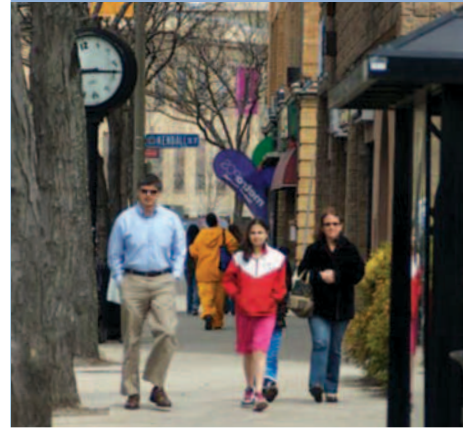


Framingham, Massachusetts

Town Manager

Profile



EDWARD J. COLLINS JR. CENTER FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT
McCORMACK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLICY STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

Introduction

The Town of Framingham, MA has retained the services of the Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston to assist in the Town's recruitment of a new Town Manager. The Collins Center focuses on helping governments work better. This Profile draws upon our discussions with selectmen, department heads, staff and community representatives. It describes our understanding of the organization, the challenges that lie ahead for the successful candidate, and the professional and personal characteristics an ideal candidate will possess. For more information about the Town of Framingham please consult Framingham's web sites (www.framinghamma.gov) and www.chooseframingham.com). The official Town Manager position description is on the Collins Center web site: www.collinscenter.umb.edu.

The Town of Framingham

Framingham is located approximately 20 miles west of the center of Boston. It is the dominant municipality in the Metro West region. The Town has a population of approximately 68,000 people. The Massachusetts Turnpike has two exits in Framingham and bisects the Town. These connections to the interstate highway system sparked major retail, office and industrial development adjacent to these exits. Much of the real estate boom of the last fifty years in Framingham is attributable to these two exits in a Town that is so close to Boston and the Route 128 corridor.

Framingham is often referred to by local residents as three Towns in one due to its diverse residential districts: a rural northwest Framingham with working farms and many acres of open space; a suburban Framingham based on post war single family housing development, and an urban Framingham concentrated in and around the old downtown and the sites of the former Dennison Manufacturing facility and the former GM vehicle assembly plant.

The Town boasts of the headquarters of international corporations, such as Staples and Bose, an excellent school system serving a mixed population that includes a substantial number of immigrants from Latin America, an outstanding hospital, a high standard of public service and a daily newspaper, the Metro West Daily.

The Town has had three Town Managers since 1996 when Framingham's strong Town Manager Act was enacted, with the outgoing Manager having served over five years. The position of Town Manager is vacant as a result of a decision by the Board of Selectmen not to extend the Town Manager's employment contract. A copy of Framingham's Town Manager Act is posted on the Collins Center web site.

The demographics of the Town are complex, reflecting the relatively large rental housing stock clustered near former manufacturing facilities, and the large amount of land developed in the post World War II era along typical suburban lines. Data on the Town's demographic trends can be obtained from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's web site: www.mapc.org.

Organizational Design and Governance

The Town governance structure consists of a five member Board of Selectmen elected for three year staggered terms and a Representative Town Meeting. The seven-member School Committee is elected as is the Planning Board, Town Clerk, the Moderator of Town Meeting, the Library Trustees and Edgell Grove Cemetery Trustees. The Town Meeting is the legislative body and exercises the functions of appropriating money and making local laws. The Town Meeting has twelve members from each of the Town's eighteen precincts. The position of Town Manager is well established and well respected. The Planning Board is designated as the special permit granting authority by town by-law.

Public Finance

Framingham had total revenues for FY2010 of approximately \$238 million. Approximately \$153 million (64%) was generated by the property tax levy, \$49 million (21%) by local receipts and \$29 Million (12.5%) by State Aid. The Town has a split property tax rate with one rate for Residential property and a separate rate for Commercial/Industrial property. The property tax burden is shifted to the Commercial/Industrial sector to the maximum extent permitted by law. Generally, Framingham has been able to fund its capital program without requiring debt exclusions. The Town has an Aa2 rating from Moody's. Detailed financial information for the Town may be obtained at the website of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Department of Local Services. An Offering Statement for a recent bond issue may be obtained at the Collins Center web site.

Challenges for the Town Manager

- **Building on the Foundation.** Recent Boards of Selectmen and the previous Town Managers have built a solid public administration foundation for the Town that emphasizes professionalism among the Town's staff and managers. Framingham has well trained professional department managers and key staff. The new Town Manager needs to sustain and build on this foundation.
- **Establishing and Maintaining a Positive Labor Management Climate.** Framingham has been fortunate in its ability to keep up with service demands and labor costs largely through the growth of the property tax base and with good management practices. The prolonged recession and its adverse affect on growth coupled with cost pressures has required some layoffs in recent years. The labor relations climate has been generally positive but maintaining that climate will require careful attention in the coming years.
- **Sustaining a High Level of Public Services.** Physical growth has been a significant net revenue generator for decades and has supported enhanced service levels, but future growth rates are uncertain.

The Town is more complex than a drive through Shoppers World, pastoral portions of North Framingham or the industrial portions of South Framingham would indicate. The Town must prudently and actively manage its major economic asset: the use of land within its borders. The Town has been managed conservatively and presently has adequate fund balances. However, declines in traditional sources of revenue growth have the potential to visibly affect service delivery in future years.

- **Community and Economic Development.** While land near the Mass Pike exits has and is being developed by land development companies of international stature, part of the Route 9 strip, several formerly vibrant neighborhood commercial venues, and the core downtown area need concentrated development planning attention. These will all be redevelopment efforts, which need to be carried out with respect for neighborhood values. Engendering a comprehensive understanding of the real economic potential of each of these areas and then realizing this potential will need to be a major focus of the Town. The Town needs to articulate a well-focused strategic vision for Community and Economic Development and take concrete steps to achieve that vision. The next Town Manager will need to determine if the Town's planning and economic development functions are adequately resourced to meet these goals and, where needed, take an active leadership role.
- **Communication.** There is a premium on good communication skills. Open, accurate and timely communication among Town government entities, and with the public, the many volunteers and employees needs to be continually fostered and integrated into the normal operational practices of the Town. The Town Manager must be an exemplar of these values. The next Town Manager must be skilled and comfortable serving as a major public spokesperson for the Town and actively participate in shaping a strategic message to citizens, stakeholders and the business and development community. In addition, the Town Manager must be able to engage the members of the Board of Selectmen in an on-going dialog about the critical issues that face the Town.
- **Education.** While not directly in the Town Manager's portfolio, education is a prominent civic value in Framingham. The next Town Manager must be cognizant of the value placed on education by citizens while collaborating with the School Superintendent and School Department to mitigate cost increases. Framingham State University provides comprehensive undergraduate and graduate programs and has received major capital investment from the state in recent years. Relations on a civic and working level are excellent. The new Town Manager needs to maintain and build on this relationship.
- **Public Role.** The next Town Manager is expected to play a public role and not simply serve as the Town's administrator. Participation in civic functions and representation of the Town with other governmental

entities, and serving as a public voice for the Town will be important. Because Framingham's economy is tied to the state's, the Town Manager must play an active role in managing the Town's relationship with the key state government actors that drive state economic and transportation policy decisions.

- **Medium Term Budget Planning.** Like all Massachusetts municipalities, Framingham is facing revenue constraints and growing cost pressures. A significant amount of the Town Manager's time will be required to forge town-wide strategies to bring these into balance. This task must be addressed in the context of a multi-year plan that considers the unknown duration of the current period of financial exigency. Framingham's services will need to be tailored to available revenues, but in a way that maintains the core capabilities required to provide services and to steadily improve services when the current period of financial difficulty recedes.
- **Developing and Sustaining Institutional Capacity, Staff Development and Morale.** The Town has a well-regarded cadre of Department Heads and key staff. Maintaining staff morale while candidly addressing the current fiscal dilemma will be a responsibility of the new Town Manager.

The Ideal Candidate

The Framingham Board of Selectmen seeks a Town Manager who is a seasoned manager in an environment of similar complexity who possesses strong organizational and community leadership skills.

Framingham seeks a Town Manager with the skill, energy, creativity and experience to achieve Framingham's goals including: preserving public service levels, fostering selected redevelopment efforts, and maintaining the Town's positive civic attitude toward the future.

Framingham seeks a Town Manager willing to commit to a tenure long enough to build a multi-year approach to the dilemma of providing adequate services on a revenue base growing at a modest rate. The new Town Manager must support regional solutions when that is in the Town's interest, as well as foster volunteerism and private contributions as a partial solution to service delivery. Framingham needs a Town Manager who can help set the stage for community-wide approaches to addressing the Town's needs, approaches that produce sound outcomes and avoid polarization within the town.

The following attributes have been determined important in Framingham's next Town Manager.

Personal

The next Town Manager needs to be:

- Able to demonstrate unquestioned integrity in interactions with officials and citizens.
- Able and willing to play a highly visible role in the community. The ideal candidate must participate

broadly across the leadership structure of the community and region and be a champion of the community.

- Comfortable engaging directly with citizens. The Town Manager must have sufficient direct engagement with the civic community so that he/she can gain thorough understanding of the Town's culture. Through formal and informal interaction the Town Manager's concern for the Town's citizens needs to become evident.
- Able and willing to work openly with community groups and employees. A direct, collegial, facilitative style that fosters joint problem solving is needed. The Town Manager can have no agenda beyond being a professional.
- Able to be a vocal and positive spokesperson for the Town's agenda at Town Meetings, public forums, state agencies and with the media. The successful candidate must be able to use the status inherent in the Town Manager's position to advance the Town's agenda.
- Able to assume a strong organizational management role. The Town Manager needs to delegate, while maintaining strict accountability. The successful candidate must be direct, facilitative, and clear.
- Able to create a goal-oriented environment by establishing, maintaining and promoting effective policies and initiatives. The Town Manager will be a genuinely inclusive leader who is capable of exerting influence and direction in a manner that shares successes with elected officials, professionals and volunteers.

Professional

The Town Manager must be:

- A mature leader of a comparable organization with extensive personal experience in finance, capital and operational planning, expenditure management, public facilitation, and staff development. Excellent public and interpersonal communication skills are essential, as is skill in forging a management team.
- A professionally stable person with a record of tenure and consistent career growth. The Town seeks a committed management professional willing to stay for a significant period but who is also willing to take risks to improve the organization.
- Demonstrate a background in guiding the development of a shared strategic vision for the community. The ideal candidate must be a coalition builder, equally at home with private sector and community leaders. The ideal candidate must be able to exercise leadership within the organization and within the community.
- In possession of a Bachelor's Degree and have at least ten years of experience as a town or city manager, assistant town manager or other position that oversees the day-to-day operations of a public entity *governed by a policy body that makes decisions in public*. Extensive knowledge of the most complex activities, practices and

procedures within a city or town government is required. The minimum qualification statement for the position is posted on the Collins Center web site.

- Able to set the stage for continuing the Town's capital plan, utilizing the decline in debt service for existing projects when it occurs, and federal and state resources whenever possible. Pursuing the Town's capital plan while maintaining the Town's bond rating is the goal.
- Both strategic and tactical. He/she must be experienced in working effectively in a political environment providing 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 deliver services.
- Capable of keeping elected officials comprehensively informed, while staying detached from the political process and ensuring that staff maintains a similar detachment.
- Comfortable managing in an environment where most employees are members of a collective bargaining unit.
- Familiar with highly participative local government environments with dynamics similar to Framingham's is preferred, as is familiarity with the Massachusetts municipal context.
- Comfortable working with and managing an organization in a political context often characterized by vigorous debate among well-informed citizens who are active in local decision-making processes. Key decisions made by the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting are sometimes closely decided.

Salary and Schedule

The search begins in early September 2011 and will conclude in December 2011. Applications should be received by October 12, 2011. Direct compensation of the previous Town Manager, a five-year incumbent, was approximately 153K. The Town is willing to negotiate compensation and an employment contract DOQ.

How to Apply

Applications are preferred electronically. Please send your resume with a cover letter addressing the job requirements to this email address: recruitment.umb@gmail.com. **Please combine all of your documents in a single file.** Kindly use PDF format, if possible. The closing date for applications is October 12, 2011.

Should you have any questions regarding this opportunity, or a recommendation of a colleague, please contact: Dick Kobayashi, Senior Consultant (617-489-8812), or Mary Flanders Aicardi, Consultant (508) 845-9720.

To learn more about the Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at UMASS Boston, please visit: www.collinscenter.umb.edu