

## Position Profile



Shrewsbury, MA

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Town Manager

## The Community

The Town of Shrewsbury is a thriving, residential community located in central Massachusetts. The quality of its public schools, municipal service levels and geographic location make it a highly desirable suburb for people living and working in the greater Worcester and Boston areas. The Town is an inclusive and diverse community that emphasizes excellence in education and the provision of municipal services as well as numerous recreational opportunities. It enjoys a tradition of open, professional, and high level of government services, quality education, support for open space and thoughtful economic development, and respect for its history. Its support for professional government is reflected in the stability of its town management, with the Town having only three Town Managers in the past 63 years, and two in the past 60 years.

Shrewsbury is a proud New England community, which was incorporated in 1727. The Town is 20.8 square miles in size, with approximately 36,000 official residents. Located in Worcester County, Shrewsbury is bordered on the west by the City of Worcester with recreational Lake Quinsigamond in between and bordered on the east by towns Northborough and Westborough. Shrewsbury is Worcester County's fourth largest community, with only its neighbor, the City of Worcester, and Fitchburg and Leominster having more residents. The Town is located just 34 miles west of Boston, and near the Interstate 495 corridor and Route 290.

The community is primarily residential, accounting for about 87% of the property value of the Town. Commercial development occurs primarily along busy Route 9, with some additional business development along Route 20. The Town also has nearly 900 acres of wetlands and over 500 acres of protected natural open spaces, allowing for wildlife diversity and scenic beauty.

The top five employers in the Town are UMass Medical, Mescaster Company Inc. (UPS), United States Postal Service, Metso Automation USA, Inc., and Home Depot with an approximate combined total of 3,800 employees. These institutions help to create the underpinning of the local economy. Unemployment, at about 3.9%, is generally not an issue in Shrewsbury.

Shrewsbury is a highly desirable suburb with a housing mix that attracts families, couples, and single homeowners. In fact, the Town's population has grown 57% from 1980 to 2010, making it one of the fastest growing towns in Massachusetts in the 1990s. Shrewsbury's highly respected school district and affordable housing prices are significant factors in its strong appeal to families.

Shrewsbury is becoming an increasingly diverse community. According to the 2010 US Census, the Town's racial makeup was 79.2% white, 15.3% Asian, 2.7% Hispanic or Latino, and 2.1% Black or African American. The schools serve 69 different language groups who are learning English as a second language. Appreciating different cultures is part of what makes Shrewsbury a strong and vibrant community.

The Town's per capita income is \$45,153, and its median household income is \$94,599, both of which are higher than the state as a whole. Average household income is \$119,987.

The Town is demographically younger than the state as a whole with the major differences being in the under 18 years cohort with Shrewsbury at nearly 26% versus 21.7% for the state. Families with preK-12 school age children have increased significantly over the past thirty years due, in part, to the excellent reputation of the Town and its school system. Meanwhile, Shrewsbury's older population is similar to the state population. In the 65 years

and older cohort, Shrewsbury has 13.5% of its population versus 15.4% for the state. It is important to note, that from 1990 to 2010, according to the U.S. Census, residents between the ages of 45 and 54 increased by 122 percent in Shrewsbury, becoming the Town's largest age group.

Educational attainment is a prominent characteristic of Shrewsbury. Approximately 54.2% of the population has a Bachelor's Degree or higher, with about 20% holding a graduate or professional degree. By comparison, just over 40% in the state have a bachelor's degree or higher and 17% hold a graduate or professional degree.

Shrewsbury residents have been highly engaged in public policy issues facing the Town, and beyond. There is a significant level of political activity through voting, volunteering on citizen committees, elected offices, and participation in community meetings and forums. It is important to note that this engagement is characterized not only by the amount of the activity but also its depth. The Town's population growth provides both opportunities and challenges for maintaining and increasing civic engagement.

The Town is well covered by local media with a daily newspaper based out of Worcester, weekly newspaper, and an active three channel local cable access system that also streams many municipal and school meetings as well as a robust municipal website at [www.shrewsburyma.gov](http://www.shrewsburyma.gov).

## The Government

Shrewsbury's government is comprised of a five member Board of Selectmen that serves as the Town's executive board, and a 240 member Representative Town Meeting that serves as the legislative body of the Town, which is chaired by an elected Town Moderator.

The membership of the Representative Town Meeting includes 240 elected representatives from 10 precincts. There is also an elected School Committee, which oversees the operation of the Town's preK-high school school system; an elected Board of Library Trustees, which oversees the public library; and a Moderator-appointed Finance Committee, which advises Town Meeting in accordance with state law. The Town also utilizes a large number of appointed boards and commissions, with various modes of appointment, to conduct municipal operation.

The Board of Selectmen are the chief elected officials of the Town; and are generally intended to act through broad policy guidelines which are to be implemented by Town employees. The Board of Selectmen appoints the position of Town Manager as the chief administrative and fiscal officer of all Town agencies, other than the Schools. The Town has had a total of only three Town Managers in more than 60 years. The current vacancy results from the upcoming retirement of a well-respected Town Manager who has served for the past twenty years. His predecessor served as Town Manager for forty years, illustrative of the Town's impressive management stability.

The Town Manager is responsible for executing the policy directives of the Board of Selectmen and for managing the operations and activities of the Town. The Town Manager is specifically responsible for the appointment and removal of members to certain boards and commissions and employees of the Town with the exception of employees of the School Department, collective bargaining and administration of a personnel system, preparation of operating and capital budgets, procurement, supervision of all town properties, and the reorganization of Town agencies under his/her jurisdiction.

The Shrewsbury Town Manager Act detailing the establishment of the Selectmen-Town Manager form of government is available online at:

<https://shrewsburyma.gov/152/Town-Manager-Act>

The Act to establish Representative Town Government in Shrewsbury is available online at:

<https://shrewsburyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/468>

The Town of Shrewsbury provides general governmental services for the territory within its boundaries including water services, sewer services, public education, libraries, streets, and parks and recreation, including Lake Quinsigamond, four ponds, biking paths, and walking trails. The Town also operates its own municipal electric utility which also provides cable/internet services.

The Town provides public safety services through police and fire services. The Police Department has 45 sworn officers. The three-station Fire Department provides fire and EMS First Responder service to the Town and participates in a mutual aid pact with 33 neighboring communities.

## Finances

Shrewsbury's finances are strong and stable, holding a Moody's rating of Aa2, based upon a credit analysis of January 2016. The rating was based upon the considered strength of the Town's financial position, manageable pension burden, budgetary performance, history of voter support for Proposition 2½ debt overrides, and sizeable tax base with above average wealth levels. In FY17 the total budget for the Town is approximately \$114.4 million. Total debt for the Town is approximately \$61 million, with debt service representing 7.8% of the annual budget. The Town does have a retirement liability of approximately \$17 million but that is on schedule to be retired by

2022, a date that is well ahead of most local governments in the state. OPEB liability is currently estimated to be approximately \$68 million, however, the Town is currently holding over \$3 million in trust for this liability and adding to this fund on an annual basis. The Town plans to dramatically increase funding towards the OPEB liability upon the full funding of the pension liability. The Town currently has Stabilization Fund reserves of \$450,000, and \$5 million in certified Free Cash.

The most recent Moody's Credit Opinion is available online at:

<https://shrewsburyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2272>

The Board of Selectmen's FY 2018 Fiscal Policies are available online at:

<https://shrewsburyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2665>

## Challenges and Opportunities

- **Capital Needs.** Like many communities the Town has infrastructure issues as programmatic needs have changed and facilities have aged. The Town recently built a new library, a new Sherwood Middle School and fire station. Currently, Shrewsbury is reviewing the need for a new early childhood center, a new or substantially renovated police station, and an upgraded water treatment facility. These large facility needs are in addition to normal required capital investment in roads, equipment, and building maintenance projects. A comprehensive plan is required in order to implement these projects in a financially and politically feasible manner.
- **Finances.** While the Town is financially stable, the array of capital needs and service needs require that the Town maintain its steady direction and careful fiscal planning as evidenced by the

funding of outstanding liabilities like its pension obligations, and early action on its OPEB liabilities. However, such actions have required the Town to occasionally use appropriation from reserves to balance the annual budget. The full funding of its pension system in 2022 will provide opportunities to address a variety of issues related to OPEB, service levels, management capacity and capital needs.

- **Housing.** Shrewsbury offers a wide variety of neighborhoods and housing and seeks to maintain affordability for all of its residents especially those of lower income so as to maintain a diverse community. Despite its cooperative relationship with developers and creativity, the Town continues to fall below the state's affordable housing requirement under Chapter 40B. While it offers more housing options than many of its neighboring communities, like many suburban communities, Shrewsbury's housing remains dominated by detached single-family homes.
- **Development.** Currently, 87% of the tax base is residential. Accordingly, any increased revenues needed to fund expenditures related to financial pressures serve to make the Town less affordable. The Town would like to grow its commercial base to help offset the financial pressures on homeowners. Shrewsbury would benefit from building up its commercial, office, research and development, and light industrial sectors. The challenge of such development will be to attract appropriate businesses and address concerns that proposed projects are balanced to meet expectations of sustainable growth and in keeping with the land use values of the community, and neighborhood stability. Opportunities do exist within the busy Route 9 and Route 20 business districts. Centech Park North is a 66-acre tract with frontage on South Street and Route 20. It has been an economic

development priority in Shrewsbury for over a decade. The site is ideally situated for some types of office or industrial uses. The Town would also like to explore expanding its commercial sectors into other areas of the Town while retaining the community's overall character

- **Management Staffing.** There is an understanding that the rapid population growth in Town has necessitated the future growth of its municipal support staff, particularly in the areas of Public Works, Finance and Human Resources. Additionally, as some senior members of the municipal management team are nearing retirement, there is an increased need for improved staff development and succession planning. The next Town Manager will need to develop a strategy to address these challenges.
- **Citizen Engagement.** The Town embraces civic engagement as reflected in strong levels of political participation and discourse. The challenge that has been identified is to increase the level of engagement with the Town's many newer residents while maintaining the engagement of longtime residents. An increased level of discourse and engagement will assist in finding and implementing solutions to many of the Town's challenging issues. Increased use of social media could be one way to increase outreach to citizens as well as engagement.

## The Ideal Candidate

The Board of Selectmen seeks an administrator with significant managerial experience and strong communication skills. The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate ability in managing a complex organization in a highly engaged community. The candidate should be competent in all areas of municipal management and operations, including finance, economic development, strategic planning, and

personnel management. The Manager should be comfortable with new technology, particularly in finding ways to make Town operations more efficient and effective.

The Manager should have a visible public presence and be highly approachable. The Manager must be a strong and decisive leader who can work collaboratively with various interests of the Town, including board and committee members, municipal and school department heads, staff members, and residents. The Manager is expected to encourage and support continued positive school/town relationships, and to work and negotiate cooperatively with the business community.

The Town Manager must be able to delegate effectively, mentor department heads, and provide support and motivation to ensure high performance and professional growth by all municipal employees. He or she must be assertive and able to aggressively pursue economic development opportunities deemed appropriate for the Town. The Manager must possess strong interpersonal skills and be able, in all forms, to communicate clearly and effectively with all constituencies.

The Town Manager must also possess and demonstrate successful experience in labor relations and personnel management. He or she must be able to develop and sustain credible relations with employees and multiple union representatives, with an ability to be firm but fair in negotiations.

Certain personal and professional qualities are priorities for the Board of Selectmen, municipal staff, and residents. These qualities include: accessibility, approachability, transparency, and regular, clear communication in dealing with all constituencies (employees, boards, committees, citizenry, business owners, regional entities); ability to actively listen and engage; ability to focus on problems and empower the staff to solve problems; ability to

remain calm in stressful situations; fairness in dealing with employees and concern for employee welfare; fairness in dealings with citizens and concern for citizen welfare; an ability to delegate; and an ability to facilitate change and help guide others through such change.

The Town is seeking a professional with a passion for local government and in particular, the Town of Shrewsbury. The successful candidate must be creative, collaborative and inclusive, able to respond to political and community pressure with positive and respectful professional strategies.

The successful candidate should possess a Master's degree in a field related to municipal management, and at least 10 years of progressive experience as a municipal manager or assistant municipal manager, or an equivalent combination of public or private sector experience, education and involvement in or with municipal government. The successful candidate must possess demonstrated skills, abilities and knowledge in municipal finance, community planning and economic development, personnel administration, labor relations, municipal procurement, and intergovernmental relations.

## Compensation

The Town of Shrewsbury will offer an employment agreement and compensation package that is competitive with comparable Massachusetts' communities, with a salary range of \$170,000+, depending on qualifications. An attractive benefits package, including health and retirement plans, is part of the Town Manager's total compensation. The successful applicant is required to be or become a resident of the Town. However, the Board of Selectmen have called for a Special Town Meeting to consider the amendment of the Town's Town Manager Special Act in order to eliminate this requirement.

## To Apply

Resumes, in confidence, by March 8, 2017 to:

Shrewsbury MA-Town Manager Search  
Community Paradigm Associates  
One Saddleback  
Plymouth, MA 02360

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION PREFERRED:  
[Apply@communityparadigm.com](mailto:Apply@communityparadigm.com)

Following the closing date, resumes will be reviewed according to the outlined qualifications. A Board of Selectmen appointed Town Manager Screening Committee will review resumes in confidence and conduct interviews as necessary. Based upon this process, a selection of finalists will be chosen for further evaluation and reference checks, and then forwarded to the Selectmen for interviews and consideration before a final selection is made. Finalists will be contacted for references and approval of background reviews before their selection is publicly advanced to the Board of Selectmen.

Shrewsbury is an EEO/AA employer.

Questions regarding the position should be directed to Bernard Lynch, Principal, Community Paradigm Associates at [blynch@communityparadigm.com](mailto:blynch@communityparadigm.com), or 978-621-6733



Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building