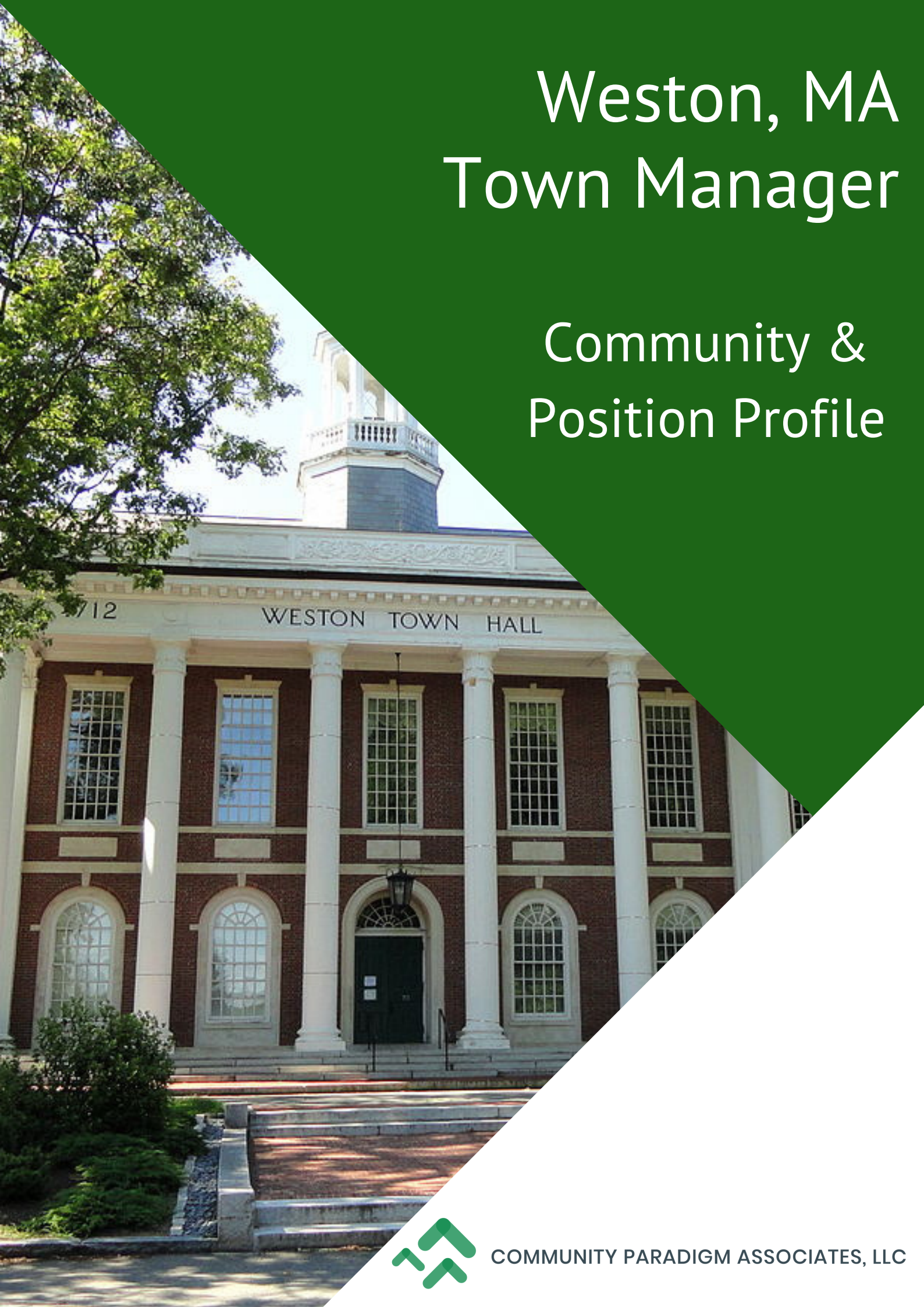


Weston, MA Town Manager

Community & Position Profile



COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

The Community

The Town of Weston is an attractive, principally residential community of approximately 11,500 residents located 12 miles west of Boston. It has a tradition of professional and highly responsive government service, with strong citizen engagement, and is known for its semi-rural character with close access to the major city of Boston. The Town is seeking an innovative, community-focused and results-driven leader to serve as its next Town Manager.

[Weston](#) was first settled in 1642, incorporated in 1713, and is part of Middlesex County. The Town is bordered by Lincoln on the north, Waltham and Newton on the east, Wellesley on the south, Natick on



the southwest, and Wayland on the west. Weston's 17.3 square miles is primarily land, with approximately 25 percent some form of wetland or in a wetlands buffer area. The community consists mainly of residential properties, a quaint town center, and small commercial office buildings located on the perimeter of town near highways and major routes.

With close proximity to Boston, desirable real estate and highly ranked school system, Weston ranks amongst the most affluent towns in Massachusetts. Median household income of \$191,744 is the highest in the state

and represents 280% of the state median income of \$68,563. While the Town's population is largely financially prosperous, according to U.S. Census statistics, there are a small percentage of residents who fall below the poverty line and find it a financial challenge to retain their Weston residence.

The Town's racial makeup is 85.3% white, 9.9% Asian, 2.6% Hispanic or Latino, and 2.0% Black or African American. The Town is demographically dissimilar to the state regarding resident age cohorts with differences in the under-18 years cohort with Weston at 28.1% in the 2010 U.S. Census versus 21.7% for the state. In the under-5 years cohort, Weston has 4.5% of its population which is slightly lower than the state's 5.6%. Additionally, in the 65 years and over cohort, Weston has 17.8% of its population compared to the state's 13.8%. The median age of Weston's residents is 43.3 years.

Weston enjoys a strong property base for its size with [total assessed value](#) of approximately \$6.0 billion. Residential properties account for 95.5% of the tax base, commercial and industrial properties 3.5%, and personal property 1.0%. The average residential property assessment is \$1,488,049 and the median residential assessment is \$1,173,300. The average commercial assessment in Weston for FY2018 is \$3,584,238 and the median commercial assessment is \$1,001,600. The FY2018 [tax rate](#) for all properties is \$12.51 per thousand of the property's assessed value.

Weston has excellent access to rail, air and highway facilities. Interstate Route 495 and state Route 128 divide the greater Boston area into inner and outer zones, which are connected by numerous spokes providing direct access to the airport, port and intermodal facilities of Boston. Other principal highways easily accessed from Weston include state routes 30 and 117, U.S. Route 20, and the Massachusetts Turnpike, I-90. The MBTA commuter rail can be accessed in Weston via the Silver Hill, Hastings, and Kendal Green stops along the Fitchburg line. The Town has 87 miles of public accepted roads, 21 miles of private roads, and 31 miles of sidewalks.

Government and Finance

Weston's government includes a three-member Board of Selectmen that serves as the governing body of the Town. Selectmen are volunteers and elected to staggered three-year terms. They oversee all matters impacting the interest and welfare of the community and are responsible for ensuring that Town government is responsive to and reflective of community needs and values.

There is also an elected five-member School Committee that oversees the policies and budget of the Town's public school system. Other elected positions include Board of Assessors, Moderator, Planning Board, Recreation Commission, Board of Health, Library Board of Trustees, and Commissioners of Trust Funds. In addition, the Town utilizes more than 30 appointed boards and commissions to conduct municipal operations.

Weston traditionally uses the [Town Caucus](#) to nominate candidates for town office. Town Caucus is normally held the first or second Monday in March. Weston has an Open Town Meeting form of government. [Town Meeting](#) is the legislative body of the Town and typically meets for the Annual Town Meeting in May during which the annual town budget is adopted and changes to the Town's General and Zoning by-laws are considered. Additional Special Town Meetings may be called as often as necessary, but one Special Town Meeting is typically held in November.

The [Board of Selectmen](#) appoints the [Town Manager](#) to provide day-to-day oversight of the Selectmen's office and to supervise all Town departments under the jurisdiction of the Selectmen. The Town Manager is responsible for executing the policy directives of the Board of Selectmen and for managing the operations and activities of the Town. The Board of Selectmen has designated specific [Projects and Priorities](#) for 2017-2018.



The Town Manager's specific responsibilities include the following:

- Provide support to the Board of Selectmen, including preparing, attending and maintaining records of all Board of Selectmen meetings
- Develop policy proposals and policy alternatives to recommend to the Board of Selectmen
- Serving as liaison between Selectmen and other town boards and committees
- Supervising all departments under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen, including handling personnel and benefits administration for approximately 175 employees
- Oversee and coordinate the preparation of the annual budget
- Provide financial oversight of all municipal operations
- Preparing the warrant for the annual and all special Town Meetings
- Responding to written and verbal inquiries from the public, and
- Coordination of the [Annual Town Report](#).

Weston holds a [Moody's rating](#) of AAA, with a stable outlook, as stated in a rating action of January 2018. The rating was based upon the community's stable financial position, manageable debt burden and pension liability, and its aggressive funding strategy toward its OPEB liability. Moody's noted that it expects that Weston will maintain a sound financial position bolstered by its strong fiscal management.

It also cited the Town's conservative approach to budgeting and expenditure management as well as its sizeable tax base and history of taxpayer support for capital expenditures which provides additional stability. Weston's tax base is approximately 96% residential.



In FY2018, Weston has an overall spending plan of approximately \$87.1 million, including \$8.9 million of exempt debt service. Approximately 66% of this spending is for schools, 22% for essential services (Public Safety, Public Works and Facilities) and 14% for general services. In FY2019,

the Town Manager and School Committee are recommending a principally level-services [budget](#) of \$89.8 million, a 3.1% YoY increase.

As of March 31, 2018, Weston had a stabilization balance of approximately \$3.1 million, a pension stabilization balance of \$415,029, and an OPEB trust fund balance of about \$16.2 million. The Town's OPEB liability is approximately \$65 million and it has a net pension liability of about \$60 million, as of the most recent actuarial valuation on July 1, 2016. Weston's debt is mainly excluded debt. Non-excluded debt is only \$19,760, which is less than one percent of the operating budget. The Town's debt-management policies include confining long-term borrowing to capital improvements too expensive to be financed from current revenues and limiting annual increases in debt to a level that will not materially jeopardize the Town's AAA credit rating.

Weston has set [policies](#) regarding its reserves, including both restricted and unrestricted. For example, the Town targets aggregated unrestricted reserves equal to five percent of the prior fiscal year's general operating budget amount excluding exempt debt service.

Challenges and Opportunities

Weston is fortunate to have a stable tax base, strong demographics and history of residents supportive of the schools and municipal services. However, there are several challenges and opportunities that face the Town and are being addressed.

- **Finances**

Weston has a Moody's rating of AAA with a stable outlook, according to a January 2018 report. The Town's goal is to manage its finances in a manner that will maintain its high rating. Weston's [FY2019 recommended budget](#) is approximately \$81.1 million, excluding \$8.7 million gross debt service. Moody's highlighted Weston's stable financial position, strong fiscal management, manageable debt burden, and conservative approach to budgeting as strengths. The Town has

increased its debt load by 24% over the past 10 years to fund capital improvements, with several more on the horizon. The Town has managed to keep tax increases to an average of 3.8% over the past 10 years, though that is anticipated to be challenging in a higher inflation environment. Maintaining the Town's credit rating, financial strength and minimal tax increases continues to be a priority for the Town.

- **Education**

Weston highly values education. Its excellent public education system consistently ranks amongst the best in the state and is a primary attractor of families to the community. Also illustrative of the Town's strong support of education is the fact that approximately 99% of Weston's residents age 25 years and older have a high school diploma and about 84% of the population age 25 and older have a bachelor's degree or higher. Student enrollment in [Weston Public Schools](#) is approximately 2,111 at the Town's three elementary, one middle, and one high school. Enrollment has historically been cyclical, and is currently on a downward trend, which presents challenges in budgeting. Approximately 18% of Weston's school-age population attends private schools, which is statistically similar to prior years.



- **Housing**

With a highly attractive location, semi-rural environment and excellent school system, Weston is an expensive community in which to live. Approximately 85% of the 3,400 homes in Weston are owner occupied with a median value of nearly \$1.2 million. Only 3.5% of housing is considered affordable, which is significantly below the state-mandated 10% level. This presents a challenge for the Town, which has identified a strong need for rental housing, particularly for the elderly and young families. Weston developed a [Housing Production Plan](#) as a proactive and studied means towards developing affordable housing that is in keeping with the Town's affordable housing policies and preferences. A proposal currently in negotiation is a 40B development of at least 200 units, with some percentage being designated affordable to make significant progress towards the state mandated level.

- **Capital Needs**

In the last 20 years or more, nearly all the Town and School buildings have been renovated or replaced, the Case House School Administration Building being the remaining major project. The Town has some surplus buildings for which appropriate re-use has been the subject of much discussion. Currently, Weston is undertaking a \$4 million renovation of the Old Library, which will become the Weston Library's new [Weston Art & Innovation Center](#), providing hands-on learning opportunities related to art and technology for citizens of all ages. The Town is also considering extensive renovations to the neighboring historic Josiah Smith Tavern, which could cost as much as \$11 million. Weston has five-year [capital improvement plans](#), which are updated annually, for such areas as drainage, water main program, roadways, and sidewalks. Roadways, in particular, are below residents' standards and expectations, and undergoing significant investment. Other

projects in the [FY2019 Capital Improvement Program](#) include: drainage improvements; burying utilities, enhancing parking, and improving sidewalks in the town center; Route 30 roadway reconstruction; the purchase of a fire engine pumper, three police cruisers, a street sweeper, and three school buses; guard rail replacements; and ongoing water main rehabilitation program costs.

- **Public Safety**

The Weston [Police Department](#) has 26 full-time officers, including patrol officers, captain, lieutenant, sergeants, detectives, community services officer, and chief. Its [Fire Department](#) has 31 full-time members on 24-hour shifts and operates out of two stations. It also runs the Town's ambulance service. Two additional firefighters are expected to join the department later this year and another two are requested for the following year. The Town utilizes a dual dispatch center, staffed by civilians, that serves both the police and fire departments. Neither the police nor the fire department is part of Civil Service. Increased traffic loads are a significant issue facing the Town as it is located at the intersection of two major highways (I-90 and I-95) and significant commuter passageways from western suburbs (Rtes. 30, 20, and 117).

- **Open Space and Recreation**

The [2017 Weston Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) details the goals, objectives, and actions that guide Weston's stewardship of its open spaces, natural resources, and recreation facilities through the year 2023. The Plan is a tool to assist the Town in maintaining and improving its green infrastructure, such as conservation land, trails, working farms and forests, wildlife habitat, streams and ponds, parks, playing fields and courts, and swimming facilities. Weston residents have access to approximately 2,000 acres of protected conservation land and approximately 90 miles of trails. Additionally, there is an array of recreational facilities, including a popular swimming pool and playing fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, and extremely robust recreational programming. Weston is designated as a Green Community by Massachusetts, giving it the ability to apply for grants, technical assistance, and local support from the state. Some residents have expressed a desire for the Town to increase its sustainability and energy-saving efforts.

- **Economic Development**

Weston is 95% a residential town, with commercial activity confined primarily in Town Center and the fringes of Town. The Town Center Planning Committee has been developing a vision and plan to address traffic, safety, aesthetics and other issues to enhance Town Center for its businesses and residents. There are no public sewers in Town, which presents a challenge for Town Center development. Other [Master Plans and Studies](#) are located on the Town's website.

- **Citizen Engagement**

With many challenges and opportunities, the Town embraces civic engagement and appreciates the high levels of participation and discourse residents provide. Volunteer citizens serve on elected and appointed boards and committees as well as in other volunteer capacities. Attracting volunteers and maintaining a strong and collaborative relationship between residents, Town employees, and volunteers is vital to the success of the community. Although the Town has an award winning website and currently makes use of various social media platforms and methods of "pushing" information to residents, additional ideas and recommendations regarding improved methods of communicating with and engaging citizens, including innovative technologies, would be welcome.

Candidate Qualifications

The Board of Selectmen seeks a Town Manager with strong leadership abilities, municipal management experience, and an interest in a tenure of at least 10 years in Weston. The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate prior success in leading a complex municipal organization. The candidate should be competent in all areas of municipal management and operations, but especially in finance, project management, and personnel administration. The candidate should be knowledgeable of municipal management best practices, including the use of data analytics. Other areas of desired expertise include housing (both affordable and elderly) and long-term planning.

The Town Manager must be an innovative and decisive leader who can work collaboratively with various interests of the Town. He or she is expected to work cooperatively with citizens, volunteers, and the business community, should be highly approachable, and should be a skilled communicator.

The Town Manager must be able to delegate effectively, mentor department heads, and provide support and motivation to ensure high performance and professional growth for Weston employees. He



or she must develop and sustain relations with employees and union representatives and be a strategic and dynamic leader who can build strong teams and employ a teamwork approach. He or she should encourage collaboration between all departments, including schools, and to build morale. The Town Manager must be a creative problem-solver who is accessible, transparent, collaborative, a consensus-builder, and open to new ideas. He or she must lead by example, and be motivated, ethical, and respectful of others.

The Town Manager must be dedicated, organized and patient, have a strong work ethic, and inspire

trust and confidence. He or she must have the ability to effectively explain complex issues to individuals, committees, and the citizenry.

The successful candidate should possess a bachelor's degree in a field related to municipal management, with a Master's degree in public administration, business management, or a related field preferred, and have a minimum of 3-5 years of progressive experience as a municipal city/town manager or administrator, as an assistant city/town manager or administrator, or education and experience in or relatable to municipal government that is equivalent. The successful candidate should possess demonstrated skills, abilities and knowledge in municipal finance, economic development and community planning, project management, team building, government law, personnel administration, and intergovernmental relations.

Compensation Package

The Town of Weston will offer an employment agreement and compensation package that is competitive with comparable area communities, with a salary of \$180,000+, commensurate upon qualifications. An attractive benefits package, including health and retirement plans, is part of the Town Manager's total compensation. Residency is not required.

How To Apply

Interested applicants should send cover letters and résumés, in confidence, by May 18, 2018, 5:00 p.m., via email to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

Subject: Weston Town Manager Search

Submit a single PDF containing both cover letter and résumé.

Following the closing date, résumés will be reviewed according to the outlined qualifications. A Screening Committee will interview the most qualified candidates in confidence. Based upon these interviews, a selection of finalists will be chosen for further evaluation and reference checks and then forwarded to the Board of Selectmen. Finalists will be contacted for references and approval of background reviews before their selection is advanced to the Board of Selectmen.

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

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

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