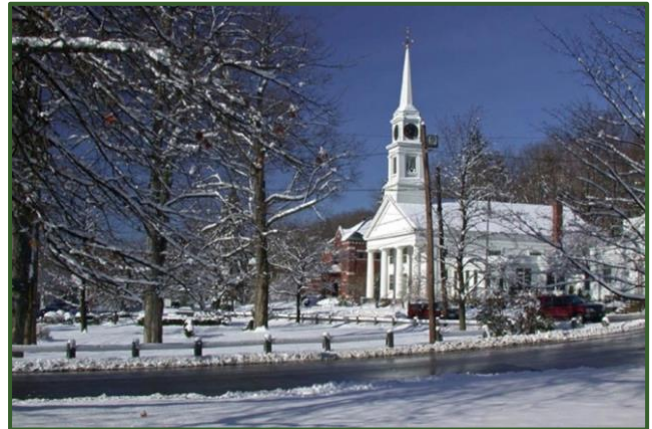


Sterling, MA – Town Administrator



Position Statement

Sterling, MA (pop. 7,985), is a beautiful small town centrally located in Worcester County. Rich in history, [Sterling](#) was originally a farming community. Today, Sterling is primarily a rural-residential Town, with a growing commercial and industrial base, located in the foothills of Mount Wachusett. Sterling has maintained its village character; has true community spirit; and residents who invest in the community, volunteer, and pride themselves on the Town's history. Sterling was incorporated in 1781, and named for William Alexander, Lord Stirling, who served with George Washington in the American Revolution. The Town also had an early tradition of small manufacturing that included clocks, hats, pottery, and cider; and is known as the home of Mary Sawyer, noted in the famous children's rhyme of "Mary Had a Little Lamb."



According to the [U.S.Census Bureau](#), the Town has a total area of 31.6 square miles of which 30.5 square miles is land and 1.1 square miles, or 3.42%, is water. Interstate I-190 bisects Sterling. The Town is also crossed by Massachusetts Routes 12, 62, 140, and 110. Sterling is bordered by Leominster to the north, West Boylston to the south, Princeton and Holden to the west, Lancaster to the northeast, and Clinton and Boylston to the southeast.

Sterling has a Moody's rating of Aa2, which reflects its strong finances and healthy reserves. The Town is led by a three-member Select Board, has an Open Town Meeting form of governance, and a FY22 budget in the amount of \$27,015,885.

Sterling is seeking a strategic and innovative Town Administrator, with excellent communication skills, to support the Select Board and provide transformative leadership. Collaborative, forward-thinking municipal administrators and managers with strong financial acumen, human resources, economic development, procurement, and grant writing experience are encouraged to apply. The successful candidate must have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred), preferably in public administration, business administration, management, or a related field.

Annual salary: \$130,000 +/- DOQ. The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package that is competitive with other Massachusetts towns, including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Residency is not required.

ECONOMY

Sterling has numerous small-to-mid-size employers, including retailers, builders and contractors, and professional services. A Town Center renovation project is underway with goals of placing utilities underground, installing ADA



ramps, replacing sidewalks, improving parking, and enhancing streetscape. Per the U.S. Census, in FY20, Sterling had a labor force of 4,339 people and 5.6% unemployment. The median household income is \$121,458. Sterling's total assessed value in FY22 was approximately \$1.34 billion, according to the Mass. [Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services](#), which represents an increase of 9% from FY21. Residential properties account for 87.8% of the Town's total assessed value, with commercial properties accounting for 3.8%, industrial for 4.7%, and personal property for 3.7%. The median FY22 residential

property value was \$410,430. While the Town's year-round population is primarily middle-income, 2.8% of residents are living in households with incomes below the poverty level.

CENSUS DATA

According to [U.S. Census](#) estimates for 2015-2019, the Town of Sterling's racial composition is 96.6% white, 5.1% Hispanic or Latino, 1.3% Black or African American, 1.1% two or more races, and 0.4% Asian. The median household annual income is approximately \$121,458, which is significantly higher than the state median household annual income of \$81,215. The Town is demographically comparable to the state. For example, the under-18 years cohort in Sterling is at 23.2% in the 2019 U.S. Census estimates versus 19.6% for the state. And, in the under-5 years cohort, Sterling has 4.9% of its population, while the state has 5.2%. Similarly, in the 65 years and over cohort estimate, Sterling is at 18.9% while the Commonwealth's is 17%. The median age of Sterling residents is estimated to be at 41.7 years, while the median age for the state is 39.5 years.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

[UMASS Memorial Health \(UMM Health\)](#), the clinical partner of the University of Massachusetts Medical School and the largest healthcare system in Central and Western Massachusetts, serves the Sterling community. It consists of UMass Memorial Medical Center, a level 1 Trauma Center, two community hospitals, and many ambulatory clinics in the area. For public transportation, Sterling is served by the MBTA Fitchburg line. The North Leominster Station, which is seven miles from Sterling, provides roundtrip service from Wachusett to Boston. Additionally, Sterling is served by the [Montachusett Regional Transit Authority](#), which offers ADA and Council on Aging Van, JARC, Subscription, and Devens-on-Demand services to residents. Sterling also offers several community services groups, including the Sterling Land Trust, Sterling Community Theater, Wachusett Food Pantry, Sterling Little League, Youth Soccer, Softball League and Garden Club, NEADS, Wheat Community Services, Wachusett Regional Newcomers Club and more.

Important Links

- [Town of Sterling](#)
- [Conant Public Library](#)
- [Council on Aging](#)
- [Department of Public Works](#)
- [Town By-Laws](#)
- [Town Boards & Committees](#)
- [Master Plan Committee](#)
- [Open Space & Recreation Plan](#)
- [Housing Production Plan](#)
- [Annual Town Reports](#)
- [Fiscal Year Budgets](#)

Government

Sterling's executive branch of government is a three-member [Select Board](#) that serves as the governing body of the Town. Board members are elected to staggered three-year terms to ensure the safety, education, and well-being of the community; to be leaders in the delivery of efficient and effective quality services that respond to community needs; to promote the continuous improvement of staff skills and performance; to encourage an environment of trust and respect; to respect cultural and economic diversity; and to protect the historic character of the community.

The Select Board serves as the Chief Executive Officers of the Town. They are responsible for setting overall policies and town-wide goals, signing warrants, payrolls, and contracts, and overseeing many Town departments via the [Town Administrator](#) who they appoint. The Town Administrator works to achieve the goals of the Select Board and implement their policies. The Town Administrator is responsible for administering and overseeing day-to-day functions, activities, and services provided by Town government; and is charged with striving for a high degree of coordination, communication, and cooperation between all Town Boards, Committees, and Departments.



In accordance with its [Town By-Laws](#), Sterling has an Open Town Meeting form of government. Town By-Laws state that [Annual Town Meeting](#) shall be held the first Monday in May each given year. Special Town Meetings may be convened as deemed necessary by the Select Board or petition of voters. There are approximately 5,592 registered voters in Sterling.

Sterling has numerous elected and appointed officials including Board of Registrars, Capital Budget, Conservation Commission, Council on Aging, Economic Development, Finance Committee, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and more. Details are available on the [Town website](#).

EDUCATION

Sterling is a member of the [Wachusett Regional Public School District](#). Students attend Houghton Elementary School and Chocksett Middle School, both of which are located on Boutelle Road. Wachusett Regional High School, located in Holden, serves students in grades 9 – 12. Approximately 1,005 students from Sterling attend district public schools. Sterling's student enrollment, according to [Wachusett Regional Public School FY22 Budget Report](#), has declined about 10% since 2019. Sterling is also a member town for the [Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School](#) in Fitchburg. Approximately 97.5%



of Sterling residents ages 25 and older have a high school diploma. About 53% of residents ages 25 and older hold a bachelor's degree or higher advanced degree.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The [Sterling Police Department](#), which employs approximately 23 officers, dispatchers, and administrative staff, is committed to excellence in the delivery of quality police service and response to the needs of the community. Their objective is a police and community partnership, which seeks to improve the quality of life, solve community problems, and promote an environment that is safe and secure. The [Sterling Fire Department](#), which employs seven full-time members and an administrative assistant, also has an on-call staff of about 30 firefighters, EMTs, and paramedics that proudly serve the Town by providing fire suppression, rescue, fire prevention and emergency medical services at the advanced life support (ALS) level. They are also active in providing ALS support to area communities.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW)

The [Department of Public Works](#) (DPW) operates under the direction of a DPW Board and the daily administration of DPW responsibilities are administered by the Superintendent of Public Works. DPW oversight includes roadways, water department services, cemeteries, parks, athletic fields, trees, stormwater management, and trash collection and recycling. Major current DPW projects include developing: Pavement Management Plan; new well site; Water Master Plan; Water Risk and Resiliency Study; and Water Corrosion Control Study.

HOUSING

There are approximately 2,918 housing units in Sterling, with 90.5% comprised of owner-occupied units, and 2.3% subsidized housing inventory (SHI) units. The median price of a single-family, owner-occupied home from 2015 – 2019, per the U.S. Census, was \$360,000. The Sterling Affordable Housing Committee, supported by the Town planner, DHCD, and the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission developed a [Housing Production Plan](#) in 2019, to present a proactive affordable housing agenda that addresses infrastructure issues and presents a range of local resources and affordable housing options with the goal of MA Chapter 40B compliance.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Sterling values open space and recreation planning. Under the guidance of the Open Space Implementation Committee and Town Planner, the Town revised its [Open Space & Recreation Plan in 2019](#). Four primary goals endorsed by the Plan include: encouraging responsible protection and stewardship of publicly accessible lands; enhancing athletic fields and other recreation facilities; improving communication among town boards and departments concerning open space and recreational issues; identifying new approaches to town zoning and planning that affect open space and recreational needs.



The Town of Sterling is committed to active and passive recreation opportunities and offers numerous and varied walking trails as well as athletic fields. The Open Space Implementation Committee and Conservation Commission are committed to preserving, maintaining, and expanding open space offerings.

Finances

Sterling has an FY22 operating budget of \$27,015,885, with approximately 47% of the budget dedicated to the regional public school system. The Town budgets conservatively and it is reflected in their healthy reserves. Property taxes, including residential, commercial, industrial, and personal property, account for the major source of revenue for the Town, generating approximately \$20,444,413 in revenue, which 75.6% of the budget. The FY22 tax rate was set at a single rate of \$15.25 per \$1,000 valuation.

FY22 Budget Snapshot

- Public Safety - \$3.8M
- Department of Public Works - \$1.8M
- Water - \$1M
- Wachusett Reg. Public School System - \$12M
- Stabilization Fund - \$686K
- OPEB Fund - \$872M
- Capital Fund - \$3.3M



Challenges and Opportunities

- Collaboratively identify comprehensive list of town processes, projects, needs, and opportunities. Build consensus with elected and appointed officials, department heads, and staff to prioritize, locate resources, and complete projects.
- Support the DPW as they continue to develop an alternative water supply and water quality issues challenged by PFAS.
- Develop technology infrastructure and systems to modernize and provide effective fulfillment of Town services and operations and minimize cyber-security threats.
- Initiate and develop facilities maintenance plan with practical steps to implement.
- Collaborate with Finance Committee, Select Board, and other committees to ensure continued financial health of the Town.
- Establish, maintain, and expand Human Resources Best Practices to support current experienced employees and attract excellent candidates to provide top-quality programs and service to taxpayers.
- Research grant opportunities to help fund downtown revitalization and other economic development needs, technology upgrades, infrastructure improvements, planning initiatives, and more.
- Continue to facilitate existing, and expand on, Town Center Renovation project.
- Lead and coordinate effort to update Town website and other communications tools.



Town of Sterling Massachusetts

The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree required (Master's preferred).
- Experience as a Town Administrator, Assistant Town Administrator, or head of a significant department in a complex municipal organization, or equivalent.
- Strong skills in economic development, community planning, human resources, financial management, budgeting, technology, municipal procurement, strategic planning, and grant writing.
- Adept at liaising between the Select Board, Town departments, elected and appointed boards, and residents.
- Team leader who sustains and builds camaraderie.
- Supportive and approachable, with high integrity.
- Delegates effectively. Provides mentoring, guidance, and motivation to employees.
- Knowledgeable of municipal best practices and familiarity with municipal law.
- Understanding of small-town governance and culture.
- Leads by example; strategic, motivated, diplomatic, forward-thinking, and organized.
- A data-driven decisionmaker.
- Ability to negotiate compromise and/or find consensus.
- Embraces becoming actively engaged in community.

How To Apply

Interested applicants should send a résumé and cover letter, in confidence, by January 31, 2022, 3:00 p.m. EST, to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

Subject: Sterling Town Administrator

Submit materials via a single PDF

Cover letters and résumés will be reviewed according to the outlined qualifications. Finalists will be contacted for references and approval of background reviews before selections are publicly advanced to the Sterling Select Board. The Board will interview finalists and select the Town Administrator.

Questions regarding the position should be directed to

John Petrin, Senior Associate
Community Paradigm Associates
JPetrin@CommunityParadigm.com
781-552-1074

The Town of Sterling is an Equal Opportunity Employer.