

DIGHTON, MA

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE & CHALLENGE STATEMENT

The Ideal Candidate for the position of the Town's first Town Administrator will have:

A preferred graduate degree in public administration or closely related field.

At least 7 years of progressive municipal management and leadership experience or similar progressive responsibilities in a state/federal government agency or non-profit organization.

Demonstrated expertise in the efficient operation and organization of a significant operation in a government setting or a not for profit organization.

Thorough knowledge of MA municipal law with a strong emphasis on labor/management issues with a well-rounded understanding of HR/personnel issues along with demonstrated high level competencies in complex financial matters including procurement under MGL.

A willingness to commit to at least three years in the position to create stability in this executive role and a passion to succeed.

Specific and direct experience as the principal negotiator for collective bargaining agreements with experience in the grievance process, arbitration and dispute resolution.

Strong and confident public speaking and presentation skills before diverse groups within the community.

Excellent written communication skills.

The ability to "listen" and to provide the highest level of customer service in a small town with a very engaged and participatory citizenry.

The ability to organize, support and manage people who volunteer to serve their community working on committees, boards and with outside civic organizations.

A strong belief in public ethical standards, integrity, accountability and open transparency.

Ability to manage large scale public projects and develop funding scenarios for the CIP.

Demonstrated skills as a consensus builder with the ability to aggressively see projects implemented in a timely manner and policy directives of the Board or Town Meeting votes brought to fruition.

A creative yet collaborative approach to problem solving with numerous community stakeholders.

The successful candidate for the Dighton Town Administrator position must have a proven record of maintaining and/or establishing positive internal as well as external relationships while holding her/himself and others to the highest standards of integrity and accountability. As the “face” of the Town and Board of Selectmen, he or she must have a strong and demonstrated commitment to the highest standards of public administration, thereby building a high level of credibility, trust and respect in the community for this newly created professional position.

The Town Administrator will fill a vital role within the community, and therefore must quickly assimilate into a broad and complex social structure that includes families, senior citizens, local and state government agencies, and regional service delivery partners.

Dighton has an engaged public with high expectations for quality and responsive services. The Town Administrator will be expected to lead, direct, mentor, and motivate a solid professional team that will consistently deliver those exemplary core community services in coordination with the Board of Selectmen. The Administrator must seek to identify and understand and help guide the current vision of the community, and provide professional, technical, and management support to the elected and appointed officials as well as the numerous volunteer boards and committees in their efforts to efficiently and effectively deliver on the high expectations of the community. The ideal candidate must be a visionary who can anticipate and recognize future potential issues through the development of a set of strategic initiatives and then work with staff and other officials in a collaborative manner to develop solutions.

Given the limited number of specialized Town staff positions the successful candidate must exhibit a general knowledge and experience in all facets of small town management. While supportive of department managers, the Administrator must have the confidence to make the “difficult” decisions where conflict may exist. Experience in municipal finance, procurement, human resources, land use, and long range capital and strategic planning are essential. In addition, the administrator should be experienced in collaborating with other regional, municipal, and private entities to provide quality services in the most efficient manner possible.

As with most small rural towns looking to retain their small town character against development pressures, a daunting challenge facing the new Town Administrator is the increasing tax burden on the residents in the community. The town has classified its properties into residential (Res) and the commercial, industrial and personal property (CIP) categories allowed by law but currently has one of the highest residential rates (\$14.94) in its sub-region and also has a very high CIP rate (\$27.67) that makes smart, effective growth (added value) on the commercial side difficult. Dighton is an ideally located suburban community that has a strong sense of preserving its natural beauty and maintaining its rural character and serves as a “commuter” town for many employees of the larger metropolitan areas of Providence, Taunton and Fall River. The Town has experienced a plethora of new sub-division submittals as well as at least two 40B housing development proposals that threaten the rural character and fragile “balance” in the community. The Town has very few commercial/industrial developments in

the community and depends upon its residents for 75-80% of its tax revenues. The Administrator must bring a vision that will seek to promote managed, smart growth in the commercial/industrial sector especially some significant land tracks of industrial abandoned sites that could be redeveloped and also help promote a viable “community” business area along the Route 138 corridor. Similar smart growth opportunities exist along the Route 44 corridor in north Dighton.

The first Town Administrator will be directly involved in a planned (approved funding) new Police/Communication complex that will likely see bids opened late summer/early fall of this year. In addition, there are a number of significant “deferred” infrastructure buildings and projects that the Board of Selectmen feel need to be addressed with careful planning and budget forecasting that will be a primary function of the Town Administrator.

The town adopted the title of Town Administrator and funded the position through a warrant article vote at the annual Town Meeting. The position was strongly supported by the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee and was overwhelmingly approved. The position has a strong “job description” outlining the powers inherent within the title albeit the job description for the position has not been memorialized within the Town By-Laws at this point in time. The Selectmen intend to engage the selected candidate in a contract discussion and define the responsibilities of the Administrator in that binding document. A challenge (or opportunity) facing the new Administrator will be helping the community and the Board to define the role of the Administrator in Dighton’s government structure and building upon the goal of the community to have a true professional Administrator managing the day to day operations of the local government.