

Swansea, MA – Town Administrator



Position Statement

Swansea, MA (16,500 pop.), is a suburban/rural community located in southeastern Massachusetts. It is located at the northern end of Mount Hope Bay and was home to many small industries such as forges, ironworks and fisheries. Swansea has an AA+ rating and an FY21 budget of approximately \$46.5 million. The Town is in a strong financial condition. Its challenges will involve the development and implementation of a plan to undertake facility improvement projects and helping to guide a significant economic development project through to completion. Swansea's local government is led by a three-member Board of Selectmen.

To serve as its next Town Administrator, Swansea is seeking an experienced, knowledgeable, and strong leader with excellent financial acumen as well as strong economic development; project management, including construction projects; procurement; facilities management; and communications skills. Preferred candidates should have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in public administration or a related field and experience as a city/town manager or assistant city/town manager. Candidates should have a proven record of leadership, be proactive and a strategic thinker, instill confidence and trust, and be able to build collaborative relationships. The next Town Administrator should be innovative, enthusiastic, and a forward thinker. Swansea has experienced department heads who will assist the Town Administrator in moving the Town forward.



Annual salary: \$145K+/-. The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Swansea is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Government

Swansea has a Board of Selectmen-Town Administrator form of government with open Town Meeting. The three-member [Board of Selectmen](#) serves as the Town's Chief Executive body and, acting through the Town Administrator, are responsible for the day-to-day operations of town government. The Board, whose members are highly engaged, appoints the Town Administrator as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town.

Swansea has a number of elected positions, boards, and committees including: Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Planning Board, Board of Library Trustees, Park Commission, Housing Authority, Community Preservation Committee, Moderator, Assessor of Taxes, Tree Warden, Treasurer/Tax Collector, and Constable. The [Swansea Water District](#) is an independent organization that provides water to homes and businesses. The next Town Administrator must be skilled at collaboratively engaging with Swansea's various elected positions, boards, and committees.

Finances

Swansea's financial condition is strong. The Town has an FY21 budget of approximately \$46.5 million and a Standard and Poor's rating of AA+ with a stable outlook. It currently has approximately \$10 million in free cash. Two stabilization funds – one general and one for specific capital needs – have current balances of approximately \$2.5 million and \$500,000. The Town put \$200,000 into its OPEB account this year, bringing it to a total of approximately \$500,000. The FY20 tax rate is \$14.18 for residential properties and \$23.29 for commercial, industrial, and personal properties. The property tax base is 85% residential and 12% commercial. Approximately 68% of the Town's revenue comes from the tax levy, with nearly 21% from state aid. New growth in FY20 was \$640,661. The community's trash is handled via a pay-as-you-throw program with a separate enterprise fund. Maintaining or even improving Swansea's financial strength and bond rating while keeping tax increases to a minimum are priorities. Like most municipalities, Swansea is facing potential revenue constraints due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis as well as the pressure of increasing costs and infrastructure needs. The community has significant projects that require consideration and potential implementation, including possible construction or renovation to Town Hall, the Town Hall Annex, the library complex, and Highway Department garage. There is also discussion of relocating Town Hall and Town Hall Annex offices to a new lifestyle center now under development.

According to a 2018 S&P ratings report, Swansea has a very strong economy. Swansea is located about 60 miles south of Boston and 10 miles east of Providence, R.I., via Interstate 195, which provides employment opportunities for residents. Businesses are located primarily along the Route 6 corridor. There is a desire and plan for economic development to help fund town services, support infrastructure needs, and provide additional employment for residents. Collective bargaining experience would be beneficial in this position. The Town Administrator is expected to develop, with input from department heads and direction from the Board, a detailed and well thought out multi-year Capital Improvement Plan that balances the needs of the community with the realities of the budget. This plan must be reviewed and updated annually to address infrastructure needs.

Important Links:

- [Town of Swansea](#)
- [Master Plan](#)
- [Economic Development Strategy; Redevelopment of the Swansea Mall and the Route 6 Corridor](#)
- [Redevelopment Authority](#)
- [Town Meetings and Town Election Results](#)



Economic and Community Development

A major project currently underway, [The Shoppes at Swansea](#), is the redevelopment of the 84-acre Swansea Mall property into a vibrant, experiential lifestyle center. The plans include two new multifamily buildings with 72 market-rate apartments in each, a 100,000-square-foot state-of-the-art self-storage facility, and 500,000 square feet of mixed-use commercial office and retail space. The project is being developed by Brady Sullivan Properties in partnership with Anagnost Companies, both based in Manchester, N.H. Swansea approved a five-member [Redevelopment Authority](#) to assist in moving the project forward and to create an urban renewal plan. There is discussion of relocating Swansea Town Hall from its current building, which needs renovation, into The Shoppes at Swansea. The Swansea Mall closed its doors in March 2019 after 45 years.

Swansea is experiencing significant growth in home building. During the past three years, approximately 190 new houses have been built. Swansea residents are highly engaged with their community. There is a high level of volunteerism and activism in town and it is common for citizens to stop by Town Hall to discuss a local subject or share their opinion regarding an ongoing issue.

Open Space

Swansea, a coastal community located at northern end of Mount Hope Bay, has numerous rivers running through it, including Cole, Lee, Kickamuit, and Palmer. A major revitalization effort has been underway at the waterfront and Swansea Town Beach, which includes a significant dredging project. A new bathhouse, boardwalk, and park with a playground were recently constructed.

Farming was once the main source of income for residents. Today, the community has fewer than 10 working farms. Preservation of farmland and open space is important to the residents of Swansea. The Town recently approved the purchase of the 22-acre Medeiros Farm for \$875,000 to be used for passive and active recreation as well as for agricultural purposes. Community Preservation Act funds will be used to pay the debt service. CPA funds have been used to preserve 317 acres of open space in Swansea. Currently under consideration is the purchase of 36 acres of the Rousseau Farm for \$700,000. The Town could make a \$100,000 down payment and bond the remainder of the cost. Last October, Swansea purchased the 33-acre Delmac Orchard for \$1.3 million.

The Town of Swansea Park Department oversees six baseball fields, four tennis courts, basketball courts, and a large family-style playground.

Current projects

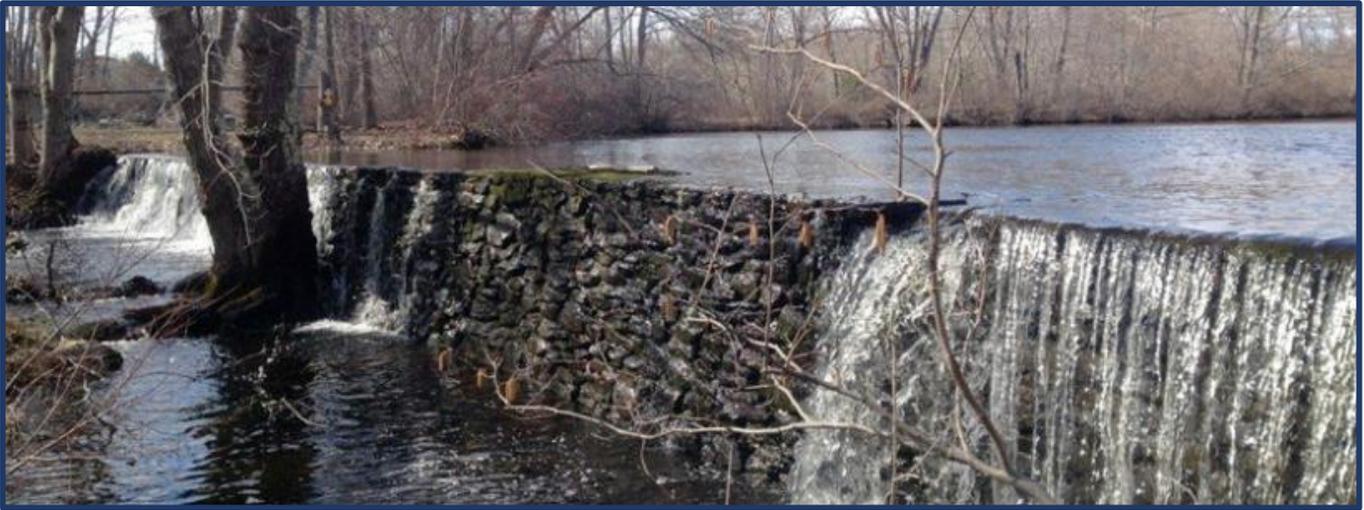
- Repairs are needed for three of the Town's four dams.
- A backlog of capital projects – large and small – must be analyzed and prioritized.
- A bylaw codification project is in process.
- Ongoing waterfront revitalization project.

Potential projects

- The renovation, reconstruction, or relocation of the Town Hall and Town Hall Annex.
- Sewer project along Route 6, including intermunicipal agreement with Somerset.
- Design and construction of new Highway Department facility.
- Design and construction of a new Fire Department headquarters station. There are four fire stations and the department is primarily a volunteer department.
- A public library expansion project.
- Upgrade municipal technology.

The next Town Administrator needs strong project management skills and should be adept at managing multiple complex projects. He or she must know how to build organizational capacity, have the ability to influence and motivate others, and be able to build consensus. He or she must be dynamic, forward thinking, and capable of moving the Town to greater levels of achievement.





The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree, preferably in public administration, with a master's degree preferred.
- Minimum of 7-10 years of experience in municipal administration or related administrative activity.
- Skilled in economic development, project management, financial management, collective bargaining, personnel administration, and communications.
- Strong knowledge of municipal law and procurement.
- Experience in setting goals and priorities.
- Excellent follow-through; strong work ethic.
- Strong leadership qualities and experience.
- Skilled in long-term planning; organized.
- Exhibits excellent attention to detail.
- Creative problem solver; proactive.
- A strong communicator, both internally and externally; active listener.
- Analytical and technologically savvy.
- Diplomatic; strong conflict resolution skills.
- Forward thinking; proactive; strategic.
- Confident, assertive, and dynamic.
- Ability to build trust; approachable.
- Team-oriented, calm, and innovative.
- Knowledgeable of best practices.
- Ability to multi-task; flexible.
- Enjoys engaging with the community.

How To Apply

Send cover letters and résumés via email, in a single PDF, by August 23, 2020, 5:00 p.m. EST to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

**Subject: Swansea
Town Administrator Search**

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

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

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