

# Westwood, MA Town Administrator



## Community & Position Profile



COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

## The Community

The Town of Westwood, Massachusetts, is a vibrant community of approximately 16,266 residents located 12 miles southwest of Boston. Westwood, situated at the junction of Routes 95/128 and 93, provides an excellent location for its residents with easy access to Boston, Amtrak trains, and commuter rail along with all the elements of a beautiful suburban community. [Westwood](#) has a strong sense of community as well as a tradition of highly responsive government service and superior financial management. Westwood has been on the list of the 100 Best Places to Live in the United States and Westwood Public Schools have been nationally recognized for excellence. To continue its tradition of excellence, the Town is seeking a highly communicative, community-focused, results-driven, and strategic leader to serve as its next Town Administrator.



The Town of Westwood was originally known as West Dedham, until its official incorporation in 1897. An early account of the formation of Westwood can be found in the Dedham Historical Register of April 1897. As stated in the Dedham Historical Register:

“The formation of a separate town by the division of the Town of Dedham is not a question of recent or sudden growth; it has been discussed at different intervals for many years.” The final petition that resulted in the incorporation of the Town of Westwood was suggested in November 1896. The petition was quickly prepared and circulated once the residents of West Dedham realized they must act quickly to receive consideration from the Legislature in 1897.

The [Dedham Historical Register](#) makes no mention of the reasons for separation, but water rights to Buckmaster Pond have long been identified as fueling West Dedham residents to separate from Dedham. The Dedham Westwood Water District (DWWD), which can be traced back to the Dedham Water Company incorporated in 1876, provides a [history](#) of the district.

According to American Community Survey (ACS) estimates of 2023-2025, the median household annual income is \$205,000, which is more than double the state median household annual income of \$101,341. While approximately 10% of residents statewide are living below the poverty line, 5% of Westwood residents currently do so, according to U.S. Census data. The median age in Westwood is 43.3 years which is slightly older than the state’s 40 years. Westwood’s [Annual Town Reports](#) and [Annual Town Meeting Books](#) can be viewed on the Town’s website.

Located in eastern Massachusetts, Westwood is bordered by Needham, Dedham, Canton, Norwood, Walpole, and Dover. Westwood is 11.1 square miles in size, including 11.0 square miles of land and 0.1 square miles of water. There are approximately 95 road miles in Town. The Town has two commuter rail lines and full MBTA bus service on Routes 1 and 1A. Westwood has easy access to Route 95/128 and I-93, and Logan International Airport is in nearby Boston. The Town consists of residential properties as well as a variety of commercial, business and retail districts. Westwood is known throughout the state for its beautiful areas of open space and rambling New England stone walls.

**Annual salary: \$220K+/- DOQ.** The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package, including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Westwood is an Equal Opportunity Employer.





## Government

The Town of Westwood is governed by the [Select Board](#), which is made up of three members who are elected for three-year overlapping terms. The Town adopted a Home Rule Charter, which provides for the Select Board, Open Town Meeting, and Town Administrator form of government. The Select Board makes policy decisions as well as formulates guidelines for all Town agencies, oversees licensing, and makes appointments to Town offices, boards, and committees. A list of [appointments](#) made by the Select Board can be viewed on the Town's website as can the Town of Westwood [organization chart](#). The [Town of Westwood Charter](#) and the [Town Code](#) may also be viewed online.

An elected five-member [School Committee](#) oversees the long-range policies of the Town's public school system. Other elected positions in Town include the Board of Assessors, Board of Library Trustees, Housing Authority, Planning Board, [Blue Hills Regional Technical School District Committee](#) (one seat), Sewer Commission, Town Clerk, and Town Moderator. In addition, the Town utilizes many other appointed boards and commissions to conduct municipal operations. The [2023 Town of Westwood Annual Report](#) is available online.

The Select Board appoints the Town Administrator to serve as chief administrative officer of the Town. The Town Administrator is responsible for executing the policy directives of the Select Board and for managing the operations and activities of the Town. Details regarding the qualifications and powers and duties of the Town Administrator can be found in [Chapter 6](#) of the Town Charter. The Town Administrator is responsible for various appointments. The [Town Administrator](#) is specifically responsible for providing support to the Select Board; supervising all departments under his/her jurisdiction; financial management and budgeting; handling personnel and benefits administration, hiring and firing of personnel, employee performance reviews, and collective bargaining; purchase of supplies, materials, and equipment; attending Select Board meetings; inventory of all Town property, maintenance and use of all Town facilities; responding to the needs of residents; and coordinating the activities of all town agencies serving under the office of the Administrator and the office of the Select Board.

## Finances

Westwood holds a Standard and Poor's rating of [AAA](#) with a stable outlook, as stated in a July 2022 rating action. Standard and Poor's noted that the Town has a very strong economy, ongoing economic developments, and very strong management as well as a strong debt and liability profile, and strong budgetary performance and operating flexibility. Local property taxes generate 80% of budget revenue, while state aid is 6%, local receipts bring in 6%, sewer enterprise is 4%, and other available revenue represents 4%. Westwood is in a strong financial position, however, Proposition 2½, rising fixed costs, and facility and infrastructure needs are putting pressure on the Town's finances. Additional economic development is desired to ease the residential tax burden.

Westwood's [FY26 Overall Budget](#) is \$130.1 million. This includes a \$26.1 million municipal budget, consisting of general government, public safety, public works, community and economic development, human services, culture and recreation, software/hardware maintenance, and communications systems. It also includes the proposed [Westwood Public Schools FY26 budget](#), which is approximately \$58.7 million. The Town's goal is to manage its finances in a manner that will serve to maintain its high rating. The FY26 budget represents an approximate 5.8% increase over the prior year and includes a \$1.59 million appropriation for the OPEB liability fund. Westwood's [financial management policies and objectives](#) and [Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for FY24](#) can be viewed on its website. Westwood has received the state CAFR award for more than 20 years.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue Division of Local Services, Westwood had a FY24 stabilization fund balance of \$4,082,266. The Town's FY25 certified free cash was \$14,302,047 and its FY25 overlay reserve balance was \$495,860. In FY25, Westwood had excess levy capacity of \$727,380 and its certified new growth for FY25 was \$931,732. The FY25 tax rates were \$12.80 per \$1,000 valuation for residential property and \$24.26 for commercial/industrial/personal property. The Town's [Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan for FY2026-2030](#) can be viewed on Westwood's website.



## Economic and Community Development

Economic development, particularly commercial development, is a priority for the Westwood administration. The redevelopment of [Islington Center](#), which includes relocating buildings as well as new construction, is ongoing with a mixed-use development adjacent to the Westwood MBTA station having broken ground in October 2024. The project is designed to revitalize properties, improve infrastructure, attract new retail stores and restaurants, increase opportunities for greater housing diversity, implement sustainable design and renewable energy elements, and increase property tax revenues. Additionally, growth at University Station, which is a two million-square-foot mixed-use development adjacent to the 128 MBTA commuter rail/Amtrak station, has slowed in recent years and will require attention from the administration to help spur new growth. It includes 120 acres zoned for retail, restaurant, residential, office and hotel uses and is located along the Route 128 and I-95 corridors. The Town remains interested in thoughtful economic development that will align with the community's character while increasing the vibrancy of Westwood. Current [economic development objectives](#) are detailed on the Town's website. The [Westwood Comprehensive Plan](#), which was first created in 2000, was reviewed and rewritten in 2020. The Town is home to more than 200 businesses in established commercial areas. Westwood benefits from its location near Boston, which is the economic engine of Massachusetts. Busy Routes 1, 1A and 109 bisect Westwood. Westwood commuters also have easy access to I-90 (Mass. Pike) and Routes 95/128 and 93. Logan International Airport is located a short distance away in Boston. A [video](#) detailing the benefits of living and working in Westwood is accessible online.

## Education

Westwood residents place a high value on education and the Town's schools have a tradition of excellence that has received national recognition. [Westwood Public Schools](#) operates a pre-school, four elementary schools, Thurston Middle School, and Westwood High School, serving approximately 3,000 students. The school budget for FY26 is approximately \$58.7 million. Students in grades 9-12 also have the opportunity to attend the [Blue Hills Regional Technical School](#) in Canton or the [Norfolk Country Agricultural High School](#) in Walpole. Illustrative of the Town's strong support of education is the fact that 95.5% of Westwood's residents age 25 years and older have a high school diploma and 71% of the population ages 25 and older have a bachelor's degree or higher. Eighty-five percent of Westwood High School's 2021 graduates enrolled in post-secondary education immediately following graduation.



## Open Space and Recreation

Westwood has an abundance of open space, including woods and forests, wetlands, fields, and ponds. Westwood's Inventory of Land of Conservation and Recreation Interest identifies 794 acres of protected open space owned by the Town and private owners. Additionally, [Hale Education](#) has 325 acres of unprotected open space (of a total 1,137 acres), another 198 acres are in use as public and private recreational facilities, and 97 acres have limited protection as Chapter 61, 61A and 61B land. Conservation of open space and natural resources is a priority for residents, both for recreational use via trails and for environmental preservation purposes. The Town has numerous playing fields and recreational land for youth and adult sports.

Westwood's [Recreation Department](#) offers a wide variety of programs for youths and adults. The Town also has a community pool located at Westwood High School. There are numerous special events held in Town, including the popular [Westwood Day](#) held in September.



## Challenges and Opportunities

- **Citizen Engagement and Communication**

The Town embraces civic engagement and appreciates the high levels of participation and discourse residents provide. The next Town Administrator must be a skilled communicator with a strong belief in transparency. They should have a visible presence in the community, attending events and seeking out opportunities to increase engagement with residents. Citizens serve on a significant number of elected and appointed boards and committees as well as in other volunteer capacities. Maintaining a strong and collaborative relationship between residents, employees, and volunteers is vital to the success of the community. Ideas and recommendations regarding improved methods of communicating with and engaging citizens, including new technologies and use of social media, would be welcome. The [Westwood Wire](#) news bulletin is published on the Town's website each month and the Town has also utilized the [Westwood Community Newsletter](#) to share information with residents.

- **Facilities Needs**

Westwood has a number of capital projects that are either ongoing, scheduled, or anticipated. The \$38.1 million [Fire Station One](#) project will be voted on at the September 9<sup>th</sup> Special Town Election. The current station is undersized, outdated, and lacks adequate health and safety protections. Replacing this facility is considered a top priority by the Select Board. The high school, police station, fire station, library, and one elementary school are all relatively new buildings. As in many Massachusetts communities, Westwood's infrastructure is aging, and maintenance is a priority. The Council on Aging building, which was built in 1998 and renovated in 2018, is considered too small for the Town's future needs. A [Municipal & Schools Facilities Study](#) was presented to the Select Board in July 2025 and the Town Administrator will be expected to spearhead implementation of recommended maintenance and renovations. Westwood's [Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan](#) for FY2026-2030 may be viewed online.

- **Transportation**

There are two commuter rail stops in Westwood: the Route 128 station located on the Providence/Stoughton line and the Islington station on the Franklin Line of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority commuter rail system. The two rail stops allow commuters easy access to and from vibrant employment centers. Amtrak trains to Providence, R.I., and New York City also stop at the Route 128 station.

- **Housing**

Westwood has adopted the [MBTA Communities](#) housing plan and was one of the first commuter rail communities to rezone a portion of the required acreage by approving a Mixed-Use Multi-Family Residential Overlay District and applying it to 16.16 acres. Approximately 87% of the housing units in Westwood are owner occupied with a median value of \$985,800, according to U.S. Census data. Home values generally range from approximately \$500,000 to \$3+ million, according to Town statistics. Westwood provides a variety of housing options for residents. Currently, there are 4,555 single family homes, 201 condominiums, 40 two-family homes, and two three-family homes in Town. There are five apartment buildings, one of which is currently under construction, accounting for 888 apartment units. A sixth apartment building is expected to be constructed next year. There are also senior housing and affordable housing options available in Westwood. The Town is currently in the process of updating its [Housing Production Plan](#). Westwood meets the state's 10% affordable housing mandate.

- **Green Community**

Westwood is a Massachusetts-designated Green Community. It received the designation by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources in 2012. The Town has received an approximate total of \$1.4 million in Green Communities grants, which have been used for such projects as installing LED lighting in the high school, middle, and elementary schools, converting all street lights to LED, updating the library with high efficiency lighting and a new control system, ensuring the Islington Fire Station and police station are energy efficient, and installing a ventilation control system at the Downey School.





## The Ideal Candidate

- Master's degree in public or business administration or a related field, and at least 7 years of progressively responsible management experience.
- Superior skills in municipal financial and budget management, project management, collective bargaining, and personnel management.
- Demonstrated prior success in leading a complex municipal and/or business organization.
- Experience with creative financing solutions and with economic development efforts.
- Ability and willingness to be present – with staff and residents, at meetings, in the community.
- A skilled communicator, both internally and externally, oral and written; highly transparent.
- An active listener with superior people skills; excellent follow-through.
- Experience with sustainable economic development and ability to cultivate and guide public-private partnerships.
- A visionary leader who can work effectively with the various interests of the Town.
- Team-oriented; morale builder; superior leadership qualities and experience; high integrity; ability and willingness to take the initiative.
- Willing to work as part of the team; empowers staff; ability to coach and mentor staff as needed; supports professional development and succession planning.
- Ability to build trust and rapport with staff, boards, school department, and the community.
- Skilled in grant acquisition and administration; proficient knowledge of municipal law.
- Knowledgeable of, and able to implement, municipal best practices; goal oriented.
- Calm under pressure; ability to negotiate compromise or consensus.

## How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by September 19, 2025, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

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

**Subject: Westwood  
Town Administrator**

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

Julie Jacobson, Senior Associate  
Community Paradigm Associates  
[JJacobson@communityparadigm.com](mailto:JJacobson@communityparadigm.com)  
774-826-6465

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



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