

Marion, MA – Town Administrator



Position Statement

Marion, MA (5,347 pop.), is a delightful residential town that has a rare natural beauty and charm. The small-town character, blended with the flavor and benefits of a seacoast community with lovely residential neighborhoods and modern conveniences, makes Marion an ideal town for year-round living.

Marion's roots go back to 1679, when the Town was first settled as a village known as Sippican, a part of Rochester.

Rochester, Mattapoisett, and Sippican, widely separate villages then under the domain of Rochester, gradually developed different interests and economies. These factors led to independence for Sippican, which was renamed Marion in honor of the Revolutionary War hero, Francis Marion, in 1852. Today, Marion has a stable year-round population with a moderate summertime increase. Over the years, residents have worked hard



to preserve Marion's rich historic traditions. In 2017, [New England Boating](#) focused an episode on Marion.

The Town of [Marion](#) is well managed and well situated for continued success. It has an AAA rating and a FY23 budget of nearly \$26.2 million. The Town's challenges include managing growth, managing the Town's many projects, managing the water and sewer rates, maintaining financial stability, and continuing to build a talented and collaborative team of employees as retirements and turnover occur.

Marion is seeking a strategic and proactive Town Administrator with municipal managerial experience who can work collaboratively with the Select Board. Preferred candidates should have a bachelor's degree (advanced degree preferred) in a field related to municipal management and at least five years of experience as a town manager/administrator, assistant town manager/administrator, head of a significant municipal department, or education and experience that is equivalent. Candidates should be skilled at project management, be an active listener, accomplished communicator, instill confidence and trust, and be able to build collaborative relationships with appointed/elected officials, business owners, residents, and employees. Due to Marion's seaside location, the Town Administrator will be able to respond to global issues such as climate resiliency, aquaculture, and, to a limited degree, tourism.

Annual Salary: \$150K+/- DOQ. The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Marion is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Government

Marion's government is comprised of a three-member [Select Board](#) that serves as the Chief Executive Officers and policy-making entity of the Town. Board members are elected to staggered three-year terms and are vested with all the municipal authority not specifically retained by the Town's legislative body, Town Meeting, or other elected boards. Annual Town Meeting is held on the second Monday of May each year. A quorum of 50 voters is minimum required.

The Select Board appoints the position of [Town Administrator](#) as the Chief Administrative and Procurement Officer of the Town. The Town Administrator is responsible for executing the policy directives of the Select Board and for administering the operations and activities of the Town.



The Town Administrator's authority is derived from Chapter 41, [Section 23A](#), of the Massachusetts General Laws, which provides the authority for the Board to delegate responsibilities to a Town Administrator. Included in the responsibilities handled by the Town Administrator are: preparing the annual operating and capital budgets; an ongoing capital improvements program; personnel management; negotiating collective bargaining contracts; Town Meeting preparation; grant writing; economic and community development; communications with staff and citizens; and general problems and administrative actions. Other elected bodies include: Board of Health, Marion School Committee, Old Rochester Regional School Committee, Board of Assessors, Moderator, Planning Board, Open Space Acquisition Commission, Tree Warden, and some members of the Upper Cape Cod Regional Vocational Technical School Committee. The Town is fortunate to have numerous volunteer boards and commissions to help conduct municipal operations.

Finances

Marion has an FY23 budget of nearly \$26.2 million and a Standard and Poor's rating of AAA with a stable outlook.

Important Links:

- [Town of Marion](#)
- [Town Code](#)
- [Annual Town Reports](#)
- [Select Board Goals for FY23](#)
- [FY23, FY22 & FY21 Budgets](#)
- [Master Plan](#)
- [Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan](#)
- [Housing Production Plan](#)
- [Energy Reduction Plan](#)

The Town is in stable financial condition. The FY22 tax rate is \$10.85 per thousand-dollar valuation for all properties. The average single-family tax bill in FY22 is \$7,685. Approximately 81% of the Town's revenues come from the tax levy, with nearly 6% from local receipts, 4.7% from state aid, and 8.4% from all other. New growth value in FY22 is \$14.12 million, the majority of which (\$11.38 million) is in residential value. The total assessed value of Marion properties in FY22 is nearly \$2 billion. Certified free cash for FY22 is \$3.78 million.

The Town has three stabilization funds: a general stabilization fund, a capital stabilization fund, and a school stabilization fund. Basic financial statements and the independent [audit report](#) for FY18 can be reviewed on the Town's website. The next Town Administrator should have solid financial acumen and the ability to work

collaboratively to help maintain Marion's stable finances.

Education

Marion is part of the [Old Rochester Regional School District](#), which comprises the communities of Marion, Mattapoissett, and Rochester. Marion students from pre-kindergarten to grade 6 attend the [Sippican School](#), which is overseen by the elected five-member [Marion School Committee](#). The [Old Rochester Regional Junior High School](#) serves students in grades 7 and 8, and the [Old Rochester Regional High School](#) serves those in grades 9-12. Overseeing the junior high school and high school is the nine-member [Old Rochester Regional School Committee](#), with three members residing in each community. The



District's master plan, [Vision 2023](#), is located on its website. It is important that the Town Administrator develop and maintain a highly collaborative relationship with the school superintendent as well as with officials in the towns of Mattapoissett and Rochester.

Economic and Community Development

The vast majority of Marion's tax base is residential. Accordingly, additional revenues needed to fund expenses can make the Town less affordable for residents unless creative revenue opportunities are explored. Marion is interested in attracting thoughtful commercial development that will fit with the Town's character. A particular challenge is that Lockheed Martin, the Town's largest taxpayer, is preparing to close its Marion facility in December 2022 and plans to sell the Route 6 property, which includes about 30 acres of undeveloped land. The closure will have an impact on water and sewer payments received as well as personal property taxes collected.

Tabor Academy, a private school located in Marion, is constructing a new student union/library facility and recently built a new dormitory to house 25 students and four residential advisors. Previously, the private school had completed a similar sized dormitory. The Town has a good relationship with the school, and in an informal agreement, Marion receives a small payment in lieu of taxes from Tabor Academy.



Ten percent of Marion's housing units meet the state's affordability requirements. The majority of housing construction in Marion typically have been rebuilds or renovations of current homes; however, there are currently two large projects in process. A 120-unit 40B development of duplex townhouses is completing the permitting process and a 48-unit market-rate development of townhouse condominiums is in the permitting stage. This is the highest percentage of growth Marion has experienced in more than a decade. Homes in Marion have a median value of \$485,500, according to U.S. Census data. The Town's population is aging (slightly over 25% of residents are age 65 or over, according to U.S. Census data), so there is concern regarding a need for additional housing that is appropriate for older residents as well as for young families. Marion completed its [Housing Production Plan](#) in 2015 and approved a new [Master Plan](#) October 2017.



Staffing

The Town Administrator oversees the day-to-day operations of myriad departments, with skilled department heads and staff dedicated to working collaboratively and to providing superior service to the community. In addition to the more standard departments in a municipality, Marion has a Harbormaster department. The Town is responsible for more than 1,500 moorings, with more than half leased to Marion residents. In recent staffing updates, the DPW Director is acting in an interim capacity, the Planner/Conservation Agent is a relatively new position, and the Building Commissioner/Zoning Officer came aboard in the past year. Marion has a talented finance team, and the Finance Director/Town Accountant works collaboratively with the Town Administrator on the Town's financial strategies and management.

Open Space, Recreation, and Climate Resiliency

The Town's Master Plan provides the guiding principles to protect Marion's traditional seaside character and natural resources while managing change. Included in the plan's vision are: protect and enhance the harbor and coastline; plan for climate change; assess the effect that sewer and water service capacity have on the type, location, and cost of future growth; zoning reform should allow desired development in the right locations; decisions should be driven by demographic, market, and data trends; and increase organization and collaboration within the town and between partners. Preserving and protecting coastal resources are important goals in Marion. Climate change, coastal erosion, and beach protection are critical issues for the Town. Protected land accounts for about 50% of Marion's 9,105 acres. The Town also owns the one-acre [Bird Island](#), a critical seabird nesting area and home to the historic [Bird Island Lighthouse](#).

Recreational opportunities are plentiful in Marion with Sippican Harbor hosting a variety of waterfront programs, including swimming at the town beaches, pleasure boating, and fishing. Marion offers youth and adult recreational programs, including soccer, yoga, kayaking, art, 5K runs, and sailing lessons. There are golf courses and indoor and outdoor tennis courts, hiking trails, and Tabor Academy periodically opens its hockey rink for public skating.

Ongoing/Upcoming Projects

Marion has a significant number of projects in process or expected to commence within the next year or two. Among the many projects are:

- The \$3.5 million Creek Road pump station reconstruction project is critical. The project is 100% designed and the plan is to seek a 75% DEP matching grant and possibly allocate a portion of ARPA funds toward it.
- The Community Center Parking lot is also considered a critical project. TEC Engineering Inc. has been contracted to provide the design and cost estimate.
- The Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan is nearing completion. Next steps include receiving the draft report from Weston & Sampson and scheduling a final public hearing on the draft report. A request for DEP review and approval will follow once the Select Board discusses the financial strategy and implementation plan. The rollout and implementation of the CWMP plan will be a major undertaking.
- The Wastewater Lagoon project is nearing substantial completion, but has several steps left in the process.
- A \$4.5 million debt exclusion was approved for construction of a new DPW Operations building during Annual Town Meeting in 2022. Saltonstall Architects is contracted for design and bidding. A Building Committee has been formed by the Select Board and is working on final preliminary design and cost estimating. It is hoped that construction can begin in summer 2023.
- The new Harbormaster facility is at the design and permitting phase and funding is expected to come from a combination of borrowing and grants, although all funding hasn't been finalized yet.
- Several projects are related to Route 6, including replacement of a section of the water main, bridge repair, and a potential MassDOT project.
- The Town is working on a new bylaw to address stormwater management and comply with MS4.





MARION MASSACHUSETTS

The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree, preferably in a field related to public or business administration; advanced degree preferred.
- At least five years of experience as a Town Manager/Administrator or Assistant Town Manager/Administrator or head of a significant municipal department.
- Skilled in project management, personnel management, community development, financial management, economic development, grant writing, and municipal procurement.
- Solid background in municipal operations and municipal law with a preference for Massachusetts knowledge.
- Enjoys engaging with the community.
- A strong communicator, both internally and externally; approachable; active listener.
- Open to input from all constituencies.
- Creates a welcoming environment for all.
- Data-driven decision making; analytical.
- Understands and embraces the importance of the community's character.
- Works in partnership with the Select Board.
- Enjoys working in a team-oriented environment.
- Creative problem solver and consensus builder.
- Embraces transparency in government.
- Experience in setting goals and priorities.
- Treats everyone fairly and respectfully.
- Skilled in long-term planning; organized.
- Forward thinking; proactive; strategic.
- Knowledgeable of best practices.
- MCPPO certified or able to attain certification within the first six months of employment.

How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by November 29, 2022, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

**Subject: Marion
Town Administrator**

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

Bernard Lynch, Principal
Community Paradigm Associates
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The Town of Marion, Mass., is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

