

LUNENBURG, MA – Town Manager



Position Statement

Lunenburg, MA (11,835 pop.) is an idyllic New England town dotted with historic buildings, scenic roadways, rolling hills, lakes, walking trails and farmland. Lunenburg is located in North Central Massachusetts approximately 43 miles from Boston. The town is both an agricultural community and a bedroom suburb of Fitchburg/Leominster, Worcester, and Nashua, NH. In more recent years, Lunenburg's country charm has become attractive to those who work in Boston, the Route 128 and I-495 employment centers, and remotely.

While many farms and orchards have been redeveloped into single-family housing, the rural character remains, with about 18 percent of the town as public land or in conservation. The town established an Agricultural Commission to represent, preserve and enhance farming in the community and to administer the "Right to Farm" bylaw.

Lunenburg is a community-minded town with strong schools, a farmer's market, Boys & Girls Club, Lions Club, and vibrant senior center. The year 2028 will mark the [300th Anniversary](#) of the incorporation of the Town of Lunenburg.

The town is served by the Lunenburg Water District, an independent entity. The Lunenburg Water District provides services to approximately 6,800 people, or 70 percent, of Lunenburg's population. The town has a 102-acre Historic District, listed with the National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Park Service that includes many buildings within the Town Center. Several town buildings in and near the Town Center are in disrepair and need to be repaired, renovated, or demolished.

The town is seeking a Town Manager who has experience with building projects and can work with the community to determine the viability of those buildings, which have structural, safety, and accessibility concerns.



As with other communities, Lunenburg has struggled to attract and retain town staff. The town is seeking a Town Manager who will stem its high turnover rate and foster the next generation of long-term employees by creating an environment where employees feel valued, respected, and part of a team. Key positions that need to be filled include the police chief and senior center director due to retirements.

Annual Salary: \$173,000+/- DOQ. The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package, including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Lunenburg is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

Government

Lunenburg has a Town Charter that calls for an open Town Meeting form of government with a five-member Select Board and a Town Manager. Lunenburg's [Town Manager](#) is the Chief Administrative and Financial Officer for the town. The Town Manager is appointed by the Select Board and is responsible for the management of all town departments and is the appointing and contracting authority for all departments, except for the Lunenburg Public Schools. The Town Manager is responsible for overseeing all budgetary, financial, and personnel administration activities of the Town. The office staff is composed of the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager/Human Resources Director, and Executive Assistant to the Town Manager.

The town is seeking a Town Manager with strong leadership qualities who develops procedures and policies to attract and retain staff, communicates with honesty and transparency, holds staff accountable, and builds trust and morale among employees, elected officials and board members, and residents.

Finances

Lunenburg is a financially stable community with a \$44,024,349 budget for Fiscal Year 2025 and an AA+ bond rating. The state certified \$1,655,778 in Free Cash for Fiscal Year 2024. Lunenburg is a semi-rural, bedroom community that relies heavily on residential taxes as its revenue source. The tax levy for Fiscal Year 2024 was \$32,823,310. Residential taxes accounted for 89.44 percent of the tax levy; while commercial, industrial and personal property made up the remaining 10.56 percent. Overall, property taxes make up about 66 percent of the budget; state aid, 22 percent; local receipts, 7 percent; and other available funds, 5 percent. The town has a single tax rate of \$14.10 for Fiscal Year 2025. The average single family tax bill is \$6,788. The new Town Manager must have a strong background in municipal finance, and experience in long-term budgeting and planning strategies.

Important Links:

- [The Town of Lunenburg](#)
- [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#)
- [Town Charter and Bylaws](#)
- [Municipal Building Design Committee](#)
- [Town Meeting & Town Finance](#)
- [Capital Planning Committee](#)
- [Lunenburg Water District](#)



Education

Led by Superintendent Kathleen Burnham, the [Lunenburg Public Schools](#) is an above average district, with 1,580 students in grades PK-12. Lunenburg is also part of the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School in Fitchburg. The district includes the Lunenburg Primary School, Turkey Hill Elementary School, and the Lunenburg Middle/High School, which opened in 2016.

The town is seeking a Town Manager that will work closely with the schools with the hope of presenting a united front related to budget and capital priorities, including the reuse of town buildings.

Economic and Community Development

Lunenburg has a small but steady business community, several of which have had a longstanding presence in town including PJ Keating and Powell Stone & Gravel. Most of the commercial and industrial development is clustered along Route 2A (Massachusetts Avenue), Route 13 (Chase Road), and in the southeastern section at Leominster-Shirley Road and Route 70 close to sewer services in Fitchburg and Leominster.

There are a variety of restaurants and services including a big box store, hardware store and grocery store. Lunenburg is also home to a variety of agricultural and recreation-related businesses including dairy farms, orchards, farm stands, a Christmas tree farm, ice cream stand, and golf course. The Lunenburg Economic Development Committee has been established to help promote the local business community. One of the challenges facing the town is its lack of access to a major highway. The closest major artery is Route 2, which is six miles away. The Town Manager must continue to look for ways to grow economic development in town to provide more options for its growing population and to ease the tax burden on homeowners.

Open Space and Recreation

Residents choose to live in Lunenburg for its open space and country charm. It is a scenic town with rolling hills, winding roads, ponds, wetlands, three lakes, hiking trails, farms and orchards. The town has large tracts of land devoted to state- and town-owned conservation areas and significant parcels of permanently protected farmland.

The town of Lunenburg owns over 2,400 acres of land under the care and management of various municipal boards and departments, including the Cowdrey Conservation Area. This is a 313-acre parcel that has a dedicated guidebook. Lunenburg's centerpiece park property is Marshall Park, which includes multiple baseball/softball diamonds, an exercise track, and a playground. Plans are underway for a \$9 million renovation of this property. Lunenburg is home to two rod and gun clubs, a nine-hole golf course, a driving range with mini-golf, and a campground.

Lunenburg's next Town Manager must understand the importance of preserving open space and retaining Lunenburg's semi-rural character.



Current Issues/Projects

- **The hiring, development, and retention of town staff.** The town is eager to be a good employer with a positive environment that respects and appreciates its employees and works effectively and efficiently for residents.
- **The use and reuse of town buildings.** Municipals offices are spread throughout three different town buildings, all of which need extensive repair or renovation. The new Town Manager will take the lead on developing a plan for future building needs and implementing it.
- **The renovation of Marshall Park.** Plans are in the works for new fields, walking trails, parking, and viewing platforms.



The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree required (with a master's preferred), preferably in public administration or a related field.
- Experience as a Town Administrator/ Manager, Assistant Town Administrator/ Manager, or head of a significant department in a complex municipal organization, or professional equivalent.
- Strong, organized leader.
- Collaborative team player.
- Ability to recruit and retain staff.
- Adept at managing personnel and building relationships.
- Honest, approachable and transparent.
- Proficient in municipal financial management, budgeting, and long-term planning.
- Ability to build trust.
- Able to build and maintain morale.
- Willing to delegate.
- Effective communicator.
- Willing to make difficult decisions.
- Eager to engage and interact with the community.
- Consensus builder-problem solver willing to work cooperatively with boards, committees, residents, and other stakeholders.
- Ability to clearly assess a situation and consider a variety of options.
- Experience in building projects.
- Ability to bring people together and defuse conflict.

How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by November 8, 2024, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

Subject: Lunenburg Town Manager

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

John Petrin, Senior Associate
Community Paradigm Associates
jpetrin@communityparadigm.com
781-552-1074

The Town of Lunenburg, Mass., is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.