

# Whitman, MA – Town Administrator



## Position Statement

Whitman, MA (15,000 pop.), is a beautiful suburban community located in southeastern Massachusetts approximately 20 miles south of Boston. Principally a residential community, Whitman is proud of its historic Town Park, designed and completed in 1880 by the Olmsted brothers, sons of Frederick Law Olmsted, designer of Boston Common. Many Whitman residents are commuters who use the Town's MBTA commuter rail station for access to Boston and various locations north. [Whitman](#) has an Aa3 rating and an FY21 budget of approximately \$40 million. The Town's budget is tight and a Proposition 2 ½ override may be needed within the next year or two, particularly to fund capital needs. Additionally, the impact of the ongoing pandemic may require some budget modifications. One of



Whitman's current challenges involves working to improve strained relationships with the [Whitman-Hanson Regional School District](#) and the neighboring Town of Hanson following the discovery that Whitman's school assessment has been considerably higher than it would have been using the statutory formula. Other challenges include funding much-needed capital projects, enhancing internal and external communications, continued implementation of modern technology, increasing collaboration, and a desire for economic development that is appropriate for the community's character and needs. Whitman's local government is led by a five-member Board of Selectmen.

To serve as its next [Town Administrator](#), Whitman is seeking a collaborative leader with strong financial acumen, strategic vision, experience with economic and community development, and excellent communication skills. Applicants should embrace modern technology and recognize the ways it can be employed to improve municipal services and transparency. Candidates should have a bachelor's degree (advanced degree preferred) in public administration or a related field. Preferred candidates will have a proven record of leadership and exceptional financial skills, encourage and support new ideas, know how to appropriately delegate, and be able to build collaborative relationships. The Town Administrator should be innovative, approachable, and highly communicative.

**Annual salary: \$145K+/- DOQ.** The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Whitman is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

## Government

Whitman has a Board of Selectmen-Town Administrator form of government with open Town Meeting. The five-member [Board of Selectmen](#) serves as the Town's principle elected executive board and, acting through the Town Administrator, are responsible for the day-to-day operations of town government. The Board of Selectmen appoints the [Town Administrator](#) who carries out the policies of the Board.

Whitman has a number of elected positions, boards, and committees including: Board of Selectmen, Whitman-Hanson Regional School Committee, Department of Public Works Commission, Planning Board, Board of Library Trustees, Board of Health, Housing Authority, Town Moderator, Board of Assessors, Town Clerk, and Treasurer/Collector. It is critical that the next Town Administrator is skilled at collaboratively engaging with Whitman's various elected positions, boards, and committees.



## Finances

Whitman has an FY21 budget of approximately \$40 million and a Moody's rating of Aa3. The Town tends to be fiscally conservative. In FY20, free cash was certified at \$1.92 million. The FY20 tax rate is \$15.85 for residential, commercial, and industrial properties. The property tax base is nearly 90% residential and about 5.2% commercial. Nearly 64% of the Town's revenue comes from the tax levy, with about 9% from state aid. Local receipts bring in about 23.4% of the annual revenue. New growth in FY20 was \$237,001. The Town's levy capacity does not meet its spending needs and it is expected that a Proposition 2 ½ override of \$1 million to \$2 million will be needed in the near future to assist in funding capital improvements. There are a number of deferred infrastructure and maintenance projects that need to be addressed.

A recent significant financial issue in Whitman relates to the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District assessments, which were not being calculated by the presumed method for a number of years and resulted in Whitman contributing considerably more than the Town would have paid using the statutory assessment formula. Following this discovery and extensive discussions, Whitman and Hanson agreed to an assessment compromise in which Whitman funds half of Hanson's contribution increase for FY21, after which both towns' assessments adhere to the statutory calculation formula (effective FY22). The school district's budget has been increasing at a rate that puts considerable pressure on the Town's budget.

Like most municipalities, Whitman is facing potential revenue constraints due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis as well as the overall pressure of increasing costs and infrastructure needs. Preferred Town Administrator candidates will have exceptional financial acumen with a proven record of building balanced budgets that reflect needs but respect the Town's policies and limited resources.

According to a 2019 Moody's rating action, Whitman has an overall stable financial position, sound liquidity and reserves, expanding residential suburban tax base near multiple employment centers, and affordable fixed costs. It also noted the Town's above average pension liability. Whitman is located about 20 miles south of Boston, which provides employment opportunities for residents. Businesses are located primarily along Route 18 and in the downtown area. There is a desire for some economic development to help fund town services, support infrastructure needs, and provide additional employment for residents, but development space is limited. A detailed multi-year Capital Improvement Plan was recently completed and includes more than \$26.7 million for a variety of goals, including maintaining and upgrading roadways, replacing vehicles, and the construction of a new DPW facility.

## Economic and Community Development

Whitman is primarily a residential community. The Route 18 corridor contains numerous retail establishments, including a Stop & Shop supermarket and a Peapod facility, and there are businesses located in the community's downtown area, such as restaurants, a pharmacy, a hair salon, and sports pub. Candidates who have innovative ideas for revenue generation and are able to take the lead on strategic economic development and community planning that won't detract from the character of the community, would be a benefit. Whitman residents voted against allowing cannabis retail and growth facilities in the community. There are several apartment developments in Town as well as townhouse developments which provide diversity in housing but also bring costs related to Town services.



### Important Links:

- [Town of Whitman](#)
- [FY20 Budget](#)
- [Capital Improvement Plan FY21-FY25](#)
- [Review & Analysis of Financial Conditions](#)
- [Employee & Union Contracts](#)
- [Annual Town Reports](#)
- [Budget Requests](#)
- [Town Meetings & Reports](#)
- [Town Survey 2018/2019](#)

## Open Space and Recreation

Whitman covers seven square miles of land. It is bordered by Abington to the north, Rockland to the northeast, Hanson to the southeast, East Bridgewater to the south, and Brockton to the west. The eastern half of Whitman is divided by the Shumatuscacant River. That half of town is also dominated by the Hobart Meadow and the Bear Meadow, both of which lie along the banks of the river. Whitman has a small, town forest with some hiking trails located in the northeast corner of the community. The Whitman Recreation Department oversees a number of sports fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, the Whitman Town Park, a summer park program, school vacation programs, and a public pool as well as managing a variety of programs for residents each year.

## Current projects

- The MSBA has stated interest in helping to fund a new middle school and, at Town Meeting in July, the Town approved \$850,000 to conduct a feasibility study.
- The feasibility study for a new DPW facility, which has been deferred for years, was funded by Town Meeting last year but has not yet started.
- Continued implementation of the recently completed long-term Capital Improvement Plan.
- All union contracts were continued for one year through June 30, 2021 and collective bargaining will need to recommence soon.
- The sewer system is aging and requires ongoing maintenance. Approximately 98 percent of the community is connected to the sewer system. Plans include replacing a sewer force main, installing more back-up generators, and rebuilding pumps and motors at two pump stations.
- Electronic permitting software is being implemented.

## Potential projects

- There are ongoing discussions regarding the potential use of the former Park Avenue School building and the former state Armory building and property.
- Upgrades to municipal technology.
- There has been some discussion in Town as to the need for a new Senior Center and/or Community Center.





## The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree (with advanced degree preferred), preferably in public administration or a related field.
- Experience in municipal administration or similar, relevant administrative activity.
- Exceptional financial acumen and budgeting skills.
- A strong communicator, both internally and externally; active listener.
- Economic and community development experience.
- Strong ability to articulate issues and achieve buy-in.
- Skilled in personnel administration and collective bargaining.
- Analytical and technologically savvy.
- Forward thinking; strategic.
- Ability to bring people together to work toward common goals.
- A morale builder and creative problem-solver.
- Ability to multi-task.
- Ability to coach and mentor others.
- Knowledgeable of municipal management best practices and ability to implement them.
- Team-oriented, innovative, and calm under pressure.
- Strong leadership qualities and experience.
- Enjoys engaging with the community.
- Ability to delegate effectively.
- Exhibits strong attention to detail.
- Strong conflict resolution skills.

## How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by November 13, 2020, 5:00 p.m. EST to:

[Apply@communityparadigm.com](mailto:Apply@communityparadigm.com)

**Subject: Whitman  
Town Administrator Search**

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

Bernard Lynch, Principal  
Community Paradigm Associates  
[Blynch@communityparadigm.com](mailto:Blynch@communityparadigm.com)  
978-621-6733

*The Town of Whitman, Mass., is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*