

# Town of Medway, Massachusetts

## Town 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

The Town of Medway 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 Administrator. This Profile draws upon our discussions with Selectmen, department heads, elected officials, 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 Medway

Medway is located approximately twenty-five miles west of the center of Boston. The Town has a population of approximately 13,000. Commercial development is limited. Medway is a well-regarded town of homes. The retiring Town Administrator has served in the position since 2006. Additional information about the Town is available on its web site. ([www.townofmedway.org](http://www.townofmedway.org))

The median household income is approximately ninety-seven thousand dollars, a number that is significantly larger than the state median of sixty-five thousand dollars. Data on the Town's demographic trends can be obtained from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council ([www.mapc.org](http://www.mapc.org)).

In the public mind, Medway is a medium-sized middle class New England town. However, its very high level of public services, amenities and geographical location have made it an attractive place to live for professional families. There is significant pressure on housing prices due to high demand.

## Organizational Design and Governance

The Town governance structure consists of a five member Board of Selectmen, elected for three year staggered terms, and open Town Meeting. Elected Boards include the School Committee, the Library Trustees, the Planning Board, Board of Health, Water & Sewer Commission, and the Parks Commission. The Town Moderator and the Town Clerk are also elected.

The Town Administrator's powers are established in the Town's Special Act Charter, Chapter 84 of the Acts of 2008. Town Meeting is the legislative body and exercises the functions of appropriating money and making local laws. The position of Town Administrator is well established and the Town is committed to professional management. As in all Massachusetts towns the schools function as an autonomous entity.

While the position of Town Administrator has relatively strong powers, as an old New England town, Medway retains a strong tradition of making decisions through

consensus. The new Town Administrator must be attuned to this tradition and be comfortable working in an environment where political power is diffuse and citizens expect broad consultation on significant decisions.

## Public Finance

The Town is financially conservative and holds significant reserves in its Stabilization Fund and in "free cash". Twenty-nine million dollars of the Town's fifty-two million dollar budget is from property taxes. Eleven million dollars of revenue is in the form of state aid and nine million dollars is in the form of local receipts. A recent bond offering statement is available on the Collins Center web site.

## Challenges for the Town Administrator

- **Building on the Foundation.** Boards of Selectmen, Town Meeting and the retiring Town Administrator have built a solid public administration foundation for the Town that emphasizes professionalism among the Town's staff and administrators. Medway has well-trained professional department administrators and key staff, a value the current Board of Selectmen wants to maintain. The job of the next Town Administrator is to take the Town to the next level.
- **Ensuring full confidence in the management of the Town.** The successful tenure of the retiring Town Administrator places a premium on making the right appointment. The new Town Administrator needs to be able to foster a sense of stability while evaluating the current condition in a forthright and professional way. The process of selecting a new Town Administrator, the first impression set by the new Town Administrator and the perception of the new Administrator's initial decisions need to engender confidence in the Town's decision-making processes and set the stage for enhanced public perception of the quality of town governance.
- **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 Administrator and Selectmen. The labor relations climate is generally considered favorable. The Town employs a human resource professional and has a well-developed human resource system.
- **Medium and Long Term Budget Planning and Service Delivery.** Like all Massachusetts municipalities, Medway is facing revenue constraints and growing cost pressures. A significant amount of the Town Administrator's time will be required to forge town-wide strategies to manage within these constraints. 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.

Conservative budgeting and strict expenditure control will be required. Medway is a high service town with own-source general fund revenue coming almost exclusively from the residential property tax base.

The Town has undeveloped land adjacent to Interstate 495. Finding a way to unlock development on this land and gain the resulting tax revenue is a longer-term town goal.

- **Communication.** Well-developed communication skills are essential. Open, accurate and timely communication by the Town Administrator with the Selectmen, other Town government entities, department heads, the public, the many volunteers and employees, need to be integrated into the normal operational practices of the Town. The next Town Administrator 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 Administrator must be able to engage the members of the Board of Selectmen and committees/boards/commissions in an on-going dialogue about the critical issues that face the Town. The public communication role of the Town Administrator will be critical to sustaining a high level of confidence and trust by residents in Town government.

- **Building a Management Team, Staff Development & Morale.** Medway has a well-regarded group of department heads. Efforts by the Town Administrator will be required to foster comprehensive interdepartmental approaches to problem solving and governance. These efforts need to include the schools (while respecting their autonomy), the Town's largest budgetary entity and a key determinant of the quality of life in Medway. 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 Administrator.
- **Managing Relationships with Boards and Commissions.** Medway 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. All need support and collaboration from the Town Administrator.
- **Strategic Planning.** Given the Town's limited revenue options careful and thoughtful strategic planning for the maximization of the town's revenue

potential, service delivery system and land use regulatory system will be a priority. It is noteworthy that the Town has recently taken the steps to establish a redevelopment authority.

## The Ideal Candidate

The Medway Board of Selectmen seeks a Town Administrator 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.

Medway seeks a Town Administrator with the skill, energy, creativity and experience to execute the vision of Selectmen in achieving the Town's goals.

Medway seeks a Town Administrator 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 Administrator must consider regional solutions when that is in the Town's interest, as well as foster volunteerism and private contributions as a partial solution to sustaining service delivery. Medway needs a Town Administrator 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 Medway's next Town Administrator.

### *Personal*

The next Town Administrator 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 Administrator 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 Administrator'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 Administrator 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 in all public forums. The successful candidate must be able to use the status inherent in the Town Administrator's position to advance the Town's interests.
- 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 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.

### **Professional**

The Town Administrator 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.
- Able to delegate to a highly competent cadre of Department Heads while maintaining strict accountability.
- 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 Medway'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. 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 five years of experience as a Town or City Manager/Administrator. A person who has served as an Assistant Town Administrator/Manager in a complex environment will be considered.
- Possess a track record of professional behavior consistent with the ethical tenets of the International City Management Association.

## **The Hiring Process**

The Town has appointed a Screening Committee to conduct preliminary interviews in confidence. The Screening Committee is expected to review the applications of candidates presented by the Collins Center in March and make a recommendation of three to five finalists to the BOS in April. The Board of Selectmen will interview finalists in May. A decision is expected by the end of May. A July start date for the new Town Administrator is contemplated.

## **Salary and Schedule**

The search is expected to end in May 2014. Applications should be received by March 7th, 2014. The total direct compensation of the retiring Town administrator, an eight-year incumbent, is in the mid-hundreds. The Town 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](mailto:recruitment.umb@gmail.com). Please combine all of your documents in a single pdf file, if possible. **Medway TA** 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.umb.edu/cpm](http://www.umb.edu/cpm)*