

BECKET, MA

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Position Profile



The Community

The [Town of Becket](#) is a beautiful rural community of approximately 1,800 year-round residents rising to 8,000 in the summer, nestled in Massachusetts' scenic Berkshire County with easy access to numerous outdoor recreational and cultural activities.

[Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival](#), a world-renowned and highly popular home for international dance, is located in Becket. The [Becket Arts Center](#) provides a wide variety of events and programs throughout the year, the majority of which are free. The [Becket Athenaeum](#) is the town's library and also offers after school programs for children. The Town is a short drive from [Tanglewood](#), the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Pops, and from [Mass MoCA](#) (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art). Additionally, Becket is situated very near Clark Art Institute, the Normal Rockwell Museum, the Berkshire Museum, and numerous theatres such as Shakespeare & Company, Williamstown Theatre, Berkshire Theater Group and Colonial Theatre.

Becket, located in the southern Berkshire Hills, is also a popular location for many outdoor recreational activities, including biking, skiing, kayaking, hiking, fishing, and

camping. The highest elevation on the Massachusetts Turnpike, reaching 1,724 feet, is located in Becket. A portion of the Appalachian Trail winds through the Berkshires as it passes through the western part of Becket, and there are extensive State Forests and Wildlife Conservation land areas. Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway attracts many visitors as do the stunning vistas of open fields, forested hills, lakes, and steep rock ledges.

The Town enjoys a strong tradition of open government with a high level of service, citizen engagement, and respect for its proud history. Becket was designated a Green Community by the state Department of Energy Resources in 2010. Becket, like many communities in the Berkshire region, is a quintessential small town, with large residential lots surrounded by breathtaking landscapes.

Settled in 1740 and incorporated in 1765, Becket is 47.8 square miles in size. Becket is bordered by Washington to the northwest, Middlefield to the northeast, Chester to the east, Blandford to the southeast, Otis to the south, and Tyringham and Lee to the west. Becket is approximately 17 miles southeast of Pittsfield, 32 miles northwest of Springfield, and 118 miles west of Boston. The Town has about 60 miles of public roadways, including 30 miles of gravel and 30 miles of asphalt. There are another 60 miles of private roadways.

There are many small businesses in town. The top employer in Becket is Becket/Chimney Corners YMCA & Outdoor Center. The majority of residents in the workforce commute outside of Becket for employment. There are many businesses in the region, including retail establishments, camps, lodges, and arts centers as well as personal and professional service businesses.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Town of Becket's racial makeup is approximately 96.6% white, 1.1% two or more races, 0.6% Black or African American, 0.4% Asian, and 0.3% American Indian or Alaska Native.

The Town is demographically somewhat older than the state as a whole with the major difference being with the median age of Becket residents being 48.2 years while the state median is 39.2 years, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The under-18 years cohort in Becket is about 19% of the population versus about 18% for the state. In the 65 years and older cohort, Becket has 16.6% of its population which is slightly higher than the state's 14%.

The median annual household income in Becket is \$70,750, which is virtually the same as the state median of \$70,628. Although the vast majority of residents are middle income, approximately 6.4% of Becket residents have incomes below the poverty level, according to the U.S. Census.

The Government

Becket's government is comprised of a three-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. Becket has an Open Town Meeting form of government that serves as the legislative body of the Town.

Becket is part of the [Central Berkshire Regional School District](#), which also includes the towns of Cummington, Dalton, Hinsdale, Peru, Washington, and Windsor. There is a 15-member Regional School Committee that oversees the policies and budget of the District's public school system.

Other elected officials include: Planning Board, Town Clerk, Finance Committee, Board of Health, Cemetery Commission, Moderator, and Constables. The Town also utilizes a number of volunteer boards and commissions, with various modes of appointment, to conduct municipal operations.

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](#) is responsible for executing the policy directives of the Board of Selectmen and for coordinating and supervising the operations and activities of the Town. The Town Administrator is specifically responsible for fiscal planning and development of the Town's budget, grant procurement and administration, procurement of goods and services, personnel management, communications with residents and staff, and special projects.

Finances

The [FY2019 budget](#) for the Town is approximately \$6.5 million. The budget assumes a modest increase in new growth revenues to \$60,000. Revenue sources for FY2019 include property taxes (88%), local receipts (8%), state aid (3.0%), and other available funds (1%). The Town is about \$400,000 below the maximum levy limit. Currently, the Town's General Stabilization Fund balance is approximately \$900,000. A plan to fund the OPEB liability is under discussion and identified as a priority.

Becket seeks a Town Administrator who will actively seek out new and creative sources of revenue and/or the sharing of resources to deliver expected services.

Challenges and Opportunities

- **Capital Needs.** Like many communities, the Town has infrastructure issues as programmatic needs have changed and facilities have aged. For example, a lack of high-speed [broadband](#) service is a significant issue and may cost approximately \$5.9 million to implement. Becket has approved about \$3 million in funding and the state is contributing a portion, but there is a funding gap, which may require a Special Town Meeting to authorize additional debt. The Town's two fire stations and several bridges require some repair. Becket Town Hall would benefit from a relocation of the Police Station, and much of the Highway Department's equipment is stored outdoors, which prematurely ages vehicles and equipment.
- **Becket Spring.** Becket Spring, a popular location on Route 20 for Becket and Chester residents to fill water jugs, tested positive for coliform bacteria and faces possible closure by the state Department of Environmental Protection unless a water purification system is installed. In May, Town Meeting voters approved appropriating money to explore the cost of keeping the spring open. The Town is performing an engineering study regarding the potential installation of a filtration system.
- **Economic Development.** Becket has no municipal water or sewer distribution which limits economic development. There are private packaged treatment facilities for some of the camps in Town and some housing developments have their own well systems.
- **Education.** Education is a high priority in Becket. The [Central Berkshire Regional School District](#) includes three elementary schools (including the Becket Washington Elementary School located in Becket), one middle school, and one high school. The District currently serves approximately 1,630 students. The [FY2019 maintenance and operating budget](#) for the Regional School District is about \$27.4 million, with Becket's assessment totaling roughly \$2.13 million. Approximately 93.4% of Becket residents have a high school diploma or higher, 34.8% have a bachelor's degree or higher; and about 17.7% have a graduate or professional degree.
- **Housing.** There are approximately 1,700 housing units in town with an estimated median value of \$255,700, according to U.S. Census data. Approximately half of the housing units in Becket are considered second homes and tend to be seasonally occupied.

- **Public Safety.** The Becket Police Department, located in Town Hall, has four full-time officers and six part-time officers with an annual budget of about \$350,000. The Volunteer Fire Department has two stations with an annual budget of approximately \$75,000. The Volunteer FD also provides coverage to the Town of Washington. The Ambulance Department is staffed by three full-time and 22 per diem EMTs. The Ambulance Department responds to approximately 250 calls per year. The departments are not part of Civil Service and there are no unions.
- **Highway Department.** The Becket Highway Department oversees the operations of the transfer station, tree warden, pest control, fleet maintenance, and assists with parks and recreation projects. It has a staff of 10 and an annual budget of about \$1 million.

The Ideal Candidate

The Board of Selectmen seeks a new [Town Administrator](#) with municipal managerial experience interested in a tenure of at least 5-8 years. The successful candidate must 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, grant writing, procurement, and knowledge of Massachusetts General Laws.

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, general knowledge of small town government operations, and the ability to work with diverse groups of Town officials and residents. Knowledge of the Green Communities Grant Program is a plus. The Town Administrator should be Procurement certified by the state or able to attain certification within the first six months of employment in Becket.

The Town Administrator must be able to work collaboratively, delegate effectively, and provide support, motivation and assistance to all municipal employees. The Town Administrator must be approachable, possess good listening skills, and be open to input from all constituencies. He or she should have strong grant-writing skills and the ability to accurately and effectively explain complex issues to individuals, committees, and the citizenry. Strong communication skills are important for this position.

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, and a consensus-builder. He or she must lead by example, and be motivated, innovative, organized, and have a sense of humor.

The successful candidate should possess a Bachelor's degree and/or Master's degree in a field related to municipal management. Applicants should have 2-3 years of progressive experience as a Town/City Manager or Administrator, or Assistant Town/City Manager or Administrator, or education and experience in or relatable to municipal government that is equivalent.

Compensation

The Town of Becket will offer an employment agreement and compensation package that is competitive with comparable Massachusetts' communities, with an annual salary up to \$72,000, depending on qualifications. An attractive benefits package, including health and retirement plans, is part of the Town Administrator's total compensation. Residency is not required.

How To Apply

Interested applicants should provide résumés, in confidence, by 5:00 p.m. on August 31, 2018, to:

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

Electronic submission, in a single PDE, 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 Becket is an EEO employer.