



**Fairhaven Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
November 10, 2020**

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2020 DEC 28 A 10:30

FAIRHAVEN,  
MASS.

**Present:** Chairman Daniel Freitas Vice-Chairman Robert Espindola, Selectman Keith Silvia, Town Administrator Mark Rees, and Cable Access Director Derek Frates

The meeting was videotaped on Cable Access and Zoom meeting application.

Chairman Freitas opened the meeting at 6:34 pm in the Town Hall Banquet Room and read the following statement:

*“This Open Meeting of the Fairhaven Board of Selectmen is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker’s Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the “COVID-19 Virus.”*

*In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor’s Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.*

*The Order, which you can find posted with agenda materials for this meeting allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting.*

*Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will allow public comment related to the posted agenda items only. For this meeting, Fairhaven Board of Selectmen is convening by telephone conference/video conference via Zoom App as posted on the Town’s Website identifying how the public may join.*

**Town Administrator Recruitment position Statement**

Motion by Espindola, second by Silvia to approve the Town Administrator Recruitment Position Statement (Attachment A). Passed unanimously.

**Screening Committee for Town Administrator Search**

Discussion regarding having a Board of Selectmen member sit on the Town Administrator Screening Committee. Silvia and Freitas were in favor of having a selectman be part of the

screening committee. Espindola was against for the reasons stated on Attachment B. Espindola made a motion to not have a selectmen serve on the screening committee. There was not a second. Freitas made a motion to appoint himself as a member of the screening committee, second by Silvia. Motion carried, Freitas and Sylvia-Yes, Espindola –No.

**Approval of the Charge of the Screening Committee**

Motion by Espindola, second by Silvia to approve the Charge of the Screening Committee Statement (Attachment C). Passed unanimously.

**COVID Red Zone Designation and Town Offices operations**

Mr. Rees informed the board that the state had recently designated Fairhaven as being in the Red Zone for the COVID 19 virus due to an increase in the number of positive test results in recent weeks. Due to this change M. Rees put together a working group consisting H.R. Director Anne O'Brien, Interim Health Agent Sarah Dupont, Deputy Fire Chief Todd Correia and Conservation Agent Whitney McClees to review safety protocols for town offices and recommend changes if necessary. The working group recommended that mask wearing requirements be better adhered to and that remote meetings using zoom technology be the default mode for meetings.

**Notes and announcements**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectman will be Monday, November 16, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion by Espindola, second by Silvia to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m. Passed unanimously.

(Approved 12/21/2020)

Attachments:

- A. Town Administrator Recruitment Statement
- B. Memo from Selectman Espindola
- C. Committee charge

# Fairhaven, MA – Town Administrator

**KEY:**

Town Administrator Mark Rees' edits are in purple text.

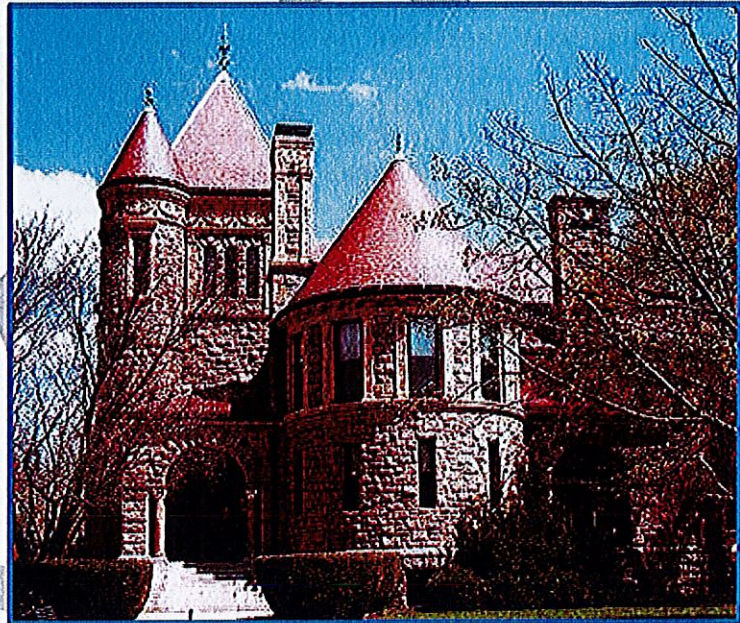
Selectman Espindola's edits are in green text.

Both requested removal of a line about revenue sharing with the school department, which has been deleted.



## Position Statement

Fairhaven, MA (16,000 pop.), is a charming seaside community located on the shore of Massachusetts' Buzzards Bay, approximately one mile from New Bedford, 35 miles east of Providence, R.I., and 50 miles south of Boston. Fairhaven is a community of homes, commercial development, the marine trades, and industrial companies. The Town, settled in 1653, has a rich history dating back to the days of the Pilgrims. Fairhaven was incorporated in 1812 after separating from New Bedford and grew in prosperity during the whaling days in the 1800s. The Town's most remarkable features are the magnificent European-style public buildings built between 1885 and 1906 by Standard Oil Company executive and millionaire Henry Huttleston Rogers, a native of the Town.



Fairhaven has an S&P rating of AA+ and an FY21 operating budget of approximately \$52 million. Fairhaven's population skews slightly older than the state average with approximately 20 percent of residents in the over 65 age group compared to the state average of about 15 percent. The Town tends to be fiscally conservative. Fairhaven's current challenges include the implementation of necessary wastewater treatment plant upgrades which will be funded via the Sewer Enterprise Fund, implementing the recommendations of the Public Facilities Improvement Plan of which the first priority is a Public Safety Facility, enhancing collaboration and unifying Town staff as well as a desire for economic development that will allow the community to retain its rural charm and character. Fairhaven's local government is led by a three-member Board of Selectmen.

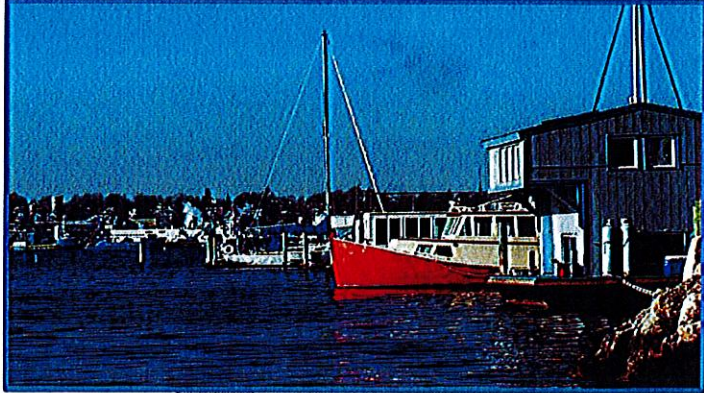
To serve as the second Town Administrator since this form of local government was enacted in 2014, Fairhaven is seeking a seasoned, collaborative leader with strong financial acumen, who has the ability to unify and make difficult decisions, has strategic vision, excellent communication skills, and experience with economic development and personnel management. Candidates should have a bachelor's degree (advanced degree preferred) in public administration or a related field. Preferred candidates will have a proven record of leadership, exceptional financial skills, and be able to build strong, collaborative relationships. The Town Administrator should be approachable and highly communicative. Given Fairhaven's seaside location, candidates should understand coastal resiliency issues and the importance of the blue economy.

**Annual salary: \$155K+/- DOQ.** The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Fairhaven is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

## Government

Fairhaven has a Board of Selectmen-Town Administrator form of government with Representative Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen serves as the Town's principle elected executive board and, acting through the Town Administrator, are responsible for the day-to-day operations of town government. The Town Administrator position was established via a Special Act in November 2014. The first Town Administrator, who is retiring, established support for the position and instituted the shifts in power and responsibility required by the Special Act. The next Town Administrator must exhibit professionalism, superior substantive knowledge, and confidence.

Fairhaven has a number of elected positions, boards, and committees including: Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Board of Public Works, Planning Board, Board of Health, Housing Authority, Commissioner of Trust Funds, Town Clerk, and Town Moderator. Fairhaven has two fire stations, a central police department, one library, and its own school department with two elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. The elementary schools were built within the past eight years. High school students may also attend either Greater New Bedford Regional



Vocational-Technical High School or Bristol County Agricultural High School. The Town of Acushnet has no high school and Acushnet students are, therefore, able to choose from New Bedford High School, Fairhaven High School, Bristol Aggie, and GNBVTRHS. In recent years, Fairhaven has been successful in drawing many students from Acushnet and this has resulted in very significant financial benefit for the Town.

## Finances

Fairhaven has an FY21 operating budget of approximately \$52 million. The Town is typically conservative with its spending, but strongly supports investing in the upkeep of its historic buildings. In FY20, free cash was certified at \$4.39 million, the Town had a General Fund Stabilization Fund of \$3.09 million and General Fund Capital Stabilization Fund of \$5.66 million. The FY20 tax rate is \$11.06 for residential and \$22.04 for commercial, industrial, and personal properties. The property tax base is nearly 86% residential, about 10.7% commercial, and approximately 1% industrial. Nearly 45% of the Town's revenue comes from the tax levy, with about 17.3% from state aid. Local receipts bring in about 25% of the annual revenue. New growth in FY20 was \$229,325. The Town's non-Proposition 2½ excluded debt service ratio is currently 0.55% of the budget with projections that it will rise to 0.83% in FY22, 1.8% in FY23, 1.19% in FY24, and 1.11% in FY25. At the October Special Town Meeting, the Finance Committee noted that there was a 2021 shortfall in revenues of \$877,572. The amount has been covered through \$387,399 in cuts in the general fund operating budget and \$490,173 from free cash/surplus revenues.

Like most municipalities, Fairhaven is facing potential revenue constraints due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis as well as the overall pressure of increasing costs and infrastructure needs. Preferred Town Administrator candidates will have exceptional financial acumen with a proven record of building balanced budgets that reflect needs while adhering to the Town's financial policies and respecting its limited resources. It is important for the next Town Administrator to maintain the good working relationship with school officials that currently exists.

According to a 2017 Moody's issuer comment, Fairhaven has a robust financial position, and a strong socioeconomic profile with a sizable tax base. It has a moderate pension liability with an affordable debt burden. Commercial businesses are located primarily along Route 6. There is a desire for some economic development to help fund town services, support infrastructure needs and provide additional employment for residents, but available land is limited.

The Town has made a concerted effort in recent years to seek and apply for grants and has been very successful in doing so. The new Town Administrator should be willing to continue these efforts to add to Fairhaven's revenue and allow the Town to provide services that would not otherwise be attainable.



## Economic and Community Development

Fairhaven is a seaside community with a working waterfront. While retail trade is now the leading segment of the economy, fishing and ship maintenance are still important segments. Acushnet Company, a leading manufacturer of golf equipment, is located in Fairhaven, and there is a burgeoning healthcare-driven job cluster along Route 240. The Town's economic development goals include preserving the financial viability of the working waterfront, maintaining healthy commercial occupancies along Route 6 and other commercial areas, supporting mixed-use projects, support of small business incubation and growth, and collaboration with New Bedford and other area towns on workforce training and regional economic development. The Northeast Maritime Institute (NEMI), located in the Town Center, is a private college that offers training and education for careers in the maritime industry. Maritime-related business in Fairhaven represents a small but vital industry cluster and it is an important aspect of the Town's legacy and identity. The next Town Administrator should be ready to study the benefits an institution of higher education in the Maritime field provides in our community and be able to work with leadership at NEMI to support their expansion plans. As the Town is largely built-out, future development will mostly consist of redevelopment. Nearly 90% of businesses in Town can be considered "small business." Apart from the commercial and industrial areas and three working farms, Fairhaven is mainly a quiet residential community. The next Town Administrator will be expected to help advance the goals and objectives detailed in Fairhaven 2040, the Town's master plan.

### Important Links:

- [Town of Fairhaven](#)
- [FY21, FY20, FY19 Operating Budgets](#)
- [FY21, FY20, FY21 Capital Improvement Budgets](#)
- [2017 Moody's Issuer Comment](#)
- [Collective Bargaining Agreements](#)
- [2020 Town Meeting Warrant](#)
- [General Town Code](#)
- [Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan](#)
- [Community Development Strategy](#)
- [FY21 Policy Goals with Objectives](#)
- [Annual Town Reports](#)
- [Information on demographic trends](#)
- [Public Safety Facility Study](#)
- [HKT Architects Public Facilities Study](#)

## Open Space and Recreation

Fairhaven strives to preserve and protect its agricultural resources and landscapes, cultural and historic places, open space, recreational, and forest and marine resources. The Town has a total area of 14.1 square miles and 29.4 miles of shore property as well as significant rural areas, including three working farms. Fairhaven is home to a public state beach overlooking Buzzards Bay, two large public parks, several recreational marinas, commercial wharves, a yacht club, historical Fort Phoenix and the Rogers buildings, and provides free walking tours of scenic and historic sites. Candidates should understand the value of protecting open space, coastal waters, and historic structures. The Town is bordered by the Acushnet River and New Bedford to the west, Mattapoisett to the east, Buzzards Bay to the south, and Acushnet to the north. The Fairhaven Recreation Department oversees youth sports programs, a fitness room, a summer youth program, and school vacation programs as well as adult exercise, wellness, and day trip programs each year.

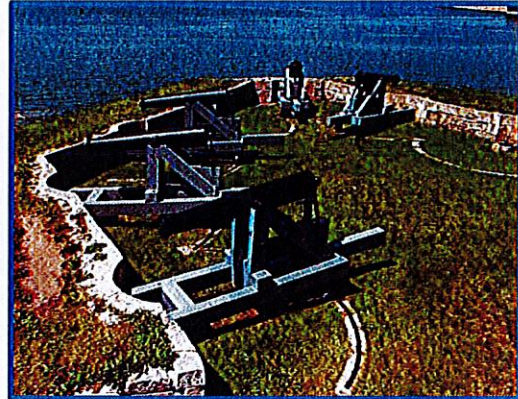
### Current projects

- Approximately \$30+ million for wastewater treatment plant upgrades to be funded through the Sewer Enterprise Fund via sewer user fees. This project is scheduled to begin in 2026.
- A \$1.4 million high school turf field project to be funded with surplus revenue and \$200,000 from the high school's trust fund.
- Ongoing maintenance of infrastructure.

### Potential projects

- Implementation of the \$110 million Public Facilities Improvement Plan of which the first priority is a new public safety facility, expected cost of about \$50 million, which would require a Proposition 2 ½ override.
- Work with committee to determine best use of the former Rogers School building.





### The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree (with advanced degree preferred), preferably in public administration, public policy, business administration, law, or a related field.
- Experience as a Town or City Manager/Administrator is preferred.
- Five years executive experience, managing a complex transparent organization similar in scale and complexity to the Town, preferably in a municipal setting, is preferred.
- Strong leadership, communication, and organizational skills.
- Strong financial acumen and budgeting skills.
- Economic and community development experience.
- Ability to unify; ability to break down silos.
- Ability to be fair but firm.
- Strong ability to articulate issues and achieve buy-in.
- Skilled in personnel management and collective bargaining.
- Analytical and technologically savvy.
- Forward thinking; strategic; diplomatic.
- A morale builder and creative problem-solver.
- Knowledgeable of municipal management best practices and ability to implement them.
- Team-oriented, innovative, highly ethical, and calm under pressure.
- Strong leadership qualities and experience.
- Enjoys engaging with the community.
- Ability to develop strong relationships.
- Experienced in goal setting and long-term planning.

### How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by November 29, 2020, 5:00 p.m. EST to:

[Apply@communityparadigm.com](mailto:Apply@communityparadigm.com)

**Subject: Fairhaven  
Town Administrator Search**

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

Bernard Lynch, Principal  
Community Paradigm Associates  
[Blynch@communityparadigm.com](mailto:Blynch@communityparadigm.com)  
978-621-6733

*The Town of Fairhaven, Mass., is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.*



## Memorandum

11-10-2020

To: Selectman Freitas and Selectman Silvia

From: Selectman Bob Espindola

**Subject: Town Administrator Search Committee**

I would like to reiterate what I said in our prior meeting about the Town Administrator Search Committee. I do not believe that a Selectman should sit on the search committee for the following reasons.

- 1) It does not place all three Selectmen on a level playing field in what is the most important decision we will make as a Board this year. If a Selectman sits on this committee, as the consultant we hired explained, that Selectman would have two bites at the apple.
- 2) If a Selectman sits on the Town Administrator Screening Committee that takes away a spot from someone in the community to have input in the process and I believe that input from a diverse group of people from the community is a very healthy part of the process.
- 3) The last time we went through this process everything went very well and no Selectman was part of the process, for the same reasons outlined in #1 and #2 above.

If I am outvoted on this, meaning you both decide that a Selectman should be on the screening committee, I would like to ask that the Selectman who makes the motion include an explanation for why you feel the person you are nominating is best suited of the three Selectman, to serve on the Committee.

Thank you,

CC: Mark Rees, Vicki Oliviera (Record)

## Fairhaven Town Administrator Screening Committee

### Committee Charge

The Town Administrator Screening Committee is responsible for presenting the names of 3-4 individuals, who shall be considered finalists, to the Town Board of Selectmen for consideration as appointment as the Town Administrator of Fairhaven. The Screening Committee members shall use their best judgment and understanding of the criteria for selection of the Town Administrator that is outlined in the Position Statement that has been prepared by the Town's recruitment consultant with the input and information of the Board of Selectmen and other town officials; and that will be utilized in conducting outreach to solicit candidates for the position. The Screening Committee shall work collaboratively with the Town's recruitment consultant in executing their responsibilities.

The Screening Committee's work shall include:

1. Meet to choose a committee Chairperson and Clerk
2. Meet with the Town's Recruitment Consultant to discuss questions regarding the Selectmen approved Position Statement, review process of interviews, discuss questions as prepared by recruitment consultant and possible additional questions, and set interview dates.
3. Receive and review resumes of Semi-finalists as presented by the recruitment consultant.
4. Conduct interviews of selected candidates utilizing established questions.
5. Compare the experience, qualifications and interview performance of candidates to identify up to 4 finalists for reference and background check by the recruitment consultant.
6. Meet with the recruitment consultant as needed to review the outcome of the reference and background checks and take a vote to present an unranked list of the chosen candidates to the Board of Selectmen.
7. Chairperson meets with the Board of Selectmen to present names and resumes of the Finalists.

It is anticipated that the work of the Screening Committee will be completed within eight weeks. The Committee shall function as a governmental body of the Town as defined in the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, and utilize the provisions of said law pertaining to Executive Session in order to act in the best interests of the Town. To the extent permitted by law, the Screening Committee shall maintain the names and any information about the candidates in strict confidence until its recommendations are presented to the Board of Selectmen. Names and information pertaining to candidates not chosen as Finalists shall be retained as confidential.