

# Lancaster, MA – Town Administrator



## Position Statement

Lancaster, MA (8,441 pop.), is a charming small town in Worcester County that has experienced steady growth for the past 20 years. The oldest Town in the county, and originally a farming community, today Lancaster is an attractive, primarily rural-residential Town, easily accessible to Interstates 190 and 495 as well as Route 2, with excellent schools, many recreational opportunities, strong community spirit, and engaged residents. Lancaster is in the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area; and is adjacent to the towns of Lunenburg, Shirley, Harvard, Bolton, Clinton, Sterling, and Leominster.



Led by a three-member Select Board, Lancaster has Open Town Meeting and an FY25 operating budget of \$28.5 million. It has a Moody's rating of Aa3, which reflects a healthy financial position, an average debt burden, low pension liability, strong income profile, and a modestly sized tax base.

The Town is seeking a detail-oriented Town Administrator with superior financial acumen and who, given the importance of planning and development in Lancaster, can lead staff and resources focused on that critical issue. Candidates should have excellent communication and project management skills along with an understanding of small-town culture and the ability to support the Select Board and provide collaborative leadership. Both traditional and non-traditional candidates who possess proficient finance and budgeting skills, planning and development leadership skills, along with experience in human resources and grant writing and the desire for a long-term tenure are encouraged to apply. The successful candidate should have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred), preferably in public administration, business administration, management, or a related field.



**Annual Salary: \$180K+/- DOQ.** The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package that is competitive with other Massachusetts towns, including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Residency is not required.

## Government

The Lancaster Select Board has three members who are elected to serve staggered three-year terms. The Town By-Laws and General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts grant the Select Board broad powers to govern the Town. The Select Board appoints more than 20 boards and committees, and acts as Lancaster's primary policy-making body for a wide variety of issues, which affect the Town's development and provision of services. The Board recommends the budget to the Annual Town Meeting; approves the reorganization of Town departments; provides oversight for matters in litigation; acts as the licensing authority for a wide variety of licenses and permits and more.



The Select Board appoints the Town Administrator who functions as the Town's Chief Administrative Officer. The primary duties of the Town Administrator include the day-to-day oversight and administration of general government and formulation of municipal policies under the direction of the Select Board. The Town Administrator is charged with maintaining a close working relationship with the Select Board, acting as a liaison between the Select Board, Town departments, elected and appointed officials, and residents; and regularly briefing the Board on important issues.

Annual Town Meeting is held the first Monday in May each year. Lancaster has numerous elected and appointed boards and committees, including the Finance Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Health, Board of Assessors, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Commission on Disability, Nashoba Regional School District School Committee, and more. A complete listing is on the Town of Lancaster [Boards and Committees](#) web page.

## Finances

Lancaster has an FY25 operating budget of approximately \$28.5 million with nearly 69% of general fund expenditures dedicated to the regional public school system. The incoming Town Administrator has an opportunity to work collaboratively with the elected and appointed boards, department heads, and staff to plan a healthy economic and financial forecast for the Town. The Town is in good financial condition and is conservative with its budgeting. The FY25 tax rate is \$16.16 for all properties. The average single family tax bill in FY25 is \$8,454. Approximately 80.1% of the Town's revenues come from the tax levy, nearly 5.0% from state aid, 8.1% from local receipts, and nearly 6.8% from all other revenue. Certified free cash for FY25 is approximately \$2.43 million. New growth value in FY25 was nearly \$15.9 million. The majority of new growth value in Lancaster in FY25 (\$12.86 million) has been residential. The total assessed value of Lancaster properties in FY25 is nearly \$1.48 billion. The incoming Town Administrator must have strong financial acumen and the ability to develop and manage the municipal budget. The Town Administrator needs to be forward-thinking regarding finances and all aspects of municipal management.

### Important Links:

- [Town of Lancaster](#)
- [Organizational Chart](#)
- [Town By-Laws & Regulations](#)
- [FY25 Budget](#)
- [Town Budget Documents](#)
- [Moody's Issuer Comment](#)
- [DCAMM Property Conceptual Site Reuse Report](#)
- [Lancaster meeting videos](#)
- [Master Plan](#)
- [Economic Development Plan](#)
- [Annual Town Reports](#)
- [Town Meetings & Elections](#)
- [Open Space & Recreation Plan](#)



## Economic and Community Development

Incorporated in 1643, Lancaster is the oldest town in Worcester County. It is primarily a bedroom community with significant open space. It has three Historic Districts, with both North Village and Lancaster Center designated as National Historical Districts. The Town has numerous small-to-medium sized businesses across many industries and is always seeking additional opportunities to foster high quality development that will create jobs for residents, broaden the tax base, and enhance Lancaster as a viable place to live and work. The Town Administrator must be able to work collaboratively with developers and businesses for the betterment of the community.



Lancaster has numerous significant economic development and planning decisions before the Town. These include the redevelopment of the [South Lancaster commercial district](#), including the former Atlantic Union College site and a vacant 80-acre DCAMM site. In 2015, the Town completed an [Economic Development Plan](#) to help guide its development efforts. An Economic Development Committee was also established to guide development in a way that is harmonious with the character of the Lancaster. The Town Administrator must be able to guide the staff that will focus on Lancaster's planning and development needs.

Lancaster's economic growth is challenged by a lack of sewer capacity. The incoming Town Administrator will need to work collaboratively with the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority and state DEP to develop a solution.

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### ***Mission Statement***

*Lancaster's governmental operations seek to provide consistent services, quality programming, sustainable management, and oversight to enrich the lives of those who live and work in the Town while maintaining the Town's historical and rural nature.*

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## Education

Lancaster, along with the towns of Bolton and Stow, is a member of the [Nashoba Regional School District](#). Students attend Mary Rowlandson Elementary School and Luther Burbank Middle School. Nashoba Regional High School, located in Bolton, serves students in grades 9-12.

Lancaster is also a member town of the [Minuteman High School](#), a regional career technical school located in the neighboring town of Lexington. Approximately 94.6% of Lancaster residents ages 25 and older have a high school diploma and 51.5% hold a bachelor's degree or higher advanced degree.





## Departments

The Lancaster Police Department and Fire-EMS Department are currently overseen by a Public Safety Commissioner who also serves as Police Chief. A Lieutenant oversees the day-to-day operations of the Fire



Department. The [Police Department](#) has 12 sworn officers. The [Fire-EMS Department](#) is made up of one Lieutenant, and six full-time firefighters, supplemented by on-call firefighters and on-call EMTs. The department operates out of two stations. Lancaster is a member of the [Nashoba Valley Regional Dispatch District](#), which is headquartered in Devens.

The [Department of Public Works](#) operates under the direction of an elected DPW Board and daily DPW responsibilities are administered by the Superintendent of

Public Works. DPW oversight includes highways/roadways, water division, sewer district commission, cemeteries, trees, and recycling center. DPW projects include numerous initiatives, including an \$8 million water main project and Complete Streets planning. The Lancaster Sewer District is an independent government entity from the Town with a three-member [Sewer District Commission](#).

[Community Development & Planning](#) is responsible for coordinating and directing all development planning activities within Town and provides staff support to numerous boards and committees. The [Council on Aging](#), [Community Center](#), and [Thayer Memorial Library](#) serve Lancaster residents by providing a variety of programming, events, resources, and services for every age group in Town. The Council on Aging and Community Center share a former school facility located near the Town Green behind Thayer Memorial Library.

## Open Space and Recreation

Lancaster completed an [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) update in 2017, which outlines goals to protect, preserve, and enrich Lancaster's open space, water, and recreational resources. Publicly controlled land in Lancaster comprises about 43 percent of the total land area. Open space and recreation opportunities include the Town Beach, Lancaster State Forest, Bolton Flats Management Area, and the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge as well as Bartlett Pond, Ballard Hill, Chapman/Goodale, Turner Pond, Chickering Conservation areas, and more. Additionally, the Lancaster [Recreation Department](#) offers a wide variety of sports and recreational programs for residents to enjoy.

## Challenges and Opportunities

- The Town will decide in May whether to take ownership of an 80-acre property now owned by the state Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance. The incoming Town Administrator will provide oversight of the team responsible for the redevelopment of the property.
- The Atlantic Union College closed in 2018, and its buildings remain vacant. The Town would like the property, which is privately owned, redeveloped in a way that will create a market for other uses and will be harmonious with the community's character.
- With some open or soon-to-be-open municipal positions, the incoming Town Administrator will have the opportunity to establish a professional team with complementary skillsets.
- Additional development is desired along the Route 70 area in North Lancaster.
- There is a potential \$8 million dollar water main project, pending Town Meeting vote, as well as various road maintenance projects.





# Lancaster

## MASSACHUSETTS

### The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree, preferably in a field related to public or business administration; advanced degree preferred.
- Experience as a Town Administrator, Assistant Town Administrator, or head of a significant department in a complex municipal organization, or professional equivalent.
- Superior skills in financial management and budgeting, economic development, municipal planning, human resources, and grant writing.
- Adept at liaising between the Select Board, Town departments, elected and appointed boards, and residents.
- Hard worker; passionate about the community and interested in a long-term tenure.
- Knowledgeable of municipal best practices and familiarity with municipal law.
- Ability to resolve rather than escalate conflict.
- Excellent communicator who is not afraid to discuss difficult things honestly and fairly.
- Transparent; prioritizes values-based decision making.
- Experience working with regional school district.
- Flexible, with ability to negotiate compromise and motivate others.
- Strategic and forward-thinker who manages resources effectively.
- Professional, appropriate, approachable.
- MCPPO certified or willingness to obtain certification.
- Detail oriented and highly organized.
- Understanding of small-town governance and culture.

### How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé via email, in confidence, in a [single PDF](#), by April 7, 2025, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

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

**Subject: Lancaster  
Town Administrator**

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

John Petrin, Senior Associate  
Community Paradigm Associates  
[JPetrin@communityparadigm.com](mailto:JPetrin@communityparadigm.com)  
781-552-1074

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