

# Hampden, MA – Town Administrator



## Position Statement

Hampden, MA (5,000 pop.), is a beautiful, small country town with gentle hills, surrounded by sloping mountains. Located in southwestern Massachusetts, approximately 11 miles southeast of downtown Springfield and 28 miles north-northeast of Hartford, Connecticut, Hampden offers residents an oasis of open space and small-town charm. Hampden has an AA+ rating, an FY24 budget of nearly \$16 million, good public schools, and strong community spirit. The Town has a three-member Board of Selectmen and open Town Meeting.

Hampden, which is committed to professional municipal management, is seeking an experienced, enthusiastic, and community-focused leader with excellent communication and collaboration skills to serve as its Town Administrator. Candidates should have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in public administration or a related field and municipal experience, preferably with demonstrated skills and abilities in municipal finance and budgeting, communications, human resources, grant writing, and procurement. Candidates should have superior leadership abilities, have a strong work ethic, instill confidence and trust, and be able to build cooperative relationships with appointed/elected officials, residents, and employees. Candidates should be creative, be politically astute, support transparency in government, and exhibit commitment to the community.

**Annual salary: \$110K+/-, DOQ.** The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Hampden is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

### Important Links:

- [Town of Hampden](#)
- [General Bylaws](#)
- [Financial Management Policies](#)
- [Town Meeting Warrants](#)
- [Annual Town Reports](#)
- [FY24 Budget](#)
- [Open Space & Recreation Plan](#)
- [Hampden YouTube](#)



## Government

Hampden, which is led by a three-member Board of Selectmen serving as the executive board for the town, has open Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen, which also serves as the Board of Health, appoints the Town Administrator, Health Coordinator, Fire Chief, Police Chief, and Highway Superintendent. Other elected committees and positions include Board of Assessors, Hampden-Wilbraham Region School District Committee, Park Commission, Planning Board, Housing Authority, Cemetery Commission, Board of Library Trustees, Moderator, Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Tax Collector, and Constables. Town Hall is open Monday-Thursday.

Hampden has a mostly volunteer Fire Department, with three full-time members. Its police station was built less than 10 years ago. The Town has contracted with Action Ambulance Service to provide 24/7 service. Space at Town Hall is tight, and the building is not ADA compliant. One potential solution that has been considered, other than renovating the Town Hall, is for Hampden to retain the currently closed middle school and move Town Hall services to that building.

Hampden has a shared services agreement for dispatch with Wilbraham. The Town also participates in a regional Health Services agreement with Longmeadow, Wilbraham and Monson, and a Veterans Services regional arrangement.

## The Position

The position of Town Administrator was established by a 2018 Town Meeting vote. The Town Administrator serves as an agent of the Board. The Town Administrator supervises staff and oversees the daily operations and delivery of municipal services performed by departments under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen. The Town Administrator:

- Serves as Chief Administrative Officer and agent of the Board of Selectmen;
- Serves as the town's Human Resources Director;
- Serves as Chief Procurement Officer;
- Serves as Director of Financial Management team;
- Oversees and reports on claims against the town;
- Prepares and coordinates Annual & Special Town Meeting warrants;
- Oversees and manages operations/services under the Board of Selectmen's authority.



## Community Development

Hampden is a tight-knit community where residents greet each other by name and cherish the small-town atmosphere. Once a farming community, it became a mill town, and today is primarily a residential community. Construction of subdivisions, once put on hold during the housing downturn, have since been and are being actively developed. Nearly all homes are on well water and have septic systems. There is a small Water District due to some leaching from a landfill about 20 years ago. This district may be expanded to include another 10-20 homes. There has been some commercial building in recent years, which has assisted in the stabilization of Hampden's finances. Hampden has about eight solar developments and cannabis establishments are prohibited by bylaw. The Town has a full-service grocery store, an assisted-care facility, bank branch, seasonal farmers market, veterinary service, several restaurants and cafes, and a gas station as well as various owner-run businesses. There are no state highways within the community, with the nearest being Route 83 in the neighboring town of East Longmeadow.

The Town's population has remained relatively steady and approximately 30% of the population ages 65 or older. With only 34 units of housing designated for the elderly, Hampden recognizes a need for additional affordable senior housing. Interestingly, about 42% of the population is under age 50, heralding a potential boom in the younger generation. Hampden recently approved funding to develop a new Master Plan.



## Finances

Hampden has an [FY24 budget](#) of nearly \$16 million and a Standard and Poor's rating of AA+ with a stable outlook. The Town's finances are in good shape, with approximately \$2.5 million in stabilization. The FY23 tax rate is \$16.87 for all properties. The average single-family tax bill in FY23 is \$5,831. Maintaining or improving Hampden's financial strength while keeping tax increases to a minimum are priorities. Nearly 85% of the Town's revenue comes from the tax levy, with approximately 5.3% from state aid, and 5% from local receipts. The Town is supportive of its public school system and the new Town Administrator must work collaboratively with the school department.

## Education

Hampden is part of the [Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District](#), which serves approximately 2,800 students in grades PreK-12. Currently, there is one elementary school and one middle school (closed) located in Hampden, with three elementary, one middle, and the regional high school in Wilbraham. The Green Meadows Elementary School in Hampden, which was renovated recently, has approximately 360 students, with fewer than 10 of those students in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. The regional agreement currently in place requires that Hampden students in grades PreK-8 be educated in Hampden. This agreement may require discussions and possible renegotiation in the near future.

## Recreation and Open Space

Hampden residents value the character and beauty of their community and are committed to the protection of open space. The Town is located along the banks of the Scantic River and nestled among a series of hills and mountains that provide scenic vistas, trails, and a variety of recreational opportunities. Hampden owns approximately 630 of the 12,576 acres that lie within its borders. Of those 630 acres, almost 400 acres is conserved land and parks. Additionally, the Audubon's Laughing Brook Wildlife Sanctuary protects another 368 acres.

Residents have access to a variety of recreational programs through the school system, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Hampden Free Public Library. Additionally, residents enjoy using Hampden Memorial Park and the Town's



Spray Park. Hampden's [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) can be accessed via its website.

## Ongoing/Potential Projects

- Senior Center renovation/expansion project is expected to cost \$4 million to \$5 million.
- The Town has undertaken a townwide fiber optic internet project.
- Town Hall is lacking much-needed space and is not ADA compliant. The cost of renovations and repairs are estimated at \$7 million and alternative solutions may be considered.
- Potential renovation of the Town's Fire Station, which could cost approximately \$3 million.
- Possible expansion of the Town's water district, to respond to an ongoing PFAS leaching issue, is expected to cost \$2.5 million.
- A renegotiation of the regional school district contract and potential school reconfiguration plan.







## The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree in public administration or related field, with a Master's degree preferred.
- Experience in municipal management or municipal administration.
- Skilled in financial management including budgeting, communications, human resources, grant writing, and procurement.
- Skilled at mentoring and helping staff to develop and grow.
- Collaborative, enthusiastic, transparent, team-oriented, and decisive.
- Knowledgeable of best practices.
- Skilled in use of traditional and modern communication tools.
- An understanding of and/or background in business organization.
- Community-focused, able to delegate effectively, morale-builder, analytical, creative problem solver, and organized.
- Politically astute; responsive.
- Approachable and open to new ideas.
- Action-oriented, have a superior work ethic, inspire trust and confidence, and enjoy working with people.

## How To Apply

Send cover letters and résumés via email, in a single PDF, by December 20, 2023, 3:00 p.m., EST, to:

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

**Subject: Hampden  
Town Administrator Search**

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