

TOWN MANAGER & CEO EXECUTIVE SEARCH TOWN OF WINCHESTER, CT





TOWN OF WINCHESTER CITY OF WINSTED, CT

TOWN MANAGER & CEO

OVERVIEW

The Town of Winchester/City of Winsted, CT is seeking an experienced, collaborative, engaging, and enthusiastic professional to serve as Town Manager and Chief Executive Officer for Winchester. This brochure provides background information on the Town as well as the requirements and expected qualifications for the Town Manager position. Additional information about Winchester can be found on the Town's website: townofwinchester.org.

ABOUT THE TOWN

Winchester is in Litchfield County at the crossroads of Route 44 and Route 8. With a population of approximately 10,200, it is the second largest municipality in the county. The Town is just 25 miles from Hartford, an hour to the coast, and a little over a two hour drive to either New York City or Boston. Winchester is surrounded by the towns of Barkhamsted, Colebrook, Torrington, Goshen, and Norfolk. The Town was incorporated in 1771 and includes the City of Winsted, the name historically attributed to the downtown, more-developed portion of Winchester. Winchester's total area is 33.8 square miles with a grand list of \$1.03 billion.

In 2022, Winchester was ranked as #4 on Realtor.com's Top 10 List of Affordable Lake Towns in America. Highland Lake, Winchester's crown jewel, has a surface area of 445 acres with an average depth of 24 feet. The lake is accessible through a public State boat launch and two Town-owned beaches. The Town has also been featured in the Wall Street Journal as a town that has recently seen significant economic gains. The Town prides itself on both its natural beauty and its access to more urban amenities.

Winchester has a high-quality school system that consists of the recently-renovated-as-new Hinsdale School, Pearson Middle School, and the Gilbert School (a privately-endowed academy that serves as the Town's primary high school). The Town is also home to Northwestern Community College, the only institution of higher education in Litchfield County.

338 Main Street, Winsted, CT 06098
860-738-6962

thall@townofwinchester.org
townofwinchester.org



TOWN OF WINCHESTER CITY OF WINSTED, CT

MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION

The Town of Winchester/City of Winsted, CT has had a Town Manager dating back to 1962. In the Board of Selectmen/Town Manager form of government, the Town Manager serves as the chief executive and chief administrative officer of the organization while the Board of Selectmen serves as the policy-setting body of the community. The Town Manager is an apolitical role and must, per the International City Managers' Association (ICMA) Code of Ethics, refrain from all political activities and from participation in the election of the members of the employing legislative body.

The Town Manager is appointed by the Board of Selectmen based on executive and administrative qualifications, character, education, training, and experience. The Town Manager reports to the Board of Selectmen and is responsible for carrying out all acts and policies of the Board and all resolutions and ordinances adopted by the Town. Winchester is a full-service community where volunteers participate as appointed and elected members of various boards, committees, and commissions.

TOWN MANAGER ROLE

The duties of the Town Manager are defined by the Town's Charter and a job description that is updated periodically by the Board of Selectmen. These duties include, but are not strictly limited to the following:

- Ensure that all laws and ordinances governing the Town are faithfully executed.
- Attend regular Board of Selectmen meetings and make regular reports to the Board.
- Make professional recommendations to the Board of Selectmen concerning the affairs of the Town and facilitate the work of the Board in developing policy.
- Keep the Board of Selectmen fully advised as to the financial condition and anticipated future financial needs of the Town.
- Acts as the Town's Human Resources Director; oversees and manages a staff of ~80.
- At the time of an emergency or disaster, be present and expend the necessary funds to assure the smooth operation of Town business and the health, safety, and wellbeing of the Town and its residents, consistent with the Charter.
- Prepare and submit to the Board of Selectmen a proposed annual Town budget and Capital Improvement Plan.
- Assist the Board in developing long-term goals including economic development for the Town and strategies to implement such goals.
- For more information, please visit the full job posting information on the Town's website at townofwinchester.org.



TOWN OF WINCHESTER

CITY OF WINSTED, CT

QUALITIES & TRAITS

Winchester is seeking candidates that have the following traits and qualities:

- Commitment to an open-door policy and an ability to listen respectfully to a variety of opinions and suggestions, carefully consider what was heard in arriving at a decision that is best of the circumstances and community and stand firm behind decisions once they are made.
- Ability to convincingly communicate a decision or course of action so the community, Board, and staff understand the logic and support the effort.
- A savvy, mature, and self-confident individual that can communicate administrative insights to the Town's boards, committees, staff, and other stakeholders with an ability to firmly and diplomatically present professional views and carry out administrative decisions in a timely, fair, and impartial manner.
- Commitment to create a collaborative team environment that is dedicated to accountability and the empowerment of staff through professional input and recommendations, establishing a course to follow with clear expectations, and supporting continuous improvement personally and professionally. Someone who will acknowledge the team accomplishments and take responsibility when things go amiss.
- Ability to appreciate and trust the competence of the professional staff, to
- support and guide their performance, and to assist with their continued development and advancement.
- Ability to identify evolving issues and develop responses, articulate a vision for the organization, and to work with a diverse group of stakeholders. Willing to actively listen to new, innovative and creative ideas when incorporating those ideas into solutions and projects and be able to effectively communicate with the public across a variety of mediums.
- Commitment to professionalism, transparency, community engagement, and accountability; not afraid to share information with all stakeholders and engage in discussion in a sincere effort to achieve consensus.
- Possesses a sense of humor, a positive attitude, and the ability to be flexible with the Town's stakeholders. Someone who follows through and does the right thing for the right reasons.
- A reputation of personal and professional integrity, trustworthiness, ethical behavior, and open-mindedness. Leading an organization by example and conducting all personal and professional interactions honestly, fairly, humbly, and with a willingness to admit when mistakes are made.
- A willingness to form a deep commitment to the community and its stakeholders.

EDUCATION, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

The successful candidate will have a combination of education and experience that demonstrates an ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position, including the following:

- At least five years of progressively responsible management experience, preferably in local government or a related organization, in an organization of comparable size and complexity; preference will be given to candidates that have served as a Town Manager/Administrator or as an Assistant Town Manager/Administrator.
- A master's degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in public administration, finance, economic, political science, public policy, sociology, or a closely related field. Membership in the International City Managers' Association (ICMA) and/or state municipal management associations and/or designation as an ICMA-Credentialed Manager is a plus.
- Demonstrated experience working effectively with an elected governing body and volunteer elected and appointed boards, commissions, and committees.
- A strong public sector financial background, understanding municipal revenue sources and their impact on municipal budgets and taxpayers. The job requires strong data presentation and business strategy skills, knowledge of internal controls, multiyear operational and capital budgeting, and understanding trends in technology.
- Experience with long-range capital improvement planning and financing, and state and federal programs to assist in infrastructure improvement funding.
- Experience with capital project management, intergovernmental and nonprofit partnerships, and environmentally and financially-sustainable development.
- Experience working in a similar town handling community relations, financial management, public safety, public works, community planning, recreation management, senior services, and other support services.
- Strong written and oral communication skills with an entire community using a variety of approaches, using social media and local media outlets.
- Commitment and proven ability to attract and retain high-performing, diverse staff at all levels of the organization.
- A proven record of working collaboratively and effectively with community and business leaders, staff, residents, and community groups to move projects forward and achieve goals established by the Town's budget and Plan of Conservation & Development.
- A leader who is truly accessible, approachable, and empathetic, and able to motivate staff and who truly understands and takes active interest in the work that is being performed.
- The Town will consider a combination of education and experience that allow for successful performance in this role.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Main Street Corridor Developments: The Town has focused considerable efforts on the reinvigoration of Main Street in downtown Winsted. This has involved extending forgivable loans to help start-up new businesses and refresh the facade on existing businesses; obtaining a \$1.7 million Communities Challenge Grant to invest in public art, signage, and sidewalks; sharing business information through our website and social media channels; and more. Main Street is on the rise, and the newly-selected Town Manager will help continue its growth and development.

Housing Opportunities: Winchester is currently in the process of seeking to sell a 118 acre property known as Mountainside Drive that is ripe for a single-family housing development. An affordable housing adaptive reuse project is progressing at the former Batcheller Elementary School site, and another hopeful housing project is taking place at 10 Bridge Street, Building #1. Winchester is well-positioned to grow and play its part in resolving the housing crisis, and the newly-selected Town Manager will be responsible for helping all of these projects over the proverbial finish line.

Industrial & Commercial Development: The Town has invested a significant amount of time and attention on its manufacturers, a sector that comprises nearly a third of all jobs offered within the Town of Winchester. To grow the grand list, efforts are now being made to attract new industrial and commercial firms to Winsted and assist existing firms with growth opportunities in areas where it makes sense. This is a primary goal of the Board of Selectmen, and the newly-Selected Town Manager will work with staff and other stakeholders to grow the grand list in this area.

Marketing & Communications: To grow Winsted's business base and tourism industry, more demand is needed, which means we need to get Winsted on the map. Efforts have been made to make Winsted a marketable destination for tourists and visitors, and it is time to take the next step in these efforts.

Recruitment & Retention: Like many organizations post-pandemic, the Town has faced many retirements and other staff departures that have resulted departments having staff members that are fairly new on the job. The newly-selected Town Manager will be tasked with creating recruitment and retention plans and campaigns to address this challenge.

Healthy, Livable, & Sustainable Community: Winchester has recently been recognized as a Sustainable CT Bronze Certified community, and the Town has put a renewed focus on making the downtown area a more vibrant, walkable, and livable area. The Town has also focused on preserving open space and the natural character of the northwest hills. The newly-Selected Town Manager will work to further sustainability and health efforts while balancing preservation with development.

Critical Infrastructure Needs: In 2022, the Town estimated that it has over \$60 million in needed road repairs. That same year, the Town authorized \$24.7 million to be bonded and invested in critical infrastructure between 2023 - 2027. This work has begun, and the newly-appointed Town Manager will oversee the project's completion.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES (CONT.)

Financial Success & Growth: While the Town of Winchester is considered to be a "distressed" municipality under State definitions, tremendous strides have been made in the past decade to improve the Town's financial position. In 2023, the Town received a double bond rating upgrade to AA with S&P, and the Town has won over \$5.5 million in competitive state and federal grants in 2022 and 2023 alone. The Town expects the newly-appointed Town Manager to continue this positive financial trend while understanding the importance of grants and decreasing our reliance on residential property taxes to accomplish the Town's goals.

IMPORTANT LINKS

- [Town Charter & Ordinances](#)
- [Current Town Budget](#)
- [Town Plan of Conservation & Development](#)
- [Comprehensive Financial Annual Report](#)
- [Town Social Media Channels \(Links in Footer of Website\)](#)

SALARY & BENEFITS

The Town of Winchester offers its Town Manager a competitive salary and benefits package, with the starting salary level being dependent on experience. dependent on qualifications. Benefits include an offering of health insurance (including dental and vision), life insurance, generous employer-matching contributions to a defined contribution plan, 14 paid holidays, generous sick and vacation leave accruals, paid ICMA and CTCMA membership fees, and more.

JOIN OUR TEAM: APPLY NOW

Candidates that are interested in applying should submit a resume, cover letter, and contact information for five professional references (at least one of whom should have been a current/former supervisor, one a current/former colleague or coworker, and one a current/former supervisee) to thall@townofwinchester.org. Questions may be directed to the Town at thall@townofwinchester.org or at 860-738-6962.

The Town of Winchester is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is actively searching for a diverse candidate pool.