

# Southampton – Town Administrator



## Position Statement

Southampton, MA (6,224 pop.), is a beautiful, rural community in Hampshire County, just west of the Connecticut River Valley. The town was established as a farming community and it has retained its historically rural character, though there are few farms remaining. Southampton residents place a high value on open space and diligently work to preserve and protect the community's natural resources. The town's agricultural heritage, scenic areas, and hiking trails are highly valued. In recent years, Southampton has become an attractive community for residential development due to its rural character, quality public education, and central location to the cities of Springfield, Holyoke, Westfield, and Northampton. Southampton is about 100 miles west of Boston. The town has a Standard and Poor's rating of AA- and an FY24 budget of approximately \$20.2 million (including public education). Southampton's current challenges involve managing efforts to design and construct both a new senior center and a new public safety complex, improving employee retention, and strengthening the town's revenues and finances. Southampton's local government is led by a five-member Select Board.



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To serve as its next Town Administrator, Southampton is seeking an energetic and proactive leader with superior financial acumen and exceptional communication skills. Southampton is a growing community that will provide opportunities for the next Town Administrator to be challenged, to develop, and to grow. The current Town Administrator is retiring following a successful tenure with Southampton. As with most small communities, the Town Administrator manages administration, finances, human resources, procurement, and grants and thus must be skilled at prioritization and managing their time. The town is seeking a team builder, who is approachable, highly collaborative, and able to work with department heads, staff, and elected and appointed officials. Candidates should have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in public administration, political science, business administration, or a related field. Preferred candidates will have experience in running a large organization, and be proficient in financial management, human resources management, collective bargaining, procurement, and grant management. An understanding of community planning would be beneficial. The next Town Administrator should be flexible, recognize the benefits of regionalization, and have a strong work ethic.

**Annual salary: \$100K+/- DOQ.** The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package, including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Southampton is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

## Government

Southampton has a Select Board-Town Administrator form of government with Open Town Meeting. The [Select Board](#) is the chief executive body of the town. The Select Board's many responsibilities include: the general direction of town government, developing the annual budget, approving all personnel policy regulations, hiring various town employees, issuing warrants for Town Meeting, appointing members of most boards and committees, and issuing and renewing liquor and food sale licenses. The Select Board appoints the Town Administrator who carries out the policies of the Board. The position of [Town Administrator](#) was established in 2008 by town bylaw. The Town Administrator is the Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer with designated supervisory, budget, and personnel powers and responsibilities.

Southampton has a number of elected positions, boards, and committees including: Select Board, both a local and a regional School Committee, Town Clerk, Treasurer/Collector, Moderator, Tree Warden, Water Commission, Finance Committee, Board of Health, Board of Assessors, Planning Board, Library Trustees, Park Commission, Personnel Policy & Procedures Board, Council on Aging, Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, and Housing Authority. It is critical that the Town Administrator be skilled at collaboratively engaging with Southampton's various elected and appointed positions, boards, and committees as volunteers provide valuable work necessary for town operations. As currently designed, the town has a fairly flat organizational structure, however an [evaluation](#) conducted in 2016 detailed the benefits of reorganization via implementing a town charter and an effort to move that forward is under discussion.

Southampton provides an excellent public education and is part of the [Hampshire Regional School District](#), along with the towns of Williamsburg, Westhampton, Chesterfield, and Goshen. The school system currently serves approximately 1,600 students. Southampton students in grades PreK-6 attend the William E. Norris School, while students in grades 7-12 attend Hampshire Regional's middle/high school. Southampton students represent 56% of the regional school population. Students also attend Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School in Northampton on a space available basis. In the near future, a study is expected to be conducted regarding how soon Norris School may reach capacity.

## Finances

Southampton, which is historically fiscally conservative, has an FY24 budget of approximately \$20.2 million and a Standard & Poor's rating of AA-. In FY23, free cash was certified at \$476,282. The property tax base is approximately 93.6% residential and 6.3% commercial and industrial. The FY23 tax rate is \$14.33 for all properties and the average tax bill for a single-family home is \$5,627. The FY23 total assessed value of Southampton is nearly \$984 million. Approximately 74% of the town's revenue comes from the tax levy, with 16% from state aid, and about 8% from local receipts. Southampton is challenged by a structural deficit that can vary from approximately \$300,000 to nearly \$1 million annually. The town is working to create a fiscally sustainable budget that stays within the limits of Proposition 2½ and does not rely on one-time funding sources. Southampton received \$1.8 million in ARPA grant funding which has so far been committed to one-time items such as various COVID-related expenses, the Senior Center Feasibility Study, Public Safety Feasibility Study, and a Master Plan for the Park. Southampton is facing revenue constraints due ongoing residential growth and little to no commercial growth combined with the pressures of increasing costs and infrastructure needs.

### Important Links:

- [Town of Southampton](#)
- [2021 Master Plan Update](#)
- [Town By-Laws](#)
- [2022 Annual Town Report](#)
- [FY24 Budget](#)
- [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#)
- [Greenway Rail Trail Project Timeline](#)
- [Senior Center Feasibility Study Report](#)
- [Annual Town Reports & Audit Reports](#)



## Economic and Community Development

Southampton is one of Massachusetts' most rapidly growing communities. Its scenic beauty, high quality of life, and proximity to urban areas make it a highly desirable place to live. The majority of Southampton's growth comes from residential development. The town is bordered by expanding urban centers – Easthampton, Holyoke, and Westfield – to the east and south and by the less-populated communities of Montgomery and Westhampton to the north and west. Its proximity to the "Five College Consortium" provides easy access to cultural and educational opportunities. While residential development is spurring student growth, approximately one-third of Southampton's population is age 60 or older which exhibits the importance of providing services for all age groups. There is a recognized need for additional housing that is affordable for young families and seniors looking to downsize. Additionally, the town is well below the state-mandated 10% for affordable housing. A Town Administrator with some knowledge of community development and housing issues would be able to put those skills to use in Southampton as voters recently approved the creation of Housing Trust. The town's Master Plan was updated within the last few years and details Southampton's desired path for future years.

While commercial development is limited in Southampton, the town is home to such businesses as a Big Y supermarket, Bashista Orchards, Tractor Supply Co. and various farm-based businesses, as well a few small restaurants and shops, and businesses providing personal and trade services.

## Open Space and Recreation

Southampton residents cherish their community's remaining farmland, open spaces, and natural resources, and are committed to preserving and protecting them. The town occupies nearly 29 square miles in Hampshire County on the western uplands of the Connecticut River Valley in western Massachusetts. Traditionally a farming community, today Southampton is a community of commuters with few farms left. Despite the loss of working farms, residents view Southampton as a rural community and strive to maintain its small-town character. The region's economic growth and housing boom is having an impact on Southampton, sparking increased residential development that residents want to ensure does not have a detrimental impact on its character.

Southampton has approximately 700 acres of conserved land and continually works to continue to add to those preserved spaces. The town is currently working with the Kestrel Land Trust and nine landowners to conserve more than 1,000 acres of open space. The next Town Administrator will be expected work collaboratively with state and local officials and volunteers to protect and conserve Southampton's beautiful open spaces and critical natural resources.

## Projects and Challenges

- Construction of a new Senior Center is considered a priority project. A feasibility study has been completed and a location selected. Funds that were bequeathed to the town for a study of establishing a separate Senior Center are currently in Probate Court, some of which ultimately may be put toward construction costs. Approvals for land acquisition and building design will likely be topics for a Special Town Meeting this fall and for Annual Town Meeting next May.
- Construction of a new Public Safety Complex is also considered a critical need as both the Old Town Hall/police station and fire station are aged buildings and do not meet today's public safety department needs. The project is still in the planning stages and the next Town Administrator will be expected to help guide this project to fruition.
- The Greenway Rail Trail project is in the design phase, which is expected to take 2-3 years before construction of the bicycle and pedestrian path can be put out to bid. This portion of the 62-mile Rail Trail will be 3½ miles in length.
- Employee hiring and retention can be a challenge throughout the region. Southampton has a classification and compensation study, including job descriptions, being conducted by a consultant, which is expected to be completed in the near future. The town is currently seeking a new Fire Chief following a retirement and the Council on Aging Director position was recently filled.
- A Safe Routes to School project will include construction of a 10-foot-wide shared-use walkway from Norris Elementary School to the corner of Route 10 to encourage children to walk and bicycle to school.
- The Water Department is in the midst of a large water main replacement project on Route 10.
- The financial management and HR systems are beginning a conversion which should be completed before FY25.
- The town is working with the Department of Transportation regarding the widening and repaving of East Street.
- Public Safety dispatch is being transferred to Easthampton Police Department as part of regionalization efforts.





## Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree required (with a master's preferred), preferably in public administration, political science, business administration, or a related field.
- Five years minimum experience, with three years in Massachusetts, preferred.
- Proficient skills in financial management, budgeting and capital planning, human resource management and collective bargaining, and municipal procurement.
- Excellent time management skills.
- Organized; able to delegate as appropriate.
- Skilled in grant management.
- A strong communicator, both internally and externally; active listener; transparent.
- Superior interpersonal skills.
- Team-oriented; morale builder; collaborative.
- Excellent writing and presentation skills.
- Superior leadership qualities and experience.
- Ability to coach and mentor staff.
- Knowledgeable of, and able to implement, municipal best practices.
- Municipal IT knowledge with experience in software conversion.
- Creative problem solver; proactive.
- Professional, courteous, and respectful.
- Strong work ethic; confident and flexible.
- Forward thinking; strategic; highly diplomatic.
- Innovative, and calm under pressure.
- Ability to negotiate compromise or consensus.
- Knowledge of Massachusetts General Laws.

## How To Apply

Position is open until filled. For a guaranteed review of application materials, send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by November 10, 2023, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

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

**Subject: Southampton  
Town Administrator**

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 Southampton, Mass., is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*