers and all need support and collaboration from the Town Manager.

- **Coastal Issues.** As a coastal community, Cohasset has unique responsibilities and budgetary pressures as it ensures the proper stewardship of its waterways, including a commercial harbor. There are also additional coastal public safety concerns. This stewardship requires special attention as well as a need for the professional staff to research, identify and solicit state and national funding sources.

### The Ideal Candidate

The Cohasset Board of Selectmen seeks a Town Manager who is a seasoned manager in an environment of similar complexity and sophistication who possesses strong organizational, communication and community leadership skills. This is not a learning position.

Cohasset seeks a Town Manager with the skill, energy, creativity and experience to achieve the Town's goals.

Cohasset seeks a Town Manager willing to commit to a tenure long enough to build a multi-year approach to ensuring the sustainability of the Town's service levels. The new Town Manager must support regional solutions when that is in the Town's interest, as well as foster volunteerism and private contributions as a partial solution to service delivery. Cohasset needs a Town Manager who can help set the stage for community-wide approaches to addressing the Town's needs, approaches that produce sound outcomes and avoid polarization.

The following attributes have been determined important in Cohasset’s next Town Manager.

### Personal

The next Town Manager needs to be:

- Able to demonstrate unquestioned integrity in interactions with officials and citizens.
- Able to communicate effectively and build consensus among all elements of the community; a diplomatic approach to communication is required.
- Able to work cooperatively with the Board of Selectmen on the establishment of annual goals and objectives for the Town and its departments, update the BOS and staff on progress and actively participate in the annual review of results and operations.
- 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 community.
- Comfortable engaging directly with residents. The Town Manager must have sufficient direct engagement with the civic community so that he/she can gain thorough understanding of the Town’s culture. Through formal and informal interaction, the Town Manager’s concern for the Town’s residents needs to become evident.
- Able and willing to work openly with community groups and employees. A direct, collegial, facilitative style that fosters joint problem solving is needed. The Town Manager can have no agenda beyond being professional
and ensuring that service delivery meets the community’s standard for customer service.

- Able to be a vocal and positive spokesperson for the Town at Town Meetings, public forums, state agencies and with the media. The successful candidate must be able to use the status inherent in the Town Manager’s position to advance the Town’s goals.

- Able to assume a strong organizational management role. He/she needs to delegate, while maintaining strict accountability. The successful candidate must be direct, facilitative, and clear.

- Able to create and sustain a goal-oriented environment by establishing, maintaining and promoting effective policies and initiatives. The Town Manager 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.

**Professional**

The Town Manager must be:

- An experienced leader of a comparable organization with extensive professional experience in finance, capital and operational planning, expenditure management, labor relations, public facilitation, and staff development. Excellent public and interpersonal communication skills are essential, as is skill in forging a management team.

- A committed and creative management professional with a record of tenure and consistent career growth.

- Able to demonstrate a background in guiding the development of a shared strategic vision for the community. 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 within the community.

- In possession of the skills and interest to identify and promote opportunities for diversified tax base expansion.

- Both strategic and tactical. He/she must be experienced in working effectively in a political environment providing seasoned and 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 sustain service delivery.

- Capable of keeping elected officials comprehensively informed, while staying detached from the political process and ensuring that staff maintains a similar detachment.

- Familiar with highly participative local government environments with dynamics similar to Cohasset’s.

- Comfortable working with and managing an organization in a political context often characterized by vigorous debate among well-informed citizens who are active in local decision-making processes. Key decisions made by the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting are sometimes closely decided.

- In possession of a Bachelor’s Degree and at least seven years of experience as a Town or City Manager or other executive position that oversees the operations of a complex multi-function public entity governed by an elected policy body that makes decisions in public. The service of a person who has served as an Assistant Town or City Manager in a complex environment will be counted toward the seven-year requirement.

- Possess a track record of professional behavior consistent with the ethical tenets of the International City Management Association, including the ICMA standard of absolute non-participation in political activities of any kind. Obtaining or continuing membership in the ICMA will be a condition of appointment.

**The Hiring Process**

The Town will utilize a Screening Committee to conduct preliminary interviews in confidence. The Screening Committee is expected to review the applications of candidates recommended by the Collins Center in October and complete preliminary interviews in November. Interviews of finalists by the Board and a decision are expected in early December. An early January start for the new Town Manager is contemplated.

**Salary and Schedule**

The search begins in September 2013 and is expected to end in December 2013. Applications should be received by October 2, 2013. Compensation is anticipated to be in the mid-$120 to mid-$150 range, DOQ. The Town is willing to negotiate a competitive compensation and an employment contract DOQ 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 file and include Cohasset TM 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, please visit: www.collinscenter.umb.edu