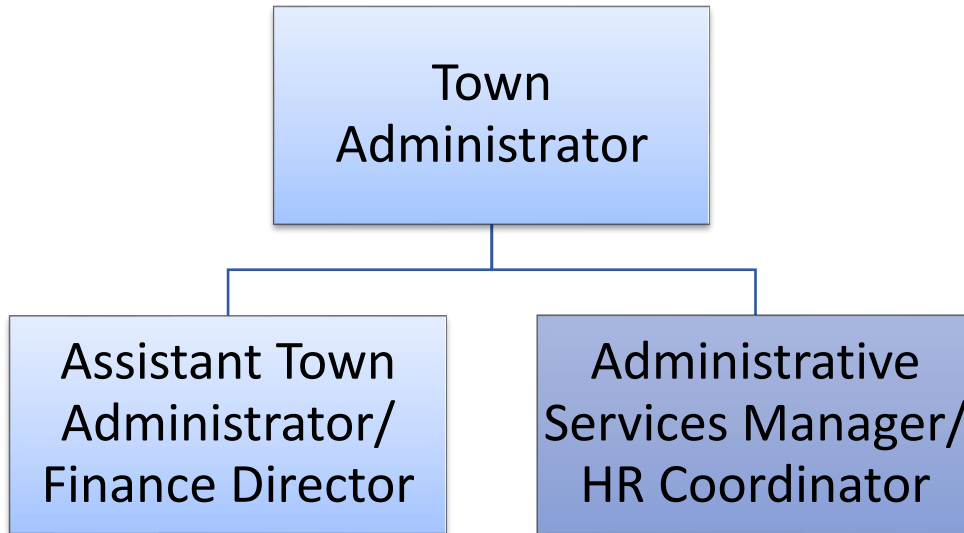# TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

MISSION STATEMENT

The Town Administrator, who serves as the Chief Administrative Officer, manages all policies, programs, and procedures that have been implemented by the Select Board. Additionally, the Town Administrator is responsible for budget preparation, hiring personnel, and negotiating labor contracts.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES, PROGRAMS, & SERVICES

- Serve as Chief Administrative Officer as appointed by the Boxford Select Board.
- Prepare Warrants for Annual and Special Town Meetings, elections, and any override votes for Select Board to issue.
- Serve as Chief Personnel Officer, responsible for hiring personnel, managing benefits, and negotiating labor contracts.
- Serves as Chief Procurement Officer and is in charge of all town property rental and use, except school property.
- Department oversees all Town finance and budgeting functions.
- Establish an annual operating budget, in collaboration with the Finance Committee.
- Create and manage the annual five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).
- Manage all administrative policies, programs, and procedures, as adopted by the Select Board.
- Oversee the Town's technology needs.
- Coordinate among the town's departments, boards, and committees
- Oversight of the Boxford Park Program

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                    Town
                 Administrator
                      |
        +-------------+-------------+
        |                           |
  Assistant Town            Administrative
  Administrator/          Services Manager/
  Finance Director          HR Coordinator
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Position	FY2023 Actual	FY2024 Actual	FY2025 Budgeted
Town Administrator	1.0	1.0	1.0
Assistant Town Administrator/ Finance Director	1.0	1.0	1.0
Administrative Services Manager/ HR Coordinator	1.0	1.0	1.0
TOTAL FTEs	**3.0**	**3.0**	**3.0**

Performance Indicator	Unit of Measure	Actual FY2022	Actual FY2023	Estimated FY2024
Credit Rating	S&P	AAA	AAA	*AAA*
Free Cash (Reserves)	$	$3,699,386	$3,451,805	*$3,758,382*
Staff Trainings	#	2	3	*4*
Active Employees Enrolled in Health Insurance	#			*161*
Retirees Enrolled in Health Insurance	#			*146*
Positions Filled	#			*6*
TA Open Office Hours		20	18	*20*
Boxford Community Newsletters	#	3	4	*4*

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Finance/ Budgeting

- Transitioned the Town's finance functions from Town Accountant to the Town Administrator's office.
- Completed five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Fiscal Years 2024 through 2028. The Program includes 78 projects and a total capital investment of $42 million over five years, and has been a very useful tool in developing a plan to finance these projects. The CIP has been particularly useful for obtaining outside funding for capital projects to help reduce the reliance on local revenue sources to finance them. Being organized and having an up-to-date capital plan is extremely helpful for obtaining outside funding.
- Grant funding: we were able to bring in nearly $700,000 in new grant funding, including:
    - $312,000 in federal and state funds for the design and engineering of the Boxford Rail Trail.
    - $210,000 in state budget earmarks that funded the purchase of Automated External Defibrillators (AED) and CPR machines for the Fire Department, the

design of a new Town Hall well, a traffic study for Main Street and Lawrence Rd, voting machines for Town Meeting, and funding for culvert repairs.

- o $75,000 from the state's Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvement Program to replace the docks at Stiles Pond Beach with new, state-of-the-art ADA-accessible docks, which will be implemented by the summer of 2024.
- o $31,600 in State Community Compact IT funds for online permitting.
- o $30,000 in Federal Brownfield grant funding for the purchase of 27 Main Street.
- o $25,000 of State One Stop money to fund the MassDevelopment consultant for the ARBA committee.
- Management of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds: worked with ARPA Committee to commit federal grant funds to high priority projects, including the design and construction costs of four critical culverts in town, a pilot program to guarantee 24/7 fire department coverage, and increased funding for crucial public health initiatives post-COVID.

HR/ Personnel

- Created the Administrative Services Manager/ HR Coordinator position to consolidate all HR functions into the Town Administrator's Office.
- Using the 2022 compensation study of peer communities conducted by GovHR, the Town has strategically increased compensation of key employees to remain competitive, which has led to increased retention of employees and has improved morale within Town Hall.
- Rolled out new trainings & staff development programming.
- Enhanced and expanded health insurance benefits for employes, including new dental plans and a volunteer vision plan.
- Held first Health and Wellness Fair for Town employees since prior to COVID-19.
- Oversaw recruitment process for open positions, including Library Director, Building Department Administrative Assistant, DPW Heavy Equipment Operator, Health Department Administrative Assistant, and COA Social Worker.

Communication and Transparency

- Increased Boards and Committee coordination for special projects, including the creation of the Waste Stream Task Force, Adaptive Reuse of Buildings Advisory Committee, and Emergency Response Advisory Committee.
- To improve communication across boards, the Select Board held 2 roundtable discussions with Boards and Committee Chairs at a scheduled Select Board meeting: September 11, 2023 and January 8, 2024.

- Press releases: Began submitting all news items and press releases to local news outlets to increase coverage of Boxford. As a result, the Ipswich Local News has increased its coverage of Boxford news.
- Website redesign: Contracted with CivicPlus on an overhaul of the existing Town website, to be completed in the summer of 2024.
- Newsletter: Continue to release Town newsletters on a quarterly basis. Expanded newsletter to include information and update from local non-profits and community organizations.
- TA Office Hours: held 18 open office hour sessions in 2023.
- Created a Town Meeting website for supporting documentation that could be accessed through a QR code, and various project pages, including the Adaptive Reuse of 4 Middleton Road and 188 Washington Street project, the Willow Rodd culvert replacement project, Community Aggregation, the Medical Response Pilot Project, and the Waste Stream Task Force.
- Social media presence: Increased social media posts

Technology

- Supported roll out of several software programs:
    - ProPhoenix Computer Aided Dispatch Records Management Software (CAD RMS)
    - OpenGov online permitting software
    - OperationsHero Facility Asset Management and work order software
    - MySeniorCenter COA software
    - MyRec Park Program registration
    - Munis financial software upgrade
- Cybersecurity: Worked with IT consultant to enhance the Town's cybersecurity posture, including the first phase of migration to cloud-based software and end-user training through the state's Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness Grant Program.
- Worked with the state's municipal cybersecurity training program to educate our staff on how to avoid phishing and email scams. Ongoing vigilance and education will be a continuing priority for all local municipalities facing emerging threats in a fast and ever-changing cybersecurity landscape.
- Hybrid remote meeting technology: Utilized the Town's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to purchase remote meeting equipment in Meeting Room 1 at Town Hall, allowing attendees the ability to access meetings remotely through Zoom and interact with in-person attendees. The hybrid setup has been effective and allows greater access to public meetings.

Facilities and Infrastructure

- Staffed the Adaptive Reuse of Buildings Advisory Committee and obtained grant funding to complete a programming study for the reuse of 4 Middleton Road and 188 Washington.
- Worked with the Permanent Building Committee (PBC), School Administration, and various departments on advancing critical facility and infrastructure projects, including Cole School ADA-accessibility site project, the Spofford Pond School HVAC electrification project, and the design of a new DPW facility.
- Rail Trail: The town was awarded $312,000 in state and federal grants for the design of the Boxford Rail Trail.

Administrative/Operations

- 10 Elm Committee: Worked with Select Board to established a committee to develop programming and standards procedures for the public use and rental of The Center at 10 Elm.
- ERAC: Worked with Select Board to establish a committee focused on the Town's emergency response capabilities, whose work is ongoing.
- Municipal Aggregation: Successfully submitted the Town's aggregation plan, in partnership with the Sustainability Committee, and received approval from the Department of Public Utilities.
- Regional ACO/AI: Successfully negotiated a new Regional Animal Control Officer/ Inspector program with the towns of Ipswich, Newbury, and Rowley.
- Waste Stream Task Force: Established a Task Force consisting of representatives from the Select Board, Finance Committee, Recycling Committee, and Board of Health to design and negotiate a new, five-year trash and recycling collection and disposal contract. The goal is a long-term contract that incorporates automated collection, promotes waste reduction, preserves or enhances Pay-As-You-Throw components of the existing program, and saves the Town money over the next five years. The new program is expected to start July 1, 2024.
- Oversaw a successful summer 2023 Park Program that included the roll out of a new registration software, MyRec.

FY2024 TRENDS

Technology and Cybersecurity

Municipalities across the country have fallen victim to cyberattacks, including neighboring communities. Because of the magnitude of this threat, we continue to explore ways to both improve operations and service through the use of technology while strengthening and

enhancing the Town's cybersecurity posture against potential attacks. The three components of the Town's cybersecurity posture are protection, recovery and user training. The Town Administrator's Office has been working with our IT consultant on enhancements in all three categories.

Human Resources

Recruitment and retention have been ongoing challenges for every Massachusetts municipality. With rising inflation, a tight job market, and the pending retirements of many "Baby Boomer" employees, it's important for municipalities to find creative ways to keep experienced employees while attracting new talent to fill vacant positions. Succession planning has also been a focus for addressing open department head positions vacated by talented and experienced employees either because of retirement or increased compensation in a larger community.

Health insurance premium rates continue to increase well beyond the Proposition 2 ½ restrictions on Towns that limit revenue from tax increases to 2.5%. Last year, the Town was able to reduce premium increases by offering new dental plans and voluntary vision. However, the premium increase was still above 8%, and continues to be trending towards 10% annual increases. The Town has hired a consultant that specializes in negotiating municipal health insurance plans in an effort to help identify strategies to avoid high premium increases.

Facilities

The cost of building and maintaining municipal facilities has increased dramatically over the past few years. By utilizing the five-year CIP, the Town Administrator's office is able to plan for crucial facilities improvements over a multi-year period in a fiscally-responsible manner that still meets the needs of the Town.

FY2024 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: CONTINUE TO IMPROVE TOWN FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Objectives:
- Work with Permanent Building Committee (PBC) on advancing the design of a new DPW Facility.
- Work with the Tri-Town Union on the design of the electrification of the HVAC system at Spofford Pond School.
- Rail Trail – finalize design of Boxford North Trail for construction; Complete 25% design for Boxford South Trail.

- Support the Adaptive Reuse of Buildings Advisory (ARBA) committee on determining the future use of 4 Middleton Rd and 188 Washington Street.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE FISCALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT AND MAXIMIZE RETURN ON TAXPAYER DOLLARS

Objectives:
- Work with Finance Department to review and update the Town's fiscal policies
- Complete a five-year Capital Improvement Program and aggressively pursue grants and other outside funding opportunities.
- Finalize, execute, and oversee new five-year Trash & Recycling contract and conversion to automated collection.
- Oversee the implementation of Boxford Community Electricity, our municipal aggregation program.

GOAL 3: LEAD IN BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY THROUGH MAINTAINING A HIGH LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION

Objectives:
- Launch updated website, BoxfordMA.gov
- Continue issuing press releases to local media outlets
- Work with Select Board to hold two Boards and Committee roundtable discussions
- Maintain publication of the quarterly Boxford Community Newsletter
- Continue to expand social media presence and content
- Implement recommendations for community programs and events identified by the 10 Elm Community Committee
- Build off of inaugural Boxford Budget document to improve communication of proposed funding levels and programs to residents in advance of Town Meeting

- **GOAL 4:** IT Improvements

Objectives:
- Migrate to cloud-based Microsoft 365, which will enhance our protection from potential attacks, as well as improve redundancies and recovery times should an attack occur.
- Support of roll out of cloud software in various departments, including OpenGov, Munis, ProPhoenix, and OperationsHero.
- Replacement of critical infrastructure, including local servers.

- Cybersecurity Posture Enhancement – implement additional security measures for publicly exposed systems, participate again in the state's cybersecurity awareness training for all staff.