

ITEMS TO CONSIDER WHEN SEARCHING FOR A NEW MANAGER / ADMINISTRATOR:

1. JOB DESCRIPTION

It could be argued that the most important piece of employment is the job description. It will be referred to throughout employment for guidance and review. The first step in choosing a manager is to have the board decide upon creating a new job description or reviewing and updating the current one if there is one. This is an important step since it creates the basis for discussion of what the municipality needs, or should demand, from a manager. Many of the duties are prescribed by state statute or in some cases in a municipal charter. The Board cannot alter those duties. We have a model job description that is excellent for the beginning of this process, or we could write one specific to your municipality's needs. Minimum qualifications must be discussed at some point, such as minimum experience, qualifications and educational requirements. Specific problems within the municipality should be reviewed and considered in terms of the manager's responsibilities. Problems of unclear responsibilities should be identified. VLCT's Municipal Assistance Center (MAC) can assist your municipality throughout this entire process, from the first discussion to approval of the final job description.

2. SALARY

The board must decide upon a salary, and we recommend including it in the job advertisement. It is important that this decision – which can be a salary range—be made up front. Using comparative salary data from VLCT surveys, the International City Management Association and current practice in the area for similar jobs, MAC staff can assist with the research and development of a salary while taking into consideration the total compensation including all benefits (e.g. insurances, retirement, leave). Some managers may need compensation packages different from other municipal employees because of the hours of work required or moving from job-to-job. The board should be prepared to deal with this issue in salary discussions. Furthermore, an increasing number of managers now insist on being covered by contracts or employment agreements. Frankly, these contracts mostly emphasize the termination of a relationship requiring, for instance, three months notice of dismissal or departure. VLCT can assist with development of such employment contracts.

3. SELECTION COMMITTEE

The board must determine the composition of the selection committee. There are several obvious alternatives, including having the full board be responsible for the entire process or delegating the initial work to a committee of the board or a "citizen's group." Different organizations have different ways of solving this, but the actual hiring must be done by the full board.

4. ADVERTISING STRATEGY

Advertising is important. VLCT has tried many combinations and will use the best option for your municipality. We recommend the following:

First, we would place an advertisement in an appropriate trade journal. The *International City Management Association* and the *American Society of Public Administrators* offer a combination of advertising in both their newsletter and on their website at reasonable cost. In addition, we often advertise in the *Times Argus/ Rutland Herald*, *Burlington Free Press*, *Seven Days*, and other local newspapers, depending on the position and your target audience. Also, a Sunday classified ad in the *Boston Globe* and Portland, Maine *Press Herald* may be desirable. VLCT and neighboring state leagues have websites offering free or low-cost advertising, as do some university public administration programs to target recent graduates and alumni. Posting on websites such as *www.careersingovernment.com* or *www.govtjobs.com* has also proven useful.

Most ads contain the population of the town, salary range, application deadline, budget size, and other pertinent information. The ads will be placed in local newspapers no more than three weeks before the application deadline. VLCT does this to minimize the local “pressure” for particular local candidates. The cost for advertising is generally around \$3,000. The bills will be sent to VLCT, which will, in turn, send your municipality an invoice.

5. SET A TIMETABLE

A timetable is important. Being realistic and starting early is essential. Three months from the placement of the ads is reasonable. Key elements of a timetable are:

ICMA NEWSLETTER.....	90 days from starting date
LOCAL ADVERTISING	80
APPLICATION DEADLINE	60
INITIAL SCREENING COMPLETE	50
SET UP INTERVIEW DATE	50
FIRST ROUND INTERVIEWS.....	45-40
BACKGROUND CHECK.....	40-30
SECOND INTERVIEW	35-30
JOB OFFER.....	30
STARTING DATE.....	0
WELCOMING RECEPTION	0
ORIENTATION	0

6. IN-HOUSE PROMOTION

There is no legal prohibition keeping you from offering a current employee the job and avoiding the entire recruitment process. That being said, internal candidates are often best able to succeed if they emerge as the candidate of choice through a competitive process.

7. THE APPLICATION

A lot can be discerned from a resume; a lot cannot. One needs to look not only at the content, but also at the way it is presented. If there are typos or if it's poorly laid out, vague or wordy, this could reflect on the person writing it. The resumes will be sent directly to VLCT to maintain confidentiality. MAC staff will grade and evaluate the resumes, and copies will be sent to each member of the search committee for further evaluation.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

This is very, very important. You must decide at the beginning how confidential or open you wish to make the process. Applicants should be notified before they submit their resumes or be given an opportunity to withdraw their application if it will be open. An applicant's current employment could be riding on this. We recommend a confidential application process in order to ensure you receive the best candidates.

There should be one public spokesperson. That person has to be careful regarding public comment, especially when discussing candidates. We recommend not publicly mentioning any names, except that of the successful candidate and only after the job is formally offered to the individual at a properly warned meeting.

9. THE WINNOWING PROCESS

The board will need to decide on a grading and ranking system (e.g. 1-5 with 1 being the best). VLCT has sample systems from previous searches and can offer insight and assistance. We will evaluate all candidates based on the chosen system and present this information to the selection committee.

10. INTERVIEWS

We recommend a two-step process, with the first round consisting of both in person and telephone interviews for individuals who live out of state. While the first round is typically used to ascertain qualifications, the second round is about "fit" and typically includes a tour of the municipality to meet the important actors.

We also recommend that each board member ask a standard question. That is, board member X asks each candidate, regardless of other questions he or she may ask, "Mr./Mrs./Ms. Candidate, do you feel that a municipality such as ours requires special effort and consideration?" VLCT can provide a list of sample questions to be used by the search committee.

11. INTERVIEW EXPENSES

Almost local public agencies outside Vermont – and a growing number within – are paying the expenses of an interview candidate, particularly for manager level positions. We recommend municipalities pay expenses on the first interview for those you want to interview in person, but to consider use of the phone to keep costs for out of state candidates down. You really should

pay for subsequent interviews. Some pro-rata sharing could also be considered (e.g. mileage but not meals or lodging, or a set dollar figure per candidate.). VLCT can communicate with the candidate to coordinate flight or driving and hotel arrangements to ensure the lowest cost with both the municipality and candidate's interests in mind.

12. REFERENCE AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

We can conduct a reference check as well as a civil and criminal background check. Timing is critical, as you want to conduct the reference check first and then typically make an offer that is conditional upon a civil and criminal background check. It is very important that it not "leak" who the final candidate is during this process. This work is really the highest value VLCT can add to your recruitment effort, given our knowledge of in-state candidates and our counterpart organizations in every state.

13. JOB OFFER

The job offer is important. It should be made rapidly, but not impetuously. It should be made verbally, and, upon acceptance, confirmed in writing. It is important that once a job offer is accepted, a welcoming and orientation program be planned and put into place. The new manager (and family) should be welcomed with a reception. The manager should be introduced to the municipal employees by the board chairperson at the beginning of his or her first day on the job.

Unsuccessful applicants need to know as soon as possible, and any loose ends should be completed. VLCT will send letters to all applicants to let them know the position has been filled.

14. MOVING EXPENSES

The board should consider budgeting a flat amount, or percentage of the total bill, to assist with relocation expenses for a successful candidate who needs to move. Do not commit to a "professional mover," or any carte blanche situation.

15. MANAGER'S CURRENT COMMITMENTS

A successful candidate might be currently employed or otherwise involved. Give the new manager a chance to give notice and clean up his or her affairs. A month should be allowed for this. If possible, the interim manager should be given an opportunity to orient the new manager on the current activities.

In conclusion, VLCT is ready to assist your municipality in any way you desire, with the exception of recommending an individual for the job. This is the municipality's responsibility; our specialty is the "leg work." We look forward to working with you to find the best leader for your municipality.

Sorted by VLCT Rank

Sample Municipal Manager Applicant Ranking

1 = Best
5 = Worst

App #	Last Name	First Name	Highest Education	General Mgm't	Personnel Mgm't	Financial Mgm't	Labor Relations	Community Relations	Local Gov	Town Mtg	VT Emp	Av'g Tenure	Rank	Notes
3			MPA	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	6.5	1	Extensive public management exp.
8			JD/MPA	1	1	1	1.5	7	3.25	1	0	1.5	1	Seems qualified; short tenures.
10			MA	22	29	29	29	29	29	29	0	4.5	1	Diverse background and well qualified.
17			MPA	13	15	13	13	15	17	10	0	3	1	Well qualified, seems to move around a lot.
27			MBA	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	0	7.5	1	Experienced manager from Maine.
34			MPA	22	25	22	22	22	12	3	0	5.5	1	Extensive local, regional, state exp in ME
6			BS	7	7	9	?	12	yes	yes	22	2.75	2	Lots of experience in Vermont local government.
14			MPA	9	9	9	9	16	13	5	0	10	2	Much relevant experience.
19			MPA	14	15	15	15	10	10	0	0	2	2	Extensive municipal background.
21			MBA	15	25	25	14	3	0	0	3	5.5	2	Extensive and diverse management exp; no muni.
22			MPA	9	15	20	9	9	19	9	10	5.25	2	Lots of municipal exp; knows Windham County.
26			BA	u/n	u/n	u/n	u/n	u/n	u/n	u/n	u/n	u/n	2	Lots of military management exp.
29			MA	7	17	11	7	17	17	17	17	5	2	Lots of Vermont municipal experience
30			BA	10	15	15	15	15	10	10	18	4.5	2	Lots of Vermont municipal experience
31			MPA	2	18	18	2	3	2	0	0	4.5	2	Extensive municipal experience.
32			MPA	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	0	u/n	2	Lots of management and environmental exp
33			MPA	6	6	9	4	7	7	7	0	3.5	2	A lot of municipal exp; financial orientation.
36			MBA	12	12	12	12	12	12	2	2	4	2	Varied NE management exp.
4			MBA	4	4	4	0	0	4	4	0	3.5	3	Some transferable skills.
5			JD	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	0	4	3	Extensive legal background; fit?
7			MPA	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	1.5	3	Engineer.
9			JD/MPA	2	2	2	2	2	3.5	0	0	0.8	3	Some experience in right direction.
12			JD	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	8	2	3	Seems to have short tenures.
13			BA	22	22	20	20	20	20	0	0	2.8	3	Diverse muni background, but no VT.
16			BA	0	1	0	0	7	7	0	0	3	3	Electoral experience only.
18			MPA/PhD	6	8	10	6	11	7	0	0	4	3	No cover letter.
20			BS	22	22	22	0	0	22	0	0	4.5	3	Not much management experience.
35			MPS, MS	13	13	13	13	1	1	0	0	3	3	Not much municipal exp.
1			MPA, JD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	No relevant experience
2			MS	0	3	0	0	1	2.5	0	0	1.25	4	Not much municipal exp.
11			MBA	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	0	0	2.25	4	No cover letter.
24			u/n	0	5	7	0	yes	12	2	0	3	4	No management experience.
25			BA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.5	4	No relevant experience
15			MPA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	5	Unqualified.
23			MPA	0	0	0	0	1.5	0	0	0	1	5	Unqualified.
28			BA	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	9.5	5	Unqualified.

Vermont League of Cities and Towns

Advertising Quotes for 2014 Town of Hinesburg Administrator Search

Newspaper/Website	Location	Advertising	2014 Estimated Costs	VLCT Recommended Costs	Actual Costs	Notes
ICMA Newsletter/website	National	Newsletter and Online 60 days	\$600/\$450			60 days online (renewable at no cost), newsletter included
Linkedin	National	Online 30 days	\$195.00			30 days online
Brattleboro Reformer	Vermont	Print/Mobile/Online - 1 Saturday	\$855.05			No Sunday publication. Ad can be run for any number of days. Includes 30 days mobile app/online Monster w/14-day auto refresh
Burlington Free Press	Vermont	2 Thursdays/2 Saturdays/ 2 Sundays	\$1,522.50			Medium sized ad 5"x6". 2 Thursdays/2 Saturdays/2 Sundays + online on CareerBuilder.com for 30 days
Rutland Herald/Times Argus	Vermont	Print/Online 3 days	\$516.00			3 days in the newspaper which includes any two weekdays plus one Sunday and 30 days online
Glassceiling.com	National	Online 30 days	\$99.00			A key resource for women determined to succeed in business. Visit http://www.glassceiling.com/about/ for more details.
Seven Days	Vermont	Print/Online/Twitter	\$774.00			One week in newspaper plus online and Twitter link Deadline Monday noon for Wednesday edition
Jobsinv.com	Vermont	Online 30 days	\$249.00			Opti-Fit subscription / company profile / network of online postings 30 days online
MA Municipal Association	Massachusetts	Online 30 days	\$270.00			\$270 for online - March 21 Deadline for April publication
Maine Municipal Association	Maine	Online 30 days	No Charge		No Charge	
New Hampshire League of Municipalities	New Hampshire	Online 30 days	\$150.00			Please note that in October 2013 we were notified that New Hampshire League of Municipalities now charges a fee to publish on their website
VLCT Newsletter and website	Vermont	Online 30 days	No Charge		No Charge	
Electronic distribution to VLCT contacts	Vermont	N/A	No Charge		No Charge	
UVM MPA Program	MPA Alums	Online	No Charge		No Charge	
Norwich University Career Development Center	Vermont	Online	No Charge		No Charge	
Maxwell School of Public Administration Website	National	Online 30 days	No Charge		No Charge	
Rockefeller College - SUNY	MPA Alums	Online	No Charge		No Charge	
Vermont Law School	Vermont	Online until deadline	No Charge		No Charge	
Total Potential Cost						The estimated cost is based on the highest prices quoted.

**VLCT Background Check Services
Available Through Burgess Loss Prevention**

Fee Structure

Comprehensive Check \$350.00

Verify Social Security Number

Previous address confirmation

Criminal Records Statewide Records for State of Residence* (if available)
 Or if Statewide Records are not available the County of Residence

Federal Court for State of Residence

National Crime Supplement

Civil court Records for the county of residence (In VT all counties except Franklin)

Sex Offender Registries (All available states)

Federal Court Bankruptcy Search for State of Residence

State Driving History for State of Residence

Education Verification for most recent degree

Patriot Act Search (Nationwide)

Additional Checks Available

Additional Criminal Records (per State or County) \$45.00

Additional Civil Records (per County) \$20.00

Additional Federal Criminal Records (per Federal Districts) \$25.00

* In addition to fees listed above, VLCT charges \$85 an hour for staff time spent obtaining releases, conducting reference checks, coordinating with Burgess Loss Prevention, etc.