



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

September 1, 2021

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Adam Politzer, Interim Town Manager

SUBJECT: Receive update on the Town Manager recruitment and review and approve Town Manager recruitment brochure.

RECOMMENDATION

Review and approve Town Manager recruitment brochure.

DISCUSSION

At its July 7th Town Council meeting, the Council approved a Consultant Services Agreement with Ralph Anderson and Associates for recruitment services for the Town Manager. The fixed fee for recruitment services is \$26,500 for the Town Manager.

At its August 4th Council meeting, the Town Council received an update on the Town Manager recruitment and appointed Vice Mayor Hellman and Council member Coler to serve on an ad-hoc subcommittee to work with the Interim Town Manager, Town Clerk, and Heather Renschler with Ralph Andersen & Associates to prepare and review recruitment materials that will be finalized and approved by the Town Council at its September 1st Council meeting.

The ad-hoc subcommittee met twice on August 18th and 20th to review and finalize the recruitment brochure (attached). The ad-hoc subcommittee recommends that the Town Council review and approve the brochure and direct Heather Renschler to advertise the Town Manager position from September 7th – October 18th (application period).

Staff will provide an update at our October 20th Council meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT

No additional cost associated with this request.

ATTACHMENT

Proposed Recruitment Brochure



Town of Fairfax, California

invites your interest in the position of

Town Manager



A Unique Opportunity

The Town Council of Fairfax, California is seeking an engaging leader with exceptional interpersonal and communication skills and a strong passion for public service. Importantly, this top candidate will be very skilled at multi-tasking and handling a variety of tasks more typical in a smaller organization.

The ideal candidate will thrive in an environment that embraces an entrepreneurial spirit and approach to local government and foster a high level of customer service and responsiveness. The selected Town Manager will also bring an inclusive management style combined with a true appreciation for diversity, equity, and inclusion, with a commitment to social justice and environmental quality along with an emphasis on climate resilience. Additionally, this top candidate will continue to build on the extremely positive culture in the organization.

Collaboration skills and a passion for best practices in managing municipal services are key characteristics the Town Council will be looking for in the next Town Manager. Additionally, a thorough understanding of municipal finance, budgeting, community planning, and contracting for a wide range of services is of high importance to the Town Council. Although the Town is largely built-out, opportunities and challenges will be centered around providing new housing opportunities, including meeting affordable housing requirements, and addressing short- and long-term capital improvement program priorities and projects.

The new Town Manager will be focused on excellent customer service and responsiveness to support a progressive, engaged, and forward-thinking Town Council.

The Community

The Town of Fairfax is an environmentally conscious community situated in the heart of central/west Marin County. Incorporated in 1921, Fairfax has a population of approximately 7,500 nestled on 2.2 sq. miles with vast open space, trees and hillsides. Historic development patterns in Fairfax created a town with a distinct center, giving it a village-like feel, and providing a good public transit hub within walking and bicycling distance of most of the town's inhabitants.

The Town is very well known as a mountain/roadbiking and hiking mecca surrounded by open space, watershed lands and a nature preserve. As the Country's birthplace of mt. biking, it also houses The Marin Museum of Bicycling. The Town's setting and Mediterranean climate encourages outdoor activities all year-round. The location is ideally suited with many amenities such as San Francisco a short distance away, Pt. Reyes National Seashore and the Coastal Range to the west. The Mt. Tamalpais watershed, state and county parks are within and/or nearby.

The current town center creates a lively mixture of businesses and residences. The movie theater is the centerpiece of a vibrant nightlife with quality restaurants and many types of nightly live music. The Town's village-like character, reflected in the small businesses, quaint neighborhoods, and busy sidewalks, contribute to the sense of uniqueness about Fairfax.

Fairfax is a special place, loved by residents as well as visitors.





Governing Structure

The Fairfax Town Council consists of five members, who are elected at large by Fairfax residents for four-year terms. Elections are held every two years, with three Council Members elected in one cycle and two in the alternate cycle. Annually, the five Council Members select a Mayor and Vice Mayor from their ranks.

The Town operates under a Town Council-Town Manager form of government. Under this form of government, the Town Council is the legislative body responsible for setting Town policy, including the adoption of ordinances and land use regulations, the adoption of the annual Town operating and capital budget. The Council appoints the Town Manager and the Town Attorney (contract with an outside firm), as well as members of Town commissions, boards, and advisory committees.

Town Council meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month.

Current members of the Town Council and their elected term are as follows:

- Mayor Bruce Ackerman (Nov 2020-Nov 2024)
- Vice Mayor Stephanie Hellman (Nov 2019-Nov 2022)
- Barbara Coler (Nov 2020-Nov 2024)
- Chance Cutrano (Nov 2020-Nov 2024)
- Renee Goddard (Nov 2019-Nov 2022)



Key Council Goals for FY 2020/2021

(not in priority order)

- Adopted updated Climate Action Plan (8/2021) and consider implementation of the top priorities
- Continue to support racial equity and social justice throughout the Town and continue work toward making the Town more inclusive
- Update the Housing Element and related General Plan elements with a robust public outreach and education process to inform the community of the policy challenges the Town will be facing (e.g., regional housing needs allocation)
- Determine allocation of Federal Rescue and potential Federal Infrastructure funds
- Begin the process and hire a Department of Public Works (DPW) Director
- Begin construction of Pavilion seismic retrofit project
- Continue to repair sidewalks downtown
- Establish Community Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Explore uses for outdoor public spaces downtown, including connecting the East and West sides of downtown
- Finalize and implement a Tree Maintenance Plan
- Continue pedestrian trail improvements
- Adopt a short-term rental ordinance



Financial Overview

The Town of Fairfax is financially stable and has been well managed over the years. The recently approved [budget for FY2021-2022](#) shows an Operating and Capital Budget of \$18.2 million which includes:

- \$11,600,000 for General Fund operations
- \$1,200,000 for debt service and other special funds
- \$5,400,000 for CIP projects

The Town of Fairfax has a longstanding position of financial stability and effective fiscal management. It has taken early steps to minimize pension liabilities by re-financing debt obligations, saving millions of dollars over several years. Also, adding to the overall fiscal health of the organization and internal policies, financial audits conducted by an outside CPA firm continue to demonstrate a well-run municipal organization and all audits to date have been deemed “clean” with no material events or notations. Reserves are strong and projected to be approximately 32% of operating expenses at the end of this fiscal year, a testament to the skills and commitment of The Town’s small but mighty staff in partnership with the Town Council.

Importantly, the Town has its own Police Department that operates seven days per week, twenty-four hours per day which is the only municipality in Marin County to operate in this fashion. Interested candidates will also want to be aware that fire services are provided through a JPA, the Ross Valley Fire Department. Marin Municipal Water District provides water to the local community. The Town participates in several JPAs, notably the newly created Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (the first agency of its kind in California).



The Town Manager's Office

The Town Manager is appointed by the Town Council and serves at its pleasure. The Town Manager directs, coordinates, and manages the overall administrative activities and operation of the Town and advises and assists the Town Council while exercising significant independent judgment and initiative.

The Town Manager is responsible for 33.4 FTEs (28 F/T and 5.4 P/T) employees supported by Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with three employee groups (SEIU, Fairfax POA and the Management Group).

Importantly, candidates should be aware that the Town Manager was with the organization for more than eight years demonstrating a very stable work environment.



The Ideal Candidate

The Town Council is seeking a creative and innovative individual to employ a team approach in proactively addressing issues that impact the Town Council and the community. The new Town Manager will also embrace the culture of the organization and continue to promote the values held by the community for highly ethical, responsive, and efficient delivery of services. The Town of Fairfax has a very engaged and active community. Approachability, attention to detail, patience, responsiveness, innovation, and follow-through are key to success in this community.

Connection to the Town and its community, connection to the region, and sharing/learning from peers are important areas of focus for the Town Manager. As such, the Town Manager will be expected to be actively involved with the Marin Managers' Association on a regular and ongoing basis. This level of involvement is highly regarded by the Town Council and valued as an important part of the Town Manager's responsibilities. Additionally, the Town Manager will be expected to be knowledgeable about each Council Member's involvement on a variety of local and regional boards as well as involved to varying degree on the Town's use of the committee structure on a range of topics.

The Town Manager will also be an "idea" person, able to develop and promote strategic initiatives for the Town Council's discussion and consideration, while incorporating best practices in local government.

Additionally, the Town Manager will have a hands-on, collaborative approach to management with frequent interaction with staff and the Town Council, fostering an open dialogue and strong lines of communication. The Town Council desires a manager who enjoys working in the public sector and appreciates contributions from all sources within the organization as well as the community. Successful candidates will also promote the use of new and emerging technology in their approach to city management.

Since residency within the Town's jurisdiction is not required, the Town Council is open to considering candidates that would commute a greater distance thus allowing for an expanded pool of applicants. Further consideration and specifics of how this would be achieved through work schedule will need to be explored on a case-by-case basis with those invited to interview with the Town Council. A physical, daily, presence at Town Hall is required as this is the expectation of the Town Council regarding the Town Manager to be present to lead and manage staff as well as participating in civic and community events.



The Ideal Candidate *continued*

The Town Manager will have unquestioned personal integrity, display honesty, and have strong ethics. Additionally, the Town Manager will also have excellent communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to address issues with a collaborative and inclusive management style.

The ideal candidate will also possess or demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Genuine concern for preserving the quality of life presently offered to residents of Fairfax with an appreciation for the natural beauty of the area and a high regard for the importance of the environment, quality of life, and open space to local residents;
- Results-driven approach to municipal finance, public safety, and all aspects of municipal service delivery;
- Ability to promote a culture of exceptional customer service, service delivery that exceeds community expectations, effective and efficient operations, transparency, and overall community access;
- Confident style that will offer candid and open discussions and encourage the review of options and alternatives for the Town Council's consideration;
- Ability to provide leadership to both the Town Council and staff with the ability to set goals and objectives, motivate others, and contribute effectively to their timely achievement and successful performance; and
- Strategic thinking with the ability to be pro-active in a variety of management decisions.

The new Town Manager will provide strong leadership and be primarily involved in:

- Balancing an array of community needs including continuing the high-level of transparent, frequent, and open communications;
- Addressing ongoing infrastructure needs, service delivery, and public safety as well as overseeing overall enhancements through effective planning and community development for a built-out environment; and
- Continuing to promote and embrace the Town's tradition of providing a strong leadership role in intergovernmental relationships, local agencies, and boards.



Experience and Education

Review of Qualifying Experience and Education – The full Town Council will be actively involved with Ralph Andersen & Associates in the initial screening and evaluation of resumes to determine the appropriate match of professional experience and education.

- **Experience** – This position requires a minimum of five years of progressively responsible experience in municipal management including at least three years in a responsible middle management or higher capacity.

Ideally, candidates will have experience either as a department director, assistant/deputy town manager, or town/city manager level in the immediate region or in a more expanded area of Northern California that would be considered commutable. Although California municipal experience is highly regarded by the Town Council, all qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply for this position.

- **Education** – Candidates will have a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in public or business administration, or a closely related field. A Master's degree in these fields may be a plus.

Compensation

The Town Council is prepared to offer a competitive salary for the region consistent with recent practices including CalPERS Retirement (2%@55-Classic Member; 2%@62-New Member). A mutually agreeable at-will employment agreement will be negotiated and may include relocation assistance. Candidates should be aware that the Town of Fairfax does not participate in Social Security. Further details can be obtained through discussions with Ralph Andersen & Associates.

To Be Considered

Interested candidates may apply for this career opportunity by submitting a resume and compelling cover letter by **Monday, October 18, 2021, to apply@ralphandersen.com**. Candidates should be aware that the Town Council desires a smooth transition of leadership and, as a result, the Council, along with the Interim Town Manager, Adam Politzer, will work together to facilitate a smooth transition. Invited finalist candidates will be interviewed by the full Town Council in early-to-mid November. Anticipated start date will be January 2022 (or sooner).

This is a highly confidential search process. References will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established. Confidential inquiries are welcomed and should be directed to Ms. Heather Renschler, Ralph Andersen & Associates at (916) 630-4900. Alternatively, candidates may request or schedule a date/time for a discussion by emailing scheduling@ralphandersen.com.

The Town of Fairfax celebrates and strongly supports a vibrant and diverse workforce and encourages all highly qualified candidates to submit for consideration.

townoffairfax.org