

The Ideal Candidate

The Town of Paxton seeks a Town Administrator with the following skills and experiences

Personal

- Strong organizational, communication, and leadership skills.
- Demonstrate the highest integrity and ethical standards in all interactions and actions with officials, volunteers, and members of the community
- Strong collaboration and problem-solving skills
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Board, town employees, and members of the Town
- Work strategically to address both short term needs of the town and build a long-term plan
- Be willing and able to engage with the community about needs, initiatives, policies, and concerns.
- Excellent written communication skills with a high level of attention to detail
- Comfortable with public speaking and have strong presentation skills
- The ability to listen and be flexible
- Commitment to open transparency, confidentiality, and mutual respect

Professional

- Significant experience (at least 5 years) as a municipal town or city manager/Administrator, or state and government agency
- A graduate degree in public administration or a related field is preferred.
- Extensive experience in finance, budgeting, and management
- Experience hiring, supporting, evaluating, and managing employees and a focus on staff development and maintaining a positive work environment.
- Ability to negotiate contracts and agreements
- A track record of grant writing, administration, and management
- Thorough knowledge of Massachusetts municipal laws, policies, and regulations
- Direct experience with collective bargaining agreements as the principal negotiator
- Experience with preparing and reviewing reports, budgets, warrants, meeting articles, and other documents

Paxton Community Profile

Geography: According to the United States Census Bureau (2020), The town of Paxton is located in Worcester County in Massachusetts in the central portion of the Commonwealth. The Community has a total area of 15.5 square miles of which 14.69 square miles is land and 0.81 square miles is water. The Community is bordered by Holden to the east,

Leicester and Worcester to the south, Spencer and Oakham to the west, and Rutland to the north. The Community's peak elevation is 1390 feet.

Population: According to the [United States Census Bureau](#) (2020), the population of Paxton is approximately 5,004 and includes 1,589 households. The population consists of approximately 18.5 % under the age of 18, 17.4 % persons age 18 to 24, 20.4 % age 25 to 44, 27.3 % age 45 to 64, and 16.3 % age 65 years of age or older. The median age was 37.5 years.

Form of Government: Paxton has an open town meeting form of government (consider link to definition) and a 3-person Board of Selectmen who serve as the executive officers of the Town. The Board of Selectmen are the appointing body for the Town Administrator. Pursuant to Ch. 122 of the Acts of 2013 (link), the Town Administrator is the chief administrative officer of the town and is responsible to the Board of Selectmen for the proper operation of Town affairs. The Town Administrator appoints the treasurer, collector, town clerk, town accountant, town services coordinator and administrative assistant to the town administrator and Board of Selectmen, as well as all department heads and officers, subordinates and employees except those of the school district, fire department, or those who are under the supervision of elected officials, boards or commissions of the Town.

Character: Paxton was settled in 1748 and incorporated in 1765, with roots as a rural farming community. Over the years, Paxton has been described as an idyllic rural oasis and at one time was considered a vacation destination. Despite regional development pressure, Paxton has maintained its rural character and remains home to several natural resource areas and extensive trail systems including Moore State Park and Eames Pond, Illig's Pond, Muir Meadow, and the Moose Hill . Currently, Paxton is mostly a bedroom community with little industry to contribute to the tax base.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts (The), 192nd General Court. November 1, 2013. An Act Relative to the Form of Government in the town of Paxton.

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2013/Chapter122>

United States Census Bureau. (2020). 2020 Decennial Census. Accessed October 2, 2021 from

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=paxton%20massachusetts&tid=DECENNIALPL2020.P1>

Wachusett Regional School District was founded in 1955 and comprises the Massachusetts towns of Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, and Sterling. The district's central office is located in the Old Jefferson Elementary School in Jefferson, Massachusetts. [Wikipedia](#)

[Superintendent: Darryll McCall](#)

[Teachers: 473.7](#)

[Headquarters: Jefferson, Holden, MA](#)

[Schools: 13](#)

[Founded: 1955](#)

[Enrollment: 7,298](#)

[Student-teacher ratio: 16:1](#)

The Wachusett Regional School District was formed in 1955 with the Wachusett Regional High School, purpose-built for the new district. While sharing the high school, the five towns of Holden, Rutland, Sterling, Paxton and Princeton had their own K-8 for 39 years.

In the early days, the district was decidedly more rural than today, and Future Farmers of America had a chapter here. According to the Dedication Program for the Wachusett Regional High School dated 1954, classrooms included Homemaking, Typing and the Agriculture Shop in addition to Mechanical Drawing and Chemistry.

The passage of the Mass Education Reform Act of 1993 that standardized curriculum and policies encouraged the district to move towards complete unification. In 1994, the five towns unanimously agreed to integrate their K-8 programs and we've been a K-12 district ever since.

At 155 square miles, WRSD is the largest school district in Massachusetts by area - the equivalent of 4 Quabbin reservoirs!

(taken from the WRSD website)

Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School

Opening in 1972 on top of Muggett Hill, Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School serves students from its member Worcester County communities of Auburn, Charlton, Dudley, N. Brookfield, Oxford, Paxton, Rutland, Spencer, Southbridge, and Webster. Bay Path is located 60 miles southwest of Boston, 10 miles south of Worcester, and 40 miles east of Springfield.

Bay Path has been a visible part of our community by providing services to nonprofit organizations and municipalities. We offer a diverse course selection that addresses both your academic and career goals. Explore our 23 career areas at Bay Path.

Moody's Municipal Bond Rating is Aa3.

DOR Code	Municipality	Year	Single Family Values	Single Family Parcels	Average Single Family Value	Single Family Tax Bill*	Single Family Tax Bill as % of Value*	DOR Income Per Capita	Average Tax Bill as a % of Income	Rank **
228	Paxton	2021	530,368,000	1,536	345,292	6,813	1.97	40,584	16.79	92

Paxton was first settled by Europeans in 1749 and was officially incorporated in 1765. It was previously occupied by the Nipmuc tribe. The district of Paxton was originally taken from the towns of Leicester and Rutland, in nearly equal parts, and was incorporated February 12, 1765.

Incorporated: 1765

Settled: 1749

(source: Wikipedia)

Moore State Park spans 400 acres and is located in the heart of Massachusetts. Between the 18th and early 20th centuries, it was home to grist and saw mills. Today, visitors come to glimpse its popular waterfalls and cascades of flower blooms. Other attractions include the stone mill foundations, a restored sawmill, and networks of wooded paths. Moore State Park spans 400 acres and is located in the heart of Massachusetts. Between the 18th and early 20th centuries, it was home to grist and saw mills. Today, visitors come to glimpse its popular waterfalls and cascades of flower blooms. Other attractions include the stone mill foundations, a restored sawmill, and networks of wooded paths.

(source: MA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation website)

Anna Maria College provides quality academic programs that integrate a liberal arts education with real-life career preparation. The College offers a variety of [undergraduate majors](#), as well

as many [graduate and certificate programs](#), both on-ground and [online](#). The small student-faculty ratio allows for a highly personalized learning experience, while the modest class and campus size allow for optimal student involvement.

Popular majors include art and music therapy, business, criminal justice, education, fire science, legal studies, nursing paramedic science, psychology, social work, sport management, and more. The College offers an Honors Program and unique study-abroad opportunities. It is a member of a 12-college Consortium that allows students to cross-register at other Consortium colleges at no additional cost.

At Anna Maria, you can enjoy all that campus life has to offer and partake in the excitement of the Worcester area, including concerts at the DCU Center and the Palladium, skiing at nearby Wachusett Mountain, art exhibits at the world-class Worcester Art Museum and great restaurants in Worcester's growing downtown. We're a short drive to Boston, Cape Cod, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island.

(source: Anna Maria College website)

Bedard Notes or Potential TA Profile Narrative:

The Town of Paxton ([hyperlink town website](#)) is a classic, charming New England town, primarily a bedroom community, conveniently located near Worcester, the second most populated city in Massachusetts. In addition to Worcester, it borders Holden, Spencer, Leicester and Rutland. Routes 122, 56 and 31 all intersect in the center of Paxton where many of the town's activities take place. The Town Hall, two churches, library and much of the business establishment overlook the triangular shaped town common.

Paxton's has its origins back to colonial times, settling in 1749 and incorporating in 1765. The Town has a total landmass of 15.5 square miles, _____ road miles and has much open space land conservation including an outdoor enthusiast treat of Moore State Park ([hyperlink Moore State Park](#)). Moore State Park is particularly popular for hikers, picture takers and bloggers during blooming season for rhododendrons and mountain laurels.

The Town's current population is 4,963 or 5,004. The median household income is approximately _____. The median single family home prices are in the \$345,000 range. Additional data on the Town's demographic trends can be found from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission ([hyperlink: www.cmrpc.com](#)).

A 2006 survey of Paxton resident's determined that the three most popular reasons they chose to live in Paxton is its rural character, low crime rate in open space.

Town Organization and Governance

The Town governing body consists of a three member Board of Selectmen, elected for three year staggering terms. There is an open Town Meeting format. The departments under the Town Administrator include Police and Fire Chief, Public Works Director, Building Commission and Council on Aging Director. The Town Collector/Treasurer, Town Accountant, Municipal Assistant, Town Services Coordinator, Town Clerk, Executive Assistant and IT Director are all appointed and evaluated by the Town Administrator. The Library Trustees, Recreation Commission, Board of Assessors and Board of Health all appoint their own professional staff. The Town also has its own water operations and a municipal light plant.

The Town of Paxton has _____ town employees.

The Town Administrator's position was established by Town Meeting on _____ and its first Town Administrator started on _____. We have had two? Town Administrators since then.

Citizens

Schools

The Town of Paxton is a member of two regional school districts. The regional public school district, for students Kindergarten through Grade 12 is Wachusett Regional School District in Holden, MA ([hyperlink](#)). The Wachusett district was formed in 1955 and consists of the five towns of Holden, Rutland, Sterling, Paxton and Princeton. While sharing the high school, the five towns have had their own elementary schools. The Paxton Center School is the elementary school for Paxton students in grades Kindergarten through Grade 8 is located right off the center of Paxton. The public high school for Paxton students Grades 9 through 12 is located in Holden. The vocational school district opened in 1972, for students Grades 9 through 12 is Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School in Charlton, MA ([hyperlink](#)). It is the member vocational high school for ten communities offering educational opportunities in twenty-three careers.

Paxton is represented on the Wachusett Regional School District School Committee by two elected Paxton residents and the Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical School District School Committee with one elected Paxton resident.

The Town of Paxton is very proud to be the home for 1,462 students (2010) at Anna Maria College. Anna Maria College integrates a liberal arts education with real-life career preparation. The quality academic programs include popular majors such as art and music therapy, business, criminal justice, education, fire science, legal studies, nursing paramedic science, psychology, social work and sport management. The college has collaborated with the Town on such things as _____. In one of the first municipal/university collaborations in the Commonwealth, the Town of Paxton provides campus security on a contractual basis.

Town Finances

The town is financially conservative. Its reserve funds are _____, relatively high/low? The current town budget is \$_____, with _____% allocated for education. _____% of its revenue is derived from local property taxes. The most recent Stabilization Fund amount is \$456,699. The Debt Service as a Percentage of the Budget has been decreasing, dropping from 9.65% to 5.23% in the last four years. The tax rate is _____ and the average single family house value is \$_____. Paxton's Moody's Municipal Bond rating is a strong Aa3.

Additional Town financial information may be obtained from the Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services ([hyperlink](#))

Master Plan

Should we mention this?

I found some part of the 2006 report online but not the full 2006 Master Plan.

Are we due to start of new Master Plan?

Is this part of the TA challenge?

Quotes

I recommend that we see if we can use, with permission, some citizen's or employees quotes from the Public Hearing and listening sessions in the profile. It might give it a nice touch to spread 4-5 quotes throughout the narrative.

I personally think the headings, graphics, pictures or quotes would make the Profile document stronger and easier to read.

Town Administrator challenges

harnessing/leveraging technology to improve operational efficiency and reduce redundancy.

Notes from TA on how duties are divided up

I believe I spend at least 40% of my time on personnel issues, whether it is meeting with department heads to respond to questions or give direction, working with town hall employees to provide working and policy guidance. We have three collective bargaining unions, Police, Fire

and DPW. I have negotiated their contracts without town counsel, but it is an option to include town counsel. I am involved in departmental budgets, all aspects of purchasing, employee issues and building issues.

I touched on this last night but over the past three years there have been three new department heads, I have needed to provide additional guidance to these employees. In Town Hall, within the same period we have had a change of three major personnel, Town Clerk, Treasurer/Collector and Accountant. Staff changes to this extent in a small town takes a great deal of additional oversight for a Town Administrator.

I attend many meetings whether they are internally, ARPA, Insurance Advisory, Department Managers, Union, Water Bd, RML Trustees, BOS, Fincom, ConCon or with other Towns, Political Representatives, MMA, STAM (Small Town Administrators of MA), CMRPC. This takes up a great deal of a Town Administrator's time.

The last two years have also had its challenges with trying to preserve staffing due to Covid and keeping everyone, including the public safe. Julia was instrumental in providing direction on behalf of the BOH. Town Hall staff were remote, sporadically for about six months, but I came into work to cover the offices.

I need to answer to residents and the public on any Town matters and concerns. Unusual and important matters can arise at any time, and take extensive time to research, respond to and hopefully resolve or put forward to the Board of Selectmen for their approval/ruling.

Networking is a very important aspect of a Town Administrator's job. I want to confess that in the last two years, other than within the Wachusett area, I haven't done a great deal of that meeting with other Town Administrators, other than via email and zoom. The next Town Administrator will need to build up relationships with other Town Administrators to gain experience and have another source for knowledge.