

Winchester, MA

Town Manager

Position Statement



Summary

The Town of Winchester, Massachusetts, is seeking a professional and experienced municipal leader to serve as its next Town Manager. The Town Manager serves as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town and works under the policy direction of the Select Board. The position is responsible for all day-to-day operations of the Town under the position's authority. In accordance with the Town Charter, "The Town Manager shall be appointed solely on the basis of (the individual's) executive and administrative qualifications. (The Town Manager) shall be a professionally qualified person of proven ability, especially fitted by education, training and previous experience in municipal administration to perform the duties of the office." The Town Manager is required to exercise considerable independent judgment in administering and managing the operations of the Town and is responsible for maintaining and improving upon the efficiency and effectiveness of all areas under his/her direction and control.



The Community

[Winchester](#) is an incorporated town located in Middlesex County, 8.2 miles north of Boston, with a population of 22,970 as of the [2020 United States Census](#). The town has total area of 6.3 square miles of which 6.0 square miles is land and 0.2 square miles is water.

Winchester borders the cities of Medford and Woburn, and the towns of Arlington, Lexington, and Stoneham. The Town is roughly bisected by a central valley which is the remnant of the original course of the Merrimack River. All that remains of its original course through present day Winchester is the [Aberjona River](#) and the several ponds it feeds enroute to the [Mystic Lakes](#) on Winchester's southern border. On its eastern third, the valley rises steeply into the wooded hills of the [Middlesex Fells Reservation](#). The western edge of the valley yields to Arlington and Lexington heights, and the boundaries with those two towns. To the north, the town's longest border is shared with Woburn.

Per the [United States Census Bureau](#) as of 2020, the Town of Winchester has a total of 8,065 households and a median household income of \$173,058. The median age of residents is 41.3 years (+/- 1.5). Of the Town's population, 18.3% are 65+ years old. It is estimated that of the population of 25+ years old, 75.3% hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

A Brief History of Winchester

According to the [Winchester Historical Society](#), Native Americans were the first to settle along the rivers and ponds in the area now known as Winchester. They spoke the Algonquin language and were part of the Massachusetts tribe. Europeans arrived in the area in the 1630s when Charlestown citizens were granted land in the northern ranges of the district known as Waterfield. It was incorporated in 1642 from Charlestown lands and annexed to Woburn. Present-day Winchester includes lands which were originally part of Woburn, Arlington (West Cambridge), and Medford.

Long before 1700, the first mills in town were built along the Aberjona River, and for 100 more years, the area remained rural in nature. During the Revolution, the Black Horse Tavern (demolished in 1892) served as an important meeting place. By the end of the 18th century, there were only about 200 persons, and some 35 houses within the bounds of present-day Winchester.

The Middlesex Canal, which opened in 1803, and the Boston and Lowell Railroad, which supplanted it in 1835, changed the character of the village. The thriving village soon began to feel the need to separate from the parent town of Woburn. By 1850, the town was ready to establish its independence from Woburn. The new town was named for a wealthy Boston businessman, Lt. Col. William Parsons Winchester. Two distinct social groups developed in the new town. In the area near the mills, such as the Canal Street-Salem Street neighborhood and in Baconville (near Grove Street), industrial workers settled near their factories. Simultaneously, Boston businessmen began to settle in Winchester, attracted by the easy commute on the Boston & Lowell railroad. From the 1870s on, suburban developments of great charm were built by the town's businessmen and professionals. By 1900, Winchester's days as a mill town were past. A more detailed history of the Town of Winchester is available at [Winchester History Online](#).



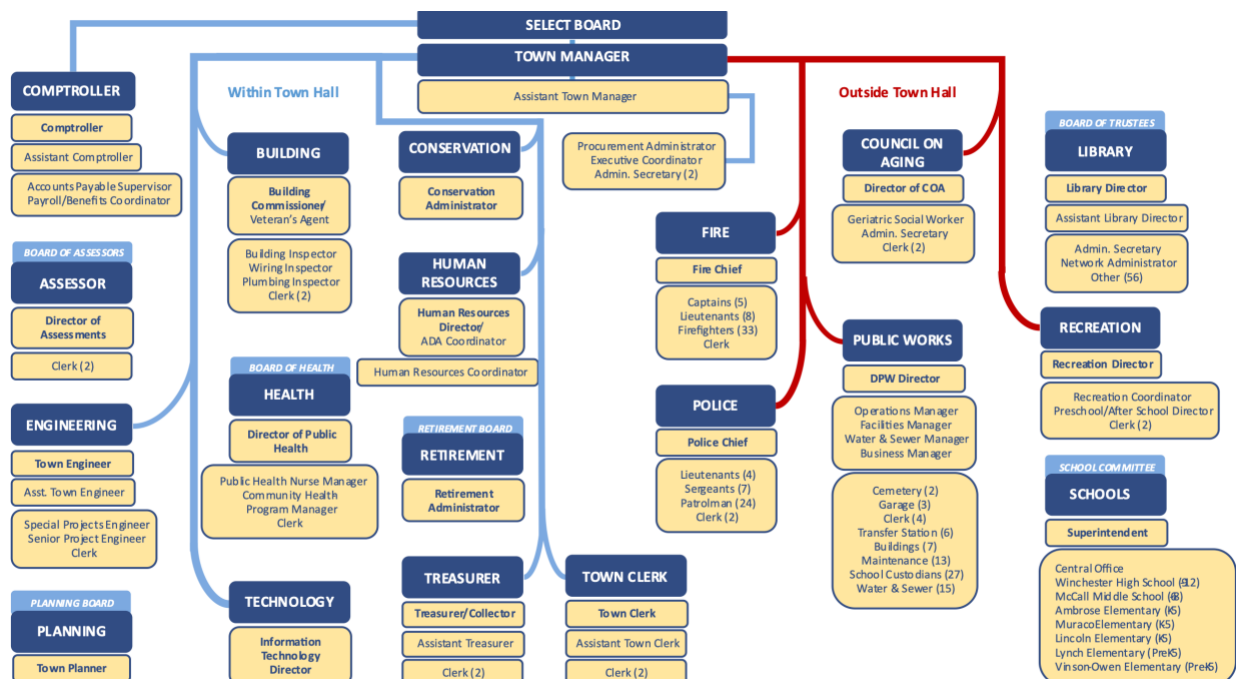
Government

Winchester has a Select Board-Town Manager form of government with a representative Town Meeting. Under the [Town of Winchester's Home Rule Charter](#), "the administration of all the fiscal, prudential and municipal affairs of the town shall be vested in an executive branch headed by a select board. The legislative powers shall be exercised by a representative town meeting."

The executive powers of the Town are vested in the nonpartisan five-member [Select Board](#). Members are elected annually with members serving three-year overlapping terms. The Select Board serves as the chief goal-setting and policy-making body of the Town. The Board acts through the adoption of policy directives and guidelines which are implemented by the Town Manager, employees, and other officers. The Board appoints the Town Manager as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town. The Select Board also appoints Town Counsel, Town Comptroller, various election officers, and members of all appointed multiple-member bodies for whom no other method of selection is provided by the charter or by bylaw. The Select Board is also the License Board of the Town.

The representative [Town Meeting](#) consists of 192 members from eight precincts "elected to meet, deliberate, act and vote in the exercise of the corporate powers of the town". Twenty four members for each precinct are elected for three-year staggered terms. The Presiding Officer of the Town Meeting is the Town Moderator responsible for administering the proceedings of all town meetings, deciding all questions of order and making public declaration of all votes.

The Town Manager is appointed by the Select Board to oversee the daily operations of the Town, advise and administer the policies and procedures of the Select Board, and enforce Town bylaws and actions passed at Town Meeting. Serving as the Chief Administrative Officer, the Town Manager is responsible for the effective management of Town departments (other than schools), preparing an annual budget and capital plan, coordinating activities leading up to the annual and special Town Meetings, providing support to the volunteer committee system, working with other levels of government, and managing special projects for the Select Board.



The [Winchester School Committee](#) consists of five members elected for three-year overlapping terms. The School Committee is responsible for appointing the Superintendent of the Winchester Public Schools, making all reasonable rules and regulations consistent with the law for the administration and management of the Winchester Public Schools, reviewing and approving the Winchester school system's annual budget, and negotiating all school related contracts. Public schools include Winchester High School, McCall Middle School, Ambrose Elementary, Lincoln Elementary, Lynch Elementary, Muraco Elementary, Vinson-Owen Elementary, and Winchester Pre-School.

Finance

Winchester has an FY23 general fund [operating budget](#) of \$142,596,182. The Winchester Public Schools' budget accounts for approximately 42.7% (\$60,904,378) of the total FY23 budget. Per the [Finance Committee Report](#) to the 2022 Spring Town Meeting:

If Capital, Enterprise, and Revolving Fund expenditures are excluded, the FY23 budget is \$118M, an increase of \$5.1M or 4.3% over the comparable sections of the FY22 budget. Most of the increased expenses result from contractual increases to employee compensation as well as budget items that are largely already determined due to external factors (e.g., healthcare costs, pension costs, special education requirements). The total tax revenue for FY23 is \$115M, an increase of \$3.2M or 2.82% from the FY22 total tax revenue and cannot sustain budgets that grow more quickly. Despite the relatively lean FY23 budget, the Town will require over \$690K from free cash to support all FY23 expenses. Continued operating deficits will lead to a decline in reserves and future operational overrides.



Winchester has operating reserves of approximately 16% of the FY22 estimated revenues. According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services [Community Snapshot](#), the Town's FY21 stabilization fund was \$9.77 million and free cash was certified at \$9.72 million. Winchester has an FY22 total assessed value of \$8.98 billion, of which \$8.59 billion is residential, \$265.9 million is commercial, \$36.9 million is industrial, and \$951 million is personal property. The FY22 tax rate for residential properties is \$12.51 per thousand of the property's assessed value and \$11.89 for commercial, industrial, and person properties. The average single-family tax bill for FY22 is \$15,035. Winchester holds a Moody's bond rating of Aaa, as affirmed in a January 2022 credit opinion, and a Standard & Poor's bond rating of AAA.

For FY23, a total of \$3.9 million was submitted for capital improvement projects by the [Capital Planning Committee](#) (CPC) and approved by either Fall or Spring Town Meetings. A total of \$9.6 million in projects were received and reviewed by the CPC for FY23. The projected five-year capital improvement projects requests for the period of FY23-FY27 totaled \$46.2 million. Approved major projects include:

Main Street Fire Station HVAC (engineering/construction)	\$750,000
Fire Department – Engine 3 replacement	\$725,000
DPW Roads & Sidewalks	\$350,000
Fire Department – Ambulance replacement	\$350,000
Washington Street bridge construction	\$270,000
West Side Fire Station improvements (engineering/construction)	\$185,000
Town Traffic Master Plan Study	\$165,000
Town Hall HVAC (engineering)	\$154,000
Storage Garage Units (design/engineering)	\$134,000
ADA Projects	\$125,000
Public Safety radios (year 5 of 5)	\$125,000
Cross Street bridge construction	\$105,000

For the FY23 capital improvement projects, a total of \$1,383,000 is being funded by the Building Stabilization Fund and \$2,376,000 by the Capital Stabilization Fund.

To date, Winchester has received federal funding under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of \$3.4 million with an additional \$3.4 million expected sometime in FY23.

Upcoming Projects/Challenges

Anticipated projects/challenges for the incoming Town Manager include:

- Planned debt exclusion in Spring 2023 to fund the new Lynch Elementary School.
- A projected debt exclusion or general override in FY24 to help fund the Town's capital needs.
- Predicted need of an operational override for the FY25 budget.
- Passage and implementation of Community Preservation Act.
- Contract renegotiations for six unions.
- Affordable housing as a primary policy issue.
- Aging municipal buildings and infrastructure.
- Large investment in technology upgrades and training.
- Revitalization of Town Center and maintaining a thriving center business district.
- Zoning reform and land use issues.
- Lack of business and industrial base.
- Fostering an inclusive community.
- Large multiple construction projects in town (MBTA station, Eversource underground power lines).
- Coordination, communication, and delineation of responsibilities of various town boards and committees.



Position Responsibilities

The Town Manager is the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town and is responsible to the Select Board for the proper administration of all Town affairs and to carry out the policies and plans set forth by the Select Board. The Town Manager is supported by a staff of professional and skilled department heads. The powers and duties of the Town Manager can be found in Section 4-2 (page 16) of the [Charter](#).

Education and Experience

Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or program is required, with a degree in public administration or business administration ideal. Master's degree preferred, with a minimum of 5-7 years' experience in executive and/or municipal management. Any equivalent combination of education and experience may substitute at the discretion of the Select Board. A solid record of professional training and development.

Required Qualifications

- Skilled in municipal financial management, budget management, economic development, personnel management, project management, communications, and collective bargaining.
- Exceptional leadership and management skills.
- Proficient understanding of municipal operations and municipal law.
- Knowledgeable of best municipal and financial practices.
- Ability to negotiate contracts, agreements and appropriate working arrangements with unions, community organizations, and the business community.
- Ability to anticipate problems and develop solutions.
- Ability to work in partnership with the Select Board.
- Able to work cooperatively with the Select Board on the establishment of annual goals and objectives for the Town and its departments, update the Board and staff on progress, and actively participate in the annual review of results and operations.
- Ability to work well with Federal, State, and Town officials.
- Human Resources certification or related work experience.
- Knowledge of and experience with Massachusetts procurement laws and processes.
- Skilled at community engagement, marketing the community, and public & media relations.
- Ability to deal with a very engaged and educated community.
- Recognizes and embraces the diversity of the community and supports the goals of equity and inclusion; creates a welcoming environment for all.
- A skilled manager of people; treats everyone fairly and respectfully.
- Able to demonstrate unquestioned integrity in interactions with officials, staff, businesses, and residents; trustworthy and level-headed.
- Ability to develop effective working relationships with all Town Departments, subordinates, and all Town Boards/Commissions.
- Strong organizational skills, detail oriented, and the ability to manage a large number of projects and tasks at any given time; able to pivot/adjust actions as needed.
- Able to assume a strong organizational management role, and able to delegate while maintaining strict accountability.
- Ability to be both strategic and tactical. Must be experienced in working effectively in a political environment providing seasoned and impartial guidance to elected officials to identify and address the long-term strategic needs of the community and the short-term tactical steps necessary to sustain service delivery.
- Values the uses of data and emerging technologies, including modern communication tools; technologically savvy.
- Collaborative and approachable; ability to work with varied personalities.
- Skilled in long-term planning; experienced in setting goals and priorities.
- Inclusive; able to build morale; a coach, mentor, and motivator.

Desirable Qualities/Characteristics

- A genuinely inclusive leader capable of exerting influence and direction in a manner that shares successes with the elected officials, staff, and volunteers.
- Actively supports transparency in government; forthright and trustworthy.
- Provides inspirational, innovative, and respectful leadership; leads by example; morale builder.
- A collaborative team builder; have empathy and care for well-being of staff.
- Ability to build trust amongst elected officials, staff, businesses, and residents.
- Highly approachable for both staff and public, with an even keeled demeanor.
- A great listener and thoughtful communicator; ability to share information.
- A visionary, proactive, and strategic administrator; open to new ideas, concepts, and processes.
- Committed & creative management professional with a record of tenure & consistent career growth.
- Willingness to take on hard problems and issues and provide viable solutions.

Compensation Package

The Town of Winchester will offer an employment agreement and compensation package that is competitive with comparable area communities, with a starting salary range of \$185,000 - \$220,000, depending on experience and qualifications.

An attractive [benefits package](#) (including [health](#), [dental](#), and [retirement](#) plans) is part of the Town Manager's total compensation.

How To Apply

Interested applicants should send cover letter and résumé, in confidence, by October 12, 2022, 3:00 p.m. EST, via email to:

Apply@CommunityParadigm.com

Subject: Winchester Town Manager

Submit a single PDF containing both cover letter and résumé.

Following the closing date, application materials will be reviewed according to the outlined qualifications. A selection of finalists will be chosen for further evaluation, reference checks, and background reviews before being advanced to the Winchester Select Board for consideration.

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

Ray Santilli, Senior Associate
Community Paradigm Associates
rsantilli@communityparadigm.com
781-775-7442

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

The Town of Winchester, Massachusetts is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.