



Town of
Westport
MASSACHUSETTS

The Coastal Agricultural Resource Community of New England

Town Administrator

Westport, MA (16,000 pop.), is a rural, coastal community that includes active farms, scenic landscapes, small businesses, and residential neighborhoods. Like many coastal communities, the population increases during the warm weather as visitors enjoy their second homes and summer rentals are occupied. Located in Bristol County, Westport lies in the South Coast region of Massachusetts, approximately eight miles south of Fall River, 54 miles south of Boston, and 26 miles southeast of Providence, Rhode Island. Principally a residential community, Westport has a number of small businesses, many located along Route 6. Westport is rich in history and culture with an active arts community and offers residents and visitors many recreational opportunities, including boating, fishing, swimming, and photography.



[Westport](#) has five historic villages: Westport Point, where Main Road meets the river; Central Village with Town offices, retail stores, and businesses; Head of Westport at the head of the east branch of the Westport River; Acoaxet or Westport Harbor, which is between the west branch of the river and Rhode Island; and Westport Factory. The Town has an Aa3 rating and an FY22 budget of approximately \$45 million (including public education). Westport's current challenges involve strengthening its finances, focusing on public service, securing grant funding, enhancing communications, negotiating union contracts, solving the lack of water and sewer infrastructure, and a desire for economic development that is harmonious with the Town's vision.

To serve as its next Town Administrator, Westport is seeking an experienced and proactive administrator with exceptional financial acumen and strong communication skills who is interested in a lengthy tenure. The current Town Administrator is retiring after serving in the position for seven years. The next Town Administrator should be an inspirational, approachable and collaborative team builder who values a customer service approach. Candidates should have strong management skills, including personnel management and human resources, and understand that the Westport Town Administrator needs to pitch in and work as part of the team. Westport is fortunate to have talented department heads who will work collaboratively to accomplish goals. The Town Administrator needs to recognize and be empathetic to citizens' concerns. Candidates should have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in public administration or a related field. Preferred candidates will have a proven record of leadership, and be proficient in financial management, strategic management, and community-based problem solving. The next Town Administrator should be innovative, have a strong work ethic, and be thoughtful in making decisions.

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

Government

Westport has a Board of Selectmen-Town Administrator form of government with open Town Meeting. The [Board of Selectmen](#) serve as the chief executive of the Town government and set policy and provide strategic direction in the best interest of the Town as a whole. The Board's responsibilities include establishing and overseeing Town government personnel and procurement systems, managing Town government facilities, and the conduct of all union negotiations for Town employees. The Board of Selectmen appoints the Town Administrator as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town. Residents appreciate a Town government that is communicative and transparent.

Westport has a number of elected positions, boards, and committees including: Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Regional School Committee, Moderator, Town Clerk, Collector of Taxes, Board of Health, Assessors, Planning Board, Housing Authority, Fish Commissioners, Library Trustees, Landing Commissioners, Board of Commissioners of Trust Funds, and Constables. An article on the 2021 Annual Town Meeting in June seeks to combine the offices of Town Treasurer and Town Collector into a single appointed position. [Westport Community Schools](#), serving approximately 1,430 students, has a primary school, an elementary school, and a new \$95 million middle-high school scheduled to open in fall of 2021.

Westport is fortunate to have an involved citizenry with active volunteers. The next Town Administrator must be skilled at collaboratively engaging with Westport's various elected and appointed positions, boards, and committees who work collegially to enhance and serve the community. Staffing in most departments is considered lean, with the police, fire, and highway departments, in particular, considered to be understaffed.

Finances

Westport is fiscally conservative and has implemented level-service budgets for the past decade. Westport has an FY22 budget of approximately \$45 million and a Moody's rating of Aa3. In FY21, free cash was certified at \$1.08 million. The FY21 tax rate is \$8.62 for residential, commercial, and industrial properties. The property tax base is slightly more than 92% residential, about 5.1% commercial, 2.4% personal property, and 0.38% industrial. Nearly 68% of the Town's revenue comes from the tax levy, with 15.06% from state aid, and nearly 15.38% from local receipts. New growth in FY21 was \$482,852. A new \$95 million middle-high school is nearing completion. The building was funded via a debt exclusion, with nearly half funded by the state. Improving Westport's financial strength while keeping tax increases to a minimum are priorities.

According to an October 2020 Moody's report, Westport has a modestly sized, residential tax base, with slightly above average resident wealth and income, a stable financial position, and manageable debt burden, pension and OPEB liabilities. There is a desire for limited, appropriate economic development, in harmony with the Town's vision, to help fund town services and support infrastructure needs.



Important Links:

- [Town of Westport](#)
- [Town By-Laws and Regulations](#)
- [2019 Annual Town Report](#)
- [Various Annual Town Reports](#)
- [Westport Master Plan 2016](#)
- [2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant](#)
- [Audit Reports, Management Letters, etc.](#)
- [Finance Committee Report](#)
- [Financial Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Open Space and Recreation Action Plan](#)
- [Housing Production Plan FY2018-2022](#)

Economic and Community Development

Westport is primarily a residential community, including a number of seasonal residents, with approximately 500 small businesses, such as restaurants, shops, offices, and home-based businesses. While Westport once had the most dairy farms in the Commonwealth, today there are two dairy farms in operation. There are also a number of beef cattle farms of varying sizes and a meat processing facility to serve the livestock farmers of the South Coast. Westport has 10 commercial solar farms currently operating in Town, with another one under construction, six with approvals, and one under review. Currently sale of medical marijuana is permitted in Westport and a retail medical marijuana establishment is under construction on Route 6. There are a number of zoning articles on the 2021 Annual Town Meeting warrant, to be held in June, that will clarify current zoning regulations related to the various types of marijuana businesses. The tax base is heavily dependent on residential taxes and discussions are ongoing as to how to lighten residents' property tax burden.

Westport has invested in its buildings over the past decade. The Town built a new \$10 million police station in 2018, the Hix Bridge Road fire station was constructed in 2010, and the Westport Free Public Library was renovated with an addition in 2009. A \$95 million middle-high school is scheduled to open in September 2021. Additionally, Westport recognizes a desire for public water and sewer, particularly to serve businesses along Route 6 and to allow for the possibilities of affordable and senior housing, as well as a desire for fiber optic internet throughout Town. There is no municipal trash collection; however, Westport operates a transfer station on Hix Bridge Road.

Open Space and Recreation

Westport values the rural nature of the community and its natural environment, including the seaside, rivers, farm fields, and woodlands. The Town occupies 62 square miles (33,900 acres) of which approximately 22% is water. Westport has 35 miles of ocean shoreline which, along with its ponds, allow for boating, sailing, fishing and other water-related sports. Beautiful Horseneck Beach is extremely popular with year-round residents, seasonal residents, and visitors. Westport is home to the Watuppa Ponds and Westport Harbor, where the two branches of Westport River meet before emptying into Rhode Island Sound. Residents are proud of Westport's preserved open spaces and are committed to preserving, protecting, and enhancing its rural character. Working collaboratively with the community to maintain a thoughtful balance of open space and harmonious economic development is critical.

Current projects/issues

- Construction of a new \$95 million middle-high school (grades 5-12), financed via a debt exclusion and state funding, is nearing completion and scheduled to open in the fall of 2021.
- Discussions focused on the myriad potential reuses of the existing high school are ongoing.
- Zoning bylaw amendments related to marijuana businesses will be considered at Town Meeting in June.
- Traffic improvements to Route 177, including the construction of a roundabout, are underway.

Potential projects

- A water, stormwater and wastewater study is ongoing and there is consideration of funding \$1.3 million for the design of public sewer along Route 6. Access to clean, potable water for all residents is critical.
- A project to provide fiber optic internet throughout Town is under consideration.





The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree required (with a master's preferred), preferably in public administration, public policy, business management, or a related field.
- Strong skills in municipal financial management, personnel management/administration, collective bargaining, and municipal procurement.
- A strong communicator, both internally and externally.
- An active listener with superior people skills.
- Excellent follow-through.
- Skilled in grant acquisition and administration.
- Proficient knowledge of municipal law.
- Supports transparency in government.
- Team-oriented; morale builder.
- Strong leadership qualities and experience.
- Willing to work as part of the team.
- Advocates a customer-service approach.
- Ability to coach and mentor staff.
- Knowledgeable of, and able to implement, municipal best practices.
- Excellent writing and presentation skills.
- Strong conflict resolution skills.
- Creative problem solver; proactive.
- Professional, courteous, and respectful.
- Strong work ethic; confident and flexible.
- Forward thinking; strategic; diplomatic.
- Innovative, and calm under pressure.
- Ability to negotiate compromise or consensus.
- Technologically savvy.

How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by June 7, 2021, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

**Subject: Westport
Town Administrator**

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

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

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