

PITTSFIELD, MA

Commissioner of Public Services and Public Utilities

Position Profile



Summary

The City of Pittsfield, MA seeks applicants to fill the highly responsible position of Commissioner of Public Services and Public Utilities for this dynamic and transforming community in the scenic, historic and vibrant Berkshire County region of western Massachusetts.

The Commissioner is responsible for managing the administration and operations of the City's [Public Services](#) and [Public Utilities](#) Departments. These departments include municipal street and highway system(s), parks maintenance, municipal vehicle service/garage, solid waste, water and wastewater, engineering, municipal parking, and other public works functions assigned to the department.

The Community and the Region

[Pittsfield](#) is a city of about 45,000 residents located in the approximate center of Berkshire County in Massachusetts. Known as the "Heart of the Berkshires," the City is 135 miles west of Boston and 39 miles east of Albany, N.Y. It covers a land area of 42.5 square miles, and is bordered by the Massachusetts communities of Lanesborough, Dalton, Washington, Lenox, Richmond and Hancock.

Pittsfield residents appreciate the natural beauty, recreation, and [culture](#) of the northern and southern [Berkshire](#) region as well as the easy access to Boston and Albany. Residents and visitors enjoy such attractions as [Onota Lake](#), the 11,000-acre [Pittsfield State Forest](#), [Mount Greylock](#), [Canoe Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary](#), [Hancock Shaker Village](#), [Berkshire Museum](#), [Colonial Theatre](#), and [Barrington Stage Company](#). Pittsfield sits close to [Tanglewood](#), Lenox, Lee, and Great Barrington. Residents enjoy outdoor activities year-round, including hiking, biking, golfing, kayaking, fishing, whitewater rafting, camping, swimming, skiing and snowshoeing. They attend concerts and theatre performances, visit museums, historic homes, and art galleries, and dine at the highly rated restaurants in Pittsfield and throughout the region.

The historic county seat, Pittsfield is the largest of the two cities in Berkshire County and has a thriving [Downtown](#). Pittsfield lies at the confluence of the east and west branches of the Housatonic River. The City sits between the Berkshire Hills to the east and the Taconic Range to the west. Pittsfield is also located at the crossroads of U.S. Routes 7 and 20. I-90 (Massachusetts Turnpike) is conveniently accessed just 10 miles away in nearby Lee. Amtrak trains and Peter Pan buses operate out of the Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center in Pittsfield as does the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority. The nearest airport with national service is Albany International Airport. Pittsfield also operates its own municipal airport.

History

The Mahican Native American nation, an Algonquian people, inhabited Pittsfield and the surrounding area until the early 1700s, when the population was greatly reduced by war and disease and many migrated to the west. In the mid-1700s, Englishmen from Boston and Westfield arrived in the area and a village began to grow, which was incorporated as Pontoosuck Plantation. By 1761 there were 200 residents and the plantation became the Township of Pittsfield, named in honor of British Prime Minister William Pitt, who later would champion the colonists' cause before the revolution.

By the end of the Revolutionary War, Pittsfield had expanded to nearly 2,000 residents. While primarily an agricultural area, due to the many brooks that flowed into the Housatonic River, mills that produced lumber, grist, paper, and textiles were built. In the early 1800s, the area became the nation's center for woolen manufacturing, an industry that would dominate in the community for nearly a century.

In 1891, the City of Pittsfield was incorporated, and William Stanley, who had recently relocated his Electric Manufacturing Company to Pittsfield from Great Barrington, produced the first electric transformer. This enterprise was the forerunner of the internationally known corporate giant, General Electric. In 1930, the population had grown to more than 50,000. While GE Advanced Materials (Plastics) continues to be one of the City's largest employers, a workforce that once topped 13,000 was reduced to less than 700 with the demise and/or relocation of the transformer and aerospace portions of the General Electric empire.

Today

Like many of New England's manufacturing centers that experienced economic decline in the latter part of the 20th century, Pittsfield has been forced to redefine itself. With the cleanup of the

Housatonic River, the reconstruction of prime industrial property at the heart of the City, and an energized arts and entertainment scene in the downtown, Pittsfield establishes itself as a cultural center for the region with the prospect of renewed economic vitality. Today, Pittsfield is an urban/suburban community with residential properties representing about 62% of total valuation within the City. In FY19, Pittsfield experienced new growth of \$1.96 million.

Pittsfield, as the medical hub of the Berkshires, is the home of leading medical research and two of the county's largest medical facilities. The City's flagship hospital, [Berkshire Health Systems](#), is located in downtown Pittsfield. Pittsfield is also home to BMC Hillcrest Campus, which provides comprehensive primary care, as well as the county-wide headquarters of the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association and home to the Berkshire's sole [Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic](#).

The City has a mix of neighborhoods that reflect its history and diversity. The bustling and urban [Downtown](#) transitions to various forms of suburban development. Scattered throughout the City are examples of architectural significance and natural open space.

Pittsfield is an attractive location for business and industry. The City's central location and access to major transportation networks, a supportive approach to well-planned development, a skilled workforce, and a high quality of life for work and leisure combine to create a positive environment for economic development.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the median annual household income in Pittsfield is \$46,871, which is lower than the state median of \$81,165. The Town's average age of 43.5 is a little above the state average of 39.1.

The City's municipal [website](#) provides additional information about the City and its local government. [1Berkshire](#) has detailed information about living and working in the region.

City Government

The City of Pittsfield is a full-service community with its own K-12 [school district](#), full-time [fire](#) and [police](#), [library](#), [senior services](#), [parks and recreation](#), [municipal airport](#) and [Public Services](#) and [Public Utilities](#) that include 208 miles of roads, engineering, parks, parking, solid waste services, public water, and wastewater treatment.

Pittsfield's government structure was established through a home-rule [Charter](#) as a City form of government. There is an 11-member legislative body known as the [City Council](#) with four members elected at large and seven elected by ward, for two-year terms.

Executive authority is vested in an elected [Mayor](#) who supervises and directs all City agencies, unless otherwise provided by Charter or law. The Mayor is elected to four-year terms. The Mayor is responsible for appointment of department heads, subject to confirmation by the City Council, and various boards and commissions. The Mayor is also responsible for the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements and the awarding of contracts, subject to approval by the City Council. The Mayor prepares the City budget, which is submitted to the City Council for approval.

The City also has a seven-member School Committee with six members elected at large for two-year terms. The Mayor serves as a member of the School Committee with full power to vote. The School Committee exercises control and management of the public schools of the City. Included within the powers of the Committee is the authority to hire a School Superintendent.

Pittsfield has 208 miles of road (accepted and unaccepted), six miles of sidewalk, five parking lots, two parking garages, two lake entrances with parking lots, and 20 City-owned buildings. Buildings are maintained by the Facilities Department.



Photo: Kenneth Zirkel

City Finances

The City's [FY19 operating budget](#) is approximately \$167.6 million, reflecting a 1.8% increase over FY18. Revenue raised from property taxes equals \$87.3 million. The remaining revenue comes in the form of state aid and local receipts. The FY19 budget includes a \$94,787 increase in solid waste collection and disposal.

The FY19 DPS budget is approximately \$7.9 million. The DPU Wastewater enterprise fund is nearly \$5.9 million, the water treatment enterprise fund is approximately \$5.17 million, and the sewer enterprise fund is about \$468,700.

The City's [Annual Audit](#) for FY18 can be reviewed on its website.

Pittsfield has an A1 rating from Moody's rating agency and an AA rating with a stable outlook from Standard and Poor's rating agency.

Position Responsibilities

The Commissioner of Public Services and Public Utilities directs and controls the Public Services and Public Utilities departments of the City and reports to and is under the charge and direction of the Mayor.

The [Department of Public Services](#) includes highway, parks and grounds, inspections, traffic and parking, and fleet maintenance. The [Department of Public Utilities](#) includes the engineering, wastewater, and water divisions.

The powers and duties of the Commissioner include the following:

- Plans, coordinates, directs, supervises and prioritizes the programs and activities of the Departments, including the coordination of approximately 90 employees, equipment, and supplies; develops both short- and long-term plans to meet the Departments' needs and emerging issues.
- Prepares and oversees the administration of the operating and capital budgets for public utilities and services.
- Consults other departments on various projects and business that intersect with public utilities and services.
- Develops and implements appropriate department rules, regulations, and policies to ensure safe and efficient operations.
- Reviews and approves the requisitions of department equipment, materials, and supplies as well as department expenditures.
- Participates in collective bargaining matters pertaining to various department/division personnel.



- Supervises construction projects either performed in-house by DPS/DPU staff or by contracted vendors; develops standards to ensure project quality and timeliness.
- Recommends usage fees and fee rates for service and inspection programs of the Department. Prepares schedules, formulates and fees for water/sewer assessments and use charges.
- Manages and coordinates federal and state grant programs and accounts for grant funds in collaboration with the Department of Finance.
- Promotes and maintains effective community relations and represents the Departments and the City with the electronic and print media; collaborates with the Mayor's Office on public relations matters.

The Commissioner of Public Services and Public Utilities should have a strong understanding of construction processes and project management.

Pittsfield's [Snow and Ice Control Plan](#) can be reviewed on the City's website.

Position Priorities

The Mission Statement of the Department of Public Services and Public Utilities is as follows: The mission of the Department of Public Services/Public Utilities is to provide for the repair and maintenance of all City streets, sidewalks, parking lots and related appurtenances as well as grounds maintenance of parks and playgrounds, public school grounds, and conservation property. The Department manages solid waste/recycling collection and disposal, public parking permit and enforcement as well as provides Engineering support to all City departments. The Department is responsible for the effective and efficient delivery of utility services for all residents, businesses and visitors, including water treatment and distribution as well as sewer collection and treatment.

Specific projects related to these responsibilities and priorities, and that reflect the perspective of the Mayor and the City Council, are identified below:

- **Enterprise Fund Capital Investments**
Approximately \$78 million will be invested over the next year in the wastewater treatment plant to fund EPA required improvements. The project will be funded through a loan from the Clean Water Trust. The major Enterprise Fund capital projects include:
 - \$74 million for required upgrades to the Wastewater Treatment Plant
 - \$2.4 million for Infiltration and Inflow Removal
 - \$900,000 for upgrades at the Ashley and Cleveland Reservoirs
 - \$800,000 for upgrades to the Gordon Rose Technology Park Pump Station
 - \$450,000 for a new sewer cleaning truck

- **Capital Plan**

The five-year [Capital Plan](#) for FY19-FY23, with costs covered by the general fund, includes a number of projects that fall under the Department of Public Services, including: \$4 million for the design of a new police station; \$2.5 million for street improvements and streetscape design, \$2 million for demolition of the Columbus Avenue parking garage, \$765,000 for improvements to Clapp Park, and \$673,000 for vehicles and equipment.

- **Human Resource Management**

There are approximately 90 employees within the Public Services and Public Utilities departments. There are superintendents for Highway, Parks, Water, and Wastewater. A complete DPS/DPU organizational chart can be found on page 103 of the [FY19 budget](#).

The Ideal Candidate

Pittsfield is seeking a Commissioner of Public Services and Public Utilities with strong leadership and management experience as well as a level of professional experience in the field. He or she should understand, and preferably have experience, working within municipal government.

The successful candidate should have strong, effective management and leadership skills; skill in developing policies and procedures to accomplish goals and objectives; and imagination, innovation, and judgment relating to planning and achieving department goals.

She or he must have the ability to plan, assign and supervise the work of groups of employees engaged in a variety of public works construction and maintenance operations.

The next Commissioner must establish and maintain collaborative and harmonious working relationships with City officials and departments, state agencies, and the general public. He or she

must have the ability to deal with employees tactfully and effectively and maintain positive relations.

The successful candidate must have the ability to work with a high level of detail, and an ability to prioritize and manage multiple tasks and deal effectively with complex challenges, often under time pressure.

The next Commissioner must be a self-motivated organizational leader and problem solver with a strategic long-term perspective, who is persistent, energetic, innovative, accessible, trustworthy, and able to build consensus and work collaboratively with all constituencies within the City.

The successful candidate must have excellent organizational, planning, decision-making, management and supervisory skills. He or she should have proficient computer and internet skills, especially in Microsoft Office programs.

Preferred applicants should have ten (10) or more years of progressively responsible experience, with a minimum of five (5) years in a supervisory position. A bachelor's degree with specialization in public or business administration, engineering, construction management, or a related field, is required. Any equivalent combinations of education, training, and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the essential function of the job may be acceptable.

Compensation

The City of Pittsfield will offer a compensation package that is competitive with comparable Massachusetts communities, with an annual salary of \$98,000 +/-, depending on qualifications. A comprehensive benefits package is part of the Commissioner's total compensation. Pittsfield residency is not required.

How To Apply

The position will remain open until filled but first review of applicants will begin on June 21, 2019. Interested applicants are asked to provide résumés and cover letters, in confidence, via email to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

Subject: Pittsfield Commissioner

Submit a **single PDF** with cover letter and résumé.

Résumés will be reviewed according to the outlined qualifications. A Screening Committee will interview the most qualified candidates in confidence. Based upon these interviews, a selection of finalists will be chosen for further evaluation and reference checks and then forwarded to the Mayor for consideration. The appointment by the Mayor is subject to City Council confirmation. Finalists will be contacted for references and approval of background reviews before their selection is advanced to the Mayor.

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

The City of Pittsfield is an Equal Opportunity Employer.