

Monson, MA – Town Administrator



Position Statement

Monson, MA (8,800 pop.), is a culturally rich, rural town nestled in the central southern part of Massachusetts, on the Connecticut state line. Monson embodies the quintessential pastoral, unspoiled charm of New England. Steeped in history and noted for community events, Monson first began as a mill town with an abundance of busy sawmills, woolen mills, and gristmills. All of the granite used in Monson buildings and foundations were supplied by a local granite quarry, which also supplied building materials throughout the northeast. Today, Monson is a tight-knit community seeking a talented, approachable Town Administrator to help the Town achieve its goals. Monson has a Standard and Poor's rating of AA and an FY21 budget of approximately \$25.8 million. A Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusion was approved in June 2020 to help fund a new roof for the elementary school. As with most communities, the ongoing pandemic is impacting Monson's revenues; however, these revenue shortfalls were anticipated and additional budget cuts are not expected. Monson's state-of-the-art Town Offices and police headquarters building, an energy efficient structure that opened in 2015, was constructed after a tornado severely damaged the former facility in 2011. Monson's current challenges involve maintaining infrastructure, attracting economic development that is appropriate for Monson, maintaining financial stability, and continuing the current collaborative atmosphere and strong customer service. Monson's local government is led by a three-member Board of Selectmen.



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To serve as Town Administrator, Monson is seeking a collaborative leader with financial acumen, excellent communication skills, and grant writing and grant administration experience. Community engagement is an essential part of this position. The next Town Administrator should be innovative, strategic, and value transparency in government. Candidates with a master's degree in public administration, business administration, or a closely related field are preferred; a bachelor's degree is required. Five years of experience as a municipal administrator or related field is preferred, but not required. Preferred candidates will have experience with personnel management, proficiency with financial management and budgeting, and be able to build strong, collaborative relationships. The next Town Administrator should be highly approachable, responsive, and be an active listener. The current Town Administrator has accepted a position in another community following a successful seven years in Monson.

Annual salary: \$115K+/- DOQ. The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package, including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Monson is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Government and Staffing

Monson has a Board of Selectmen-Town Administrator form of government with open Town Meeting. The three-member [Board of Selectmen](#) is deemed the Chief Executive Office of the Town and serves as the chief policy making agency of Monson. The Board of Selectmen appoints individuals and citizens to myriad positions and to serve on a variety of Town boards and committees, issues a variety of licenses, and is responsible for preparing the Town Meeting Warrant and calling Town Meetings. The Board of Selectmen appoints the [Town Administrator](#) who serves as the chief administrative and procurement officer for the Town. Residents want a Town government that is highly communicative and transparent.

Monson has a number of elected positions, boards, and committees including: Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical School District Committee, Board of Assessors, Water/Sewer Commission, Cemetery Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Housing Authority, Highway Surveyor, Town Clerk, and Town Moderator. The next Town Administrator must be skilled at collaboratively engaging with Monson's various elected and appointed positions, boards, and committees as well as the with the school department.

Monson has a municipal staff of approximately 70 employees and about 200 school department employees. Monson is fortunate to have talented department heads and employees who will work collaboratively with the Town Administrator to achieve goals and complete projects. The Water & Sewer Department is an enterprise fund overseen by an elected Commission.

Finances

Monson's financial condition is relatively healthy. The Town has an FY21 budget of approximately \$25.8 million (including approximately \$11.7 million for public education) and a Standard and Poor's rating of AA with a stable outlook. In September 2020, voters approved a \$2.5 million Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusion to help fund a new roof for the Quarry Hill Community School. In FY20, free cash was certified at \$1.54 million. The FY21 tax rate is \$18.12 for residential, commercial, and industrial properties. The property tax base is approximately 90% residential, about 3.3% commercial and 2.2% industrial. Approximately 48% of the Town's revenue comes from the tax levy, with about 33.3% from state aid. Local receipts bring in about 14.9% of the annual revenue. New growth in FY21 was \$189,009. The operating budget for FY22 is expected to be somewhere between level-funding and level services. The Town's detailed long-range Capital Improvement Plan is a rolling document and will need to be updated annually by the next Town Administrator. Maintaining or improving Monson's financial strength and bond rating while keeping tax increases to a minimum are priorities. Candidates should have a demonstrable skill in building balanced budgets that reflect the community's needs but respect its policies and resources.



Important Links:

- [Town of Monson](#)
- [Monson General By-Laws](#)
- [2020 Town Reports](#)
- [Town Meeting Warrants](#)
- [FY20 Operating Budget and Enterprise Funds](#)
- [Capital Improvement Plan](#)
- [Financial Policies Manual](#)
- [Monson Master Plan](#)
- [Open Space & Recreation Plan](#)
- [Monson Developmental Center Reuse Plan](#)
- [Keep Homestead Museum](#)

Economic and Community Development

Monson began as an agrarian society and, in the 19th century, evolved into an industrial town with mills springing up along Twelve Mile Brook and later along Chicopee Brook. The discovery of granite sparked the founding of the Flynt Quarry. Today, Monson is re-evaluating its local economy as the old mill town of years past is no longer. Chicopee Brook, rather than being the focus of industrial usage, is now being reassessed for its aesthetic, recreational, and wildlife sustaining qualities. Monson has grown over the years, from about 7,700 in 1990 to today's 8,800, and feels some of the pressure of new housing development with the subsequent need for additional services. Approximately 75% of the land is forested, so the populated areas of Town have a much greater density. At the June 2019 Town Meeting, Monson voters did not secure the two-thirds majority needed to approve a change to town bylaws that would have allowed for the cultivation and sale of cannabis. The next Town Administrator must be adept in attracting economic development projects and businesses that are appropriate for Monson and would not alter the character of the community. Preferred candidates must be skilled in articulating the benefits of such projects and be able to achieve community buy-in.

Open Space and Recreation

Monson is characterized by a beautiful rural landscape of fields and forests, streams and wetlands, and ridgelines and valleys, interlaced with traces of a varied and interesting agricultural and industrial heritage. Residents strongly value Monson's natural and historic character, many having moved there for its wide expanses of open spaces and intact forests. Protecting the natural landscapes and agricultural resources in Town is critical to maintaining the sense of place that residents cherish. Peaked Mountain allows for exploration of wooded road through a former working forest and a trek to the summit that provides panoramic views from Mount Wachusett to Vermont's Green Mountains. Miller Memorial Park includes a facility with a pavilion and kitchen. The Keep Homestead and Conant Brook Dam allow for such activities as hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, fishing, and hunting. Flynt Park and Veterans' Field provide playgrounds, athletic fields, tennis courts, a skatepark, a disc golf course, and exercise equipment. Preservation of open space is important to the residents of Monson. Working collaboratively to help create a thoughtful and acceptable balance of open space and appropriate economic development is critical.



Current projects

- An ESCO contract has been approved to design energy saving initiatives for the three school buildings.
- Partial funding has been secured to install a new roof on the Quarry Hill Community School.
- A committee has been created to conduct a needs assessment regarding the renovation of the Fire Station, which was built in 1978.
- A regional emergency dispatch center was implemented last year (including Monson, Chicopee, Longmeadow, and East Longmeadow) and the next Town Administrator will be a member of the WestComm Regional Emergency Communication Center board of directors.

Potential projects

- A study shows Memorial Hall requires a multi-million-dollar, multi-phase renovation project to turn the building into a destination spot for theater, music, and other live events. The historic 1884 building was constructed with Monson granite.
- Monson's aging mill buildings should become the focus of some type of economic development initiative.
- The state-owned former Monson Developmental Center property, which houses approximately 70 buildings and encompasses about 600 acres, has been vacant for years. The Town is interested in having the property redeveloped.





The Ideal Candidate

- Master's degree in public administration, business administration, or closely related field preferred; bachelor's degree is required.
- Five years of experience as a municipal administrator or related field; municipal management experience is preferred.
- Experience with Town Meeting process preferred.
- Skilled in public finance, budget management, capital planning, economic development, personnel management, and strategic planning.
- Experience with grant acquisition and grant administration.
- Skilled communicator, both internally and externally; active listener.
- Demonstrated success in working collaboratively with staff, boards, committees, and citizens.
- Interested in attending various committee meetings to learn how the committees operate.
- Have a passion for community service.
- Enjoy engaging with the community.
- Ability to bring people together; consensus builder.
- Supportive of transparency in government.
- Ability to build trust; a team player.
- Approachable with an open-door policy; model and promote a positive approach and outlook.
- Engage and empower staff to share ideas.
- Ability to coach and mentor staff.
- Thoughtful and compassionate leadership.
- Excellent follow-through; strong work ethic.
- Creative problem solver; proactive.
- Confident, energetic, patient, and flexible.
- Exhibits excellent attention to detail.
- Diplomatic; strong conflict resolution skills; calm under pressure.
- Knowledgeable of municipal best practices.

How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by March 15, 2021, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

**Subject: Monson
Town Administrator Search**

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

Bernard Lynch, Principal
Community Paradigm Associates
Blynch@communityparadigm.com
978-621-6733

The Town of Monson, Mass., is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

