

WAKEFIELD, MA – Town Administrator



Position Statement

Wakefield, MA (pop. 27,000) is a desirable, financially secure community led by a team of dedicated employees and volunteers who have strategically planned for its future by investing in buildings, infrastructure and the school system. Wakefield is ideally located at the intersection of two major highways, (Interstates 93 and 95) and is less than 15 miles north of Boston in Middlesex County. The town is accessible by commuter rail and bus, making it a prime destination for both business and residential development. The MBTA operates two commuter rail stations in Wakefield along the Haverhill line.

Wakefield is a picturesque New England town with beautiful Lake Quannapowitt as its centerpiece. The 247-acre lake with its paved walking path is a popular recreational destination for residents and visitors alike. With its convenient location and longstanding reputation as a well-run community with quality schools, Wakefield has seen significant [housing growth](#) in recent years. The new Town Administrator will work with town officials to manage that growth while also looking at ways to add affordable housing for residents who would like to downsize and remain in their hometown.

As Wakefield grows, the town is seeking a Town Administrator who can bring people from different backgrounds and generations together. The town would like an energetic administrator who is comfortable engaging with residents and serving as the public face of the community.

The town is in an enviable financial position that has been fueled by housing growth and strong fiscal management. The town is eager to retain that financial stability and would like a financially savvy Town Administrator who can oversee the budget with a steady hand.



Wakefield is renewing efforts to revitalize its downtown and is seeking an enthusiastic Town Administrator with economic development experience and fresh ideas to help boost this already-thriving community.

Significant research and preparation have taken place over the past few years on plans to lead the town into the future and the new Town Administrator will be instrumental in ushering those plans into reality. The town has or will soon be adopting its Master Plan, Housing Production Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, Aging in Place Plan, and the Bike and Pedestrian Plan. Strong communication will be key as the Town Administrator will be juggling responsibilities with staff, volunteers, and among its seven-member Town Council.

Annual Salary: \$225,000+/- DOQ. The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package, including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Wakefield is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.



Government

Wakefield has an Open Meeting form of town government with a seven-member [Town Council](#) elected at large for terms of three years each. The Town Council is the chief executive office and chief policy-making agency in the town, functioning much the same as a Select Board under Mass. General Laws. The Town Administrator is the Chief Administrative Officer of the town, overseeing the administration of all town affairs, and supervising town departments that are placed in their charge. Appointed by the Town Council, the Town Administrator implements and manages all policies, programs, and procedures that have been implemented by the Council and by Town Meeting.

The Town Administrator is responsible for budget preparation and implementation, hiring personnel, and negotiating labor contracts.

Wakefield is a well-run community with a tradition of stable, effective, and financially strong leadership in the Town Administrator's office. The current Town Administrator has served the town for 17 years and is retiring in July. Wakefield has an experienced Assistant Town Administrator who also serves as the Finance Director.

The town has a dedicated, seasoned team of departments heads who help keep Wakefield running smoothly. The town is seeking a Town Administrator who has strong management, communication and human resource skills to bring departments together and work cohesively.



Finances

Wakefield has a Fiscal Year 2025 budget of \$143.8 million. Funding raised through local taxes accounts for \$95.1 million; state aid, \$13.8 million; local receipts, \$10.7 million; enterprise funds \$18.1 million; free cash, \$5 million; and other funds, \$1.1 million. Primarily a residential community, about 80 percent, or \$76.7 million of the tax levy was raised through residential property taxes. Commercial tax revenue accounted for \$11.7 million; industrial, \$2.2 million; and personal, \$4.5 million.

The residential tax rate is \$11.35 per thousand-dollar valuation; commercial, industrial and personal, \$21.76. Free cash was certified at \$11,620,315 as of July 2024.

The town has an AAA bond rating from Standard & Poor's, the highest possible rating, indicating the lowest credit risk and the highest level of creditworthiness.

The average FY2025 single family home value is \$782,300; the average residential tax bill is \$8,894.

Wakefield is proud of its strong financial standing and is seeking a Town Administrator who understands the nuances of municipal finances in Massachusetts in order to continue the town's legacy of sound fiscal management.

Important Links

- [Town of Wakefield](#)
- [Town Meeting](#)
- [About Wakefield](#)
- [Wakefield Public Schools](#)
- [Open Space & Recreation Plan](#)
- [Wakefield Memorial High School Building Project](#)
- [Wakefield Municipal Gas & Light Department](#)
- [Town Charter](#)
- [Town Bylaws](#)



Open Space and Recreation

Lake Quannapowitt is the heart of Wakefield's open space and recreation, with the southern end touching the Town Common and Veteran's Field.

Prominently located just off Route 128, the 247-acre lake is a popular destination for residents and visitors. The area around the lake has a 3.6-mile paved loop that attracts walkers, runners, and cyclists.

The lake itself is used for sailing, kayaking, paddleboarding, pedal boats, skating, and ice fishing. The Quannapowitt Yacht Club, the oldest inland yacht club in the country, and Wakefield Community Boating are located on the shoreline, along with public park and picnic facilities, offering abundant recreational opportunities.



Wakefield has approximately 172 acres of parks throughout town that include amenities such as athletic fields, playgrounds, and walking areas. The state-owned Breakheart Reservation is a public recreation area covering 652 acres in the towns of Saugus and Wakefield. The reservation features a hardwood forest, two freshwater lakes, a winding stretch of the Saugus River, and scenic views of Boston from rocky hilltops.

As new families continue to move into Wakefield, the town is eager to create a welcoming environment where new and long-time residents will come together to build community pride. The town is seeking a Town Administrator who will utilize the public spaces for events and activities that bring energy and vibrancy to the town.

Community and Economic Development

In partnership with the Wakefield Economic Development Council, the town is currently managing and creating programs for small and large businesses using \$1 million in federal American Rescue Plan funding. The town is managing a [façade and sign program](#), downtown market assessment, digital marketing and public relations program, and creative arts and event program.

One of the top priorities for the new Town Administrator will be working with the town's economic director to help spur economic development, specifically focusing on the [revitalization of Wakefield's downtown](#). Route 129 runs through downtown Wakefield as its Main Street.

The town is also working on a Rail Trail project, which includes a shared-use path for pedestrian and bicyclists along an abandoned railroad corridor, beginning at the Main Street/Bennett Street intersection in Wakefield and extending northerly through Lynnfield to the Peabody city-line. The proposed trail is approximately 4.4 miles long.

Wakefield would like an outside-the-box thinker who has economic development planning experience to help create a strategy for the long-term sustainability of Wakefield's downtown.



Education

Wakefield is home to seven schools within the [Wakefield Public Schools](#), serving about 3,360 students.

[The Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational High School](#), which has 1,380 students from 12 communities north of Boston, is also located in town.

WPS has the Wakefield Memorial High School, the Galvin Middle School, and four neighborhood elementary schools: Greenwood, Walton, Woodville, and Dolbeare. Doyle School serves as the town's public preschool.

Wakefield is currently building a [new high school](#), which is expected to open in January 2027. Residents approved a debt exclusion in 2023 to fund the \$273 million project.

Led by Superintendent Dr. Douglas Lyons, the Wakefield Public Schools have a uniquely collaborative working relationship with town officials. The next Town Administrator should be a transparent communicator who will continue to foster this positive partnership.



Potential Issues/Upcoming Projects

- Revitalizing Wakefield's downtown and developing a long-term strategy to sustain economic growth.
- Reviewing the operations and management structure of the town. There are currently 21 direct reports to the Town Administrator.
- Strengthening the community fabric and civic pride by creating a welcoming environment through community events and activities. As new residents move to town, there is an increasing need to bridge the gap between the needs and interests of newcomers and long-time residents.
- Managing ongoing housing growth while looking to boost affordable housing, particularly for seniors.
- Maintaining the town's strong financial standing as fiscal pressures mount and the town manages borrowing for projects such as the new high school.
- Overseeing the implementation of several community plans including the Master Plan, Housing Production Plan, and Open Space Plan.





The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree required (with a master's preferred), preferably in public administration or related field.
- At least 5 years of full-time paid experience as a city or town administrator, an assistant city or town administrator, or the equivalent public or private sector level experience, and has performed the functions anticipated under the charter.
- Proficient in municipal financial management, budgeting, and long-term planning.
- Eager to engage and interact with the community.
- Politically savvy.
- Background in economic development strategies and planning.
- Transparent and effective communicator.
- Collaborative team builder.
- Willing to delegate.
- Creative, outside-the-box problem solver.
- Strong, organized leader.
- Personable and approachable.
- Willing to be flexible and embrace change.
- Curious and eager to learn.
- Experience in succession planning.
- Future-thinking visionary.
- Practical, common-sense approach.
- Ability to assess a situation and consider a variety of options.

How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by June 23, 2025, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

Subject: Wakefield Town Administrator

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

John Petrin, Senior Associate
Community Paradigm Associates
jpetrin@communityparadigm.com
781-552-1074

The Town of Wakefield, Mass., is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

