



SELECT BOARD
Town Offices
50 Billerica Road
Chelmsford, MA 01824-2777

Phone: (978) 250-5202

Town Manager Appointment Policy

The policy provides guidelines for the process to hire a Town Manager. It should be noted that the Town Charter, Section 4-1 describes the Appointment, Qualifications, and Term of Office for the Town Manager. Also, the contract between the Town Manager and the Town of Chelmsford may include language relative to appointment and reappointment. Those documents shall supersede this policy if they are in conflict.

When it becomes known that there is, or will be, a vacancy in the position of Town Manager, the Select Board shall begin the process to hire a new Town Manager. That process will include defining a timeline, such that the steps outlined below can be accomplished adequately.

Per the Town Charter, the Select Board shall create a screening committee. It should include at least one, but no more than two, sitting Select Board Member(s), at least one representative employee from Town staff, and Town residents. The screening committee should consist of seven to nine members. The process to select members shall be determined by the sitting Select Board.

The Select Board shall also decide if a search firm should be employed by the screening committee; if so, the Select Board will direct the screening committee as to how to choose the search firm, and how it will be used.

The screening committee should meet as soon as practical following its creation, and select a Chair from among its members. The Select Board and screening committee shall meet to identify desired traits, experiences, etc. for the screening committee to highlight as it recruits candidates for the Town Manager position.

The screening committee shall conduct at least one general focus group session. If time permits, multiple focus group sessions should be considered. The purpose of the focus group sessions will be to further identify the qualifications and qualities/traits (both professional and personal) that the community considers important in the next Town Manager. Focus group sessions should be open to all stakeholders. If multiple sessions are held, they may be targeted to specific groups (residents, staff, business interests, etc.).

The screening committee shall be responsible for crafting a comprehensive job description for use in recruiting candidates for the position. It should be based on the requirements, duties, etc., spelled out in the Charter, as well as criteria that has been identified in the focus group sessions. The job description should be published on the MMA website and its monthly news publication, and other organizations and locations where a wide range of potential applicants will have access.

When the deadline for receipt of applications has passed, the screening committee (and search firm, if used) will review applications in Executive Session, in order to maintain the confidentiality of candidates. They will decide on the applicants they wish to move forward with in this process. The number of potential candidates should be reduced to three to five semi-finalists at this point.

The screening committee shall interview each of the semi-finalist candidates in Executive Session. By majority vote, the screening committee shall then reduce the number of candidates to no more than three finalists.

The names of the finalists will be submitted to the Select Board, who will interview them in a public meeting, and proceed with the remaining steps in the formal hiring process.

If, at any point, it is determined that no candidate meets the required standards for hiring, the process shall restart, in order to attract more qualified candidates.

In the case that a new Town Manager is not hired by the time the incumbent Town Manager has left the position, Section 4.6 of the Town Charter allows for the Select Board to appoint an interim Town Manager for a period of up to six months, with the allowance for a second six month appointment, if needed.

Adopted by the Select Board– May 19, 2025