

ADAMS, MA

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Position Profile



The Community

The [Town of Adams](#) is a picturesque valley town of approximately 8,500 residents in beautiful northern Berkshire County. Adams is home to Mount Greylock, which is Massachusetts' highest peak. The Town is bordered by Greylock on the west and by the Hoosac Range on the east. Adams is abundant with natural splendor, dramatic scenery, and historical landmarks.

Adams is a close-knit community that enjoys a strong tradition of open government with a high level of service, citizen engagement, and respect for its proud history. The Town is mainly a bedroom community with the majority of residents commuting for employment.

History. Originally named East Hoosac, the township was purchased from the state at auction by Nathan Jones in 1762. It was officially incorporated as Adams in 1778, named for Samuel Adams, a revolutionary leader and signer of the Declaration of Independence. First settled in 1745, North Adams was originally part of Adams until the communities divided in 1878. There are many historical landmarks in Adams, including the [Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum](#) and [the Quaker Meeting House](#).

Geography. Today, Adams is 23 square miles in size, of which 22.9 square miles is land and 0.077 square miles is water. Adams is bordered to the north by North Adams, to the east by Florida and Savoy, to the south by Savoy and Cheshire, and to the west by New Ashford and

Williamstown. Adams lies along the valley surrounding the Hoosic River and its tributary brooks.

Adams is known for its natural beauty and is home to Greylock Glen, Mount Greylock, and the [Ashuwillticook Rail Trail](#). In 2008, Adams was named to the Top 200 Towns for Outdoorsmen. There are numerous other attractions located near Adams, including [MASS MoCA](#) in North Adams, [Tanglewood](#) in Lenox, [Hancock Shaker Village](#) in Pittsfield, museums, theater groups, historic homes, galleries, lakes, rivers, and forestland.

Business. There are numerous small and medium-sized businesses in Adams, including retail and professional services. Businesses with the highest number of employees in town include Specialty Minerals Inc. and the Adams-Cheshire Regional School District. The Hoosac Valley Elementary School, in particular, has a large number of employees. Additionally, the Adams Corporate Park has hundreds of employees working in its various manufacturing companies, including Adams Plumbing and Heating, Shine Wire Products, Inc., MRA Laboratories, and CTC, Inc.

Census data. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Town of Adams' racial makeup is 97.0% white, 1.6% two or more races, 1.1% Hispanic or Latino, 0.5% Black or African American, 0.2% Asian. The Town is demographically somewhat older than the state as a whole, with the major differences being the under-18 years cohort, which is about 18.8% of the population in Adams versus about 20% for the state, and the 65 years and older cohort, where Adams has 18.1% of its population compared to the state's 16.2%, according to the U.S. Census. The median annual household income in Adams is \$48,422, which is lower than the state median of \$70,954. While the majority of residents are middle income, approximately 10.3% of Adams residents have incomes below the poverty level, according to the U.S. Census.

The Government

Board of Selectmen. Adams' government is comprised of a five-member Board of Selectmen that serves as the Chief Executive Officers of the Town. [Selectmen](#) are elected to staggered three-year terms and oversee all matters affecting the interest and welfare of the community and are responsible to ensure that Town government is responsive to and reflective of community needs and values.

Town Meeting. Adams has a [Representative Town Meeting](#) form of government that serves as the legislative body of the Town. There are five precincts with 150 members in total. Adams' FY2017 [Annual Town Report](#) can be found on its website.

School Committees. Adams is part of the [Adams-Cheshire Regional School District](#), which serves students in grades K-12. The Adams-Cheshire school district comprises two schools: the [Hoosac Valley Elementary School](#), located in Adams, and the [Hoosac Valley Middle and High School](#), located in Cheshire. There is a seven-member Regional School Committee, including four members from Adams, that oversees the policies and budget of the school district. The Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District provides vocational education for the area at the [McCann Technical School](#) for the high school and postgraduate levels. The Northern Berkshire Regional School Committee representation is based on population and has elected members from the nine communities forming this regional school district.

Elected Officials. Other elected officials in Adams include: Assessors, Planning Board, Board of Health, Cemetery Commission, Park Commission, Board of Library Trustees, Housing Authority, Redevelopment Authority, Town Clerk, Treasurer/Collector, Moderator, and Town Meeting representatives. Adams also utilizes a number of volunteer boards and commissions, with various modes of appointment, to conduct municipal operations.

Town Administrator. The [Board of Selectmen](#) appoints the position of Town Administrator as the chief administrative officer of all Town agencies, other than the Schools. The Town Administrator manages a municipal workforce of approximately 80 employees. Duties of the [Town Administrator](#) include overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Town – hiring of personnel, collective bargaining and labor relations, budget preparation, capital planning, economic development, procurement, oversight of town departments and functions, communications, and special projects. Adams has three collective bargaining units: Police, DPW, and a Clerical unit. The [Adams Fire District](#) is a separate entity from municipal government, managing the community’s water delivery system, fire protection, and street lighting.

Finances

Financial Snapshot. The FY2019 budget for the Town is approximately \$15.6 million, reflecting a 0.51% increase over FY2018. Adams has a Standard and Poor’s rating of AA- with a stable outlook, as affirmed in March 2015. The rating is based upon Adams’ very strong budgetary flexibility, liquidity, and debt liability scores. The general stabilization fund is currently about \$350,000. There is approximately \$690,000 in excess levy capacity. Adam’s FY2019 tax rate is \$21.39 per thousand valuation, which is lower than its FY2018 tax rate of \$22.21. The commercial tax rate for FY2019 is \$25.40.

Adams seeks a Town Administrator who will actively seek out new and creative sources of revenue and/or the sharing of resources, grant opportunities, and commercial development to deliver expected services.

Challenges and Opportunities

- **Finances.** Adams is facing financial challenges due to revenue limitations, aging infrastructure that requires investment, and education costs stretching beyond the Town’s funding ability. In June 2017, a [Fiscal Evaluation and Management Review](#) was completed by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue’s Division of Local Services. There were a number of recommendations and the Town is working toward implementation. Expansion of the Town’s commercial/industrial tax base has been identified as an immediate need to help alleviate the financial pressure.
- **Capital Needs.** Like many communities, the Town has infrastructure issues as programmatic needs have changed and facilities have aged. There is a need for upgrades, but creative funding will be necessary. In September, Adams sustained about \$2.5 million in damage from two significant rain storms that flooded streets, damaged culverts, created sinkholes, and destroyed a bridge. Town Meeting has approved a request for \$2.5 million for immediate repair work and the Town has applied for state assistance. The former Memorial School building is identified as the location of a new, multi-generational community center with initial renovations funded under the Town’s CDBG grant; redevelopment of the building is also expected to incorporate a new private housing development.
- **Economic Development.** Adams is avidly interested in boosting economic development in Town. Adams’ downtown is historically charming but in need of a business influx. New shops, restaurants, and galleries, as part of a mixed-use district, would be welcomed. There has been new growth in Town over the past two years, including the Mount Royal Inn, several restaurants, and a gas station. There is a small corporate park in Adams, with only one lot left to be developed. Town officials would like to explore the possible development of a second corporate park in Town given the success of the first. Additionally, Cumberland Farms is interested in constructing a \$5 million building on Route 8. Road improvements on Route 8, which is the main road running through Adams, are needed.
- **Tourism.** Tourism, and specially ecotourism, will play a key role in Adams’ economic development. For example, [Greylock Glen](#), at the base of Mount Greylock, is the site of the future Greylock Glen Resort, a \$50M project focused on outdoor recreation. The Town is spearheading the development project, which will include a multi-use trail system, a 140-site Campground, a 10,000 square-foot Outdoor Center, a lodge and conference center and performing arts amphitheater. The

Resort's multi-use trail system will support the recreation, conservation, and educational values of the Glen. Efforts on the \$3 million trail system, funded by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation, began last year.

The [Hoosac Valley seasonal train service](#), a living history exhibit, carries residents and visitors for five miles between Adams and North Adams, allowing them to enjoy scenic views along the route. Adams is well-positioned for economic growth and needs a Town Administrator who will be persistent in moving the plan forward and implementing the Board's vision.

- **Education.** Education is a high priority in Adams. The [Adams-Cheshire Regional School District](#) serves the communities of Adams and Cheshire. One elementary school – Hoosac Valley Elementary School for grades pre-K through 3 – is located in Adams. Hoosac Valley Middle and High School is located in Cheshire. The District serves approximately 1,200 students. Students may also attend McCann Technical High School, which is part of the Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District. McCann Technical High School's enrollment is nearly 500 students in grades 9-12. BART Charter Public School, which has increasing enrollment, serves grades 6-12 and has more than 350 students currently enrolled. St. Stanislaus is also an option for Adams students in pre-K through 8th grade.

The [FY2019 budget](#) for the Regional School District is \$19.7 million, with Adams' assessment totaling slightly less than \$5 million and Cheshire funding about \$2.56 million. Approximately 88.8% of Adams' residents have a high school diploma or higher and 22.7% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

- **Housing.** Housing in Adams has an estimated median value of \$149,700, according to U.S. Census data. Approximately 65% of homes are owner occupied. The number of residents renting has been steadily increasing in the past decade.
- **Public Safety.** The [Adams Police Department](#) has 16 full-time officers, a chief, and three reserve officers. The Town Charter requires that the police station be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The [Adams Fire District](#) is separate from municipal government. It has five engineers and the [Alert Hose Company](#), No. 1, is an all-volunteer organization that provides fire suppression and other emergency service manpower to the Adams Fire Department. Emergency dispatch is handled via a county-side service based in Lanesborough.

- **Department of Public Works.** The [Adams Department of Public Works](#) oversees the operations of roads, wastewater, parks and playing fields, cemetery maintenance and sale of burial lots, and servicing of town vehicles. It has a staff of about 13, with another six for wastewater operations. The position of DPW Director is currently open and the next Town Administrator will be able to conduct the hiring. Residents, who pay a service fee, bring trash and recycling to the transfer station. Some residents hire a private hauler.
- **History.** Adams, named for American Revolution leader Samuel Adams, has a fascinating [history](#) and numerous historical sites. It is home to the birthplace of Susan B. Anthony, a pioneer in advocating suffrage for women; the Quaker Meeting House, a memorial to the pioneers of Adams, which is believed to be the oldest continually open Meeting House in the country; and the birthplace of George N. Briggs, who served seven terms as governor of Massachusetts. Adams residents were mostly farmers until the early 1800s when new technology sparked the construction of small textile factories in Town. President William McKinley made three visits to Adams, laying the cornerstone to Mill No. 4 of the Berkshire Cotton Manufacturing Co. After his assassination, Adams erected a statue to him.
- **Recreation.** Adams has numerous events and areas for passive recreation that can be enjoyed by residents and visitors. The summit of Mount Greylock, the highest point of land in Massachusetts, is within Adams and overlooks the town center from the west and is part of the Taconic Range, a spur of the Appalachian Mountain system. Greylock Glen is the area at the base of Mount Greylock which is formerly farm land and is the future site of the Town's proposed Greylock Glen Resort, some components of which are now under development. The Greylock Ramble, during which more than 1,000 hikers climb to the summit of Mount Greylock, is held annually in October.

The 12.6 mile [Ashuwillticook Rail Trail](#) runs through Adams, Cheshire, and Lanesborough parallel to Route 8. It offers spectacular views of the Cheshire Reservoir, the Hoosic River, mountains, wetlands, and wildlife sightings. Completing the last phase of the trail is a priority for the Town. The Thunderbolt Ski Trail, which begins near the summit of Mount Greylock, is a Class A racing trail. [Forest Park Country Club](#) is a nine-hole golf course located at the base of Mount Greylock. Adams is also part of the Mohawk Trail region.

In 2020, Adams is planning multiple events and celebrations in honor of the 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage and the 200th birthday of Susan B. Anthony.



The Ideal Candidate

The Board of Selectmen seeks a Town Administrator with municipal managerial experience interested in a tenure of at least five years. The successful candidate should be able to demonstrate prior success in managing or as an assistant managing a complex organization. The candidate should be competent in all areas of municipal management and operations, but especially in financial management, budgeting, personnel and labor relations management, procurement, grant writing, and communications.

The Town Administrator must be a decisive administrator who can work collaboratively with various interests of the Town. He or she must have excellent communication skills and the ability to work with diverse groups of Town officials and residents. The Town Administrator should be strategic, hard-working, detail-oriented, innovative, and committed. He or she should be personable, outgoing, interested in being involved in the community, and in attending local events and activities.

The Town Administrator must be able to work collaboratively, delegate effectively, and provide support, motivation and assistance to all municipal employees. He or she must be approachable, possess good listening skills, and be open to input from all constituencies. The Town Administrator should have the ability to accurately and effectively explain complex issues to individuals, committees, and the citizenry. He or she must be respectful, ethical, even-tempered, fair, and highly professional.

The Town Administrator must also possess and demonstrate successful experience in personnel management. He or she must be able to develop and sustain credible relations with employees, volunteers, and residents. The Town Administrator must be a creative problem-solver who is accessible, transparent, trustworthy, collaborative, a team-builder, and a consensus-builder. He or she must lead by example, and be motivated, innovative, organized, and have a sense of humor. The Town Administrator should be diplomatic,

visionary, and viewed as a positive influence. He or she should seek to build a strong and collaborative municipal team with high morale. The Town Administrator should enjoy working hand-in-hand with the Board of Selectmen, striving together to achieve goals that will benefit the community.

The successful candidate should possess a bachelor's degree, with a master's degree preferred, in a field related to municipal management. Applicants should have at least three years of progressive experience as a Town/City Manager or Administrator, or Assistant Town/City Manager or Administrator, or have education and experience in or relatable to municipal government that is equivalent.

Compensation

The Town of Adams will offer an employment agreement and compensation package that is competitive with comparable Massachusetts' communities, with an annual salary of \$85,000+/-, depending on qualifications. An attractive benefits package, including health and retirement plans, is part of the Town Administrator's total compensation.

How To Apply

Interested applicants should provide résumés, in confidence, by 5:00 p.m. on December 14, 2018, to:

Adams Town Administrator Search
Community Paradigm Associates, LLC
One Saddleback, Plymouth, MA 02360

Electronic submission, in a single PDF, preferred.
Apply@communityparadigm.com.

Following the closing date, résumés will be reviewed according to the outlined qualifications. The most qualified candidates will be interviewed in confidence. Based upon these interviews, a selection of finalists will be chosen for further evaluation and reference checks and then forwarded to the Board of Selectmen. Finalists will be contacted for references and approval of background reviews before their selection is publicly advanced to the Board of Selectmen.

Questions regarding the position should be directed to Bernard Lynch, Principal, Community Paradigm Associates, at: blynch@communityparadigm.com or 978-621-6733.

The Town of Adams is an EOE/AA employer.