

City of Watertown



CITY MANAGER FINALISTS

APRIL 2022



COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

John Curran

Finalist

Watertown City Manager



John C. Curran
[REDACTED]
Woburn, MA 01801

March 10, 2022

Mark Sideris, Chair
City Manager's Screening Committee
c/o Watertown City Hall
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472

Dear Mr. Chairman

Please accept this letter and attached resume for the Watertown City Manager's position. I feel confident that my experience, background and sincere dedication to municipal management will serve me well in helping Watertown continue its progressive tradition and fulfill the goals established by the recent charter changes. It is clear to me that the community and its' leaders have a desire to increase public involvement and increase transparency in local government. The addition of a community engagement officer and a council analyst will help on both of those fronts.

I am acutely aware of the challenge today with public involvement. Social Media has been a powerful venue to help people be more connected to their local government – particularly during a pandemic. Conversely, misinformation proliferated on social media can quickly change the trajectory on *even* positive public initiatives. I have been very aware of this challenge and made it the subject of my capstone for my MPA in 2015.

Since that time my office has been very engaged in disseminating information to the public to positively inform people of local initiatives and dispel any errant information that can quickly take hold in electronic mediums. While all of this is important, municipal leaders must not lose sight of the importance of developing and maintaining relationships as well as collaborating with community groups. I look forward to this opportunity in a community that is growing and changing like Watertown.

I know that you and your colleagues will be focusing on the experience and accomplishments of candidates as well as selecting a candidate that is the "best fit" for your vibrant and diverse community. I believe my experience and accomplishments are uniquely suited for Watertown. While I am happy in the current position I hold I cannot pass up the opportunity to pursue a position that is so appealing and so closely fits with my experience and background. I am excited about the prospect of meeting with you and the members of the City Manager Screening Committee to discuss this rare opportunity.

My background of chief executive experience in both a city and a town makes me uniquely qualified for your City Manager's position. I look forward to the opportunity of discussing this with you. I am happy to provide references upon request.

I can be reached at (781) [REDACTED] or by e-mail at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,


John C. Curran

JOHN CURRAN

[REDACTED], Woburn, MA 01801



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/john-curran-548b744b/>



PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Results Oriented Municipal Leader with twenty years of experience in the manager role in both a city and a town. Positioned philosophically to move communities forward as opposed to maintaining the status quo. Demonstrated ability to facilitate community initiatives whether it is building a new high school or establishing universal kindergarten. Strong record of improving the financial position of each community served while constantly investing in infrastructure. Proactive in reaching out to community groups to help them achieve their goals that are consistent with those of the community.

SKILLS

- Building consensus around community goals using modern and traditional communication venues such as social media and town meetings.
- Recognizing changing environments and using them to create opportunities rather than build resistance.
- Negotiating contracts and establishing a level of trust and respect for success.
- Reinventing government services to be efficient and innovative.
- Building a diverse team of individuals that bring differing perspectives and are encouraged to challenge conventional thinking.
- Managing and navigating through municipal projects that involve different agencies and stakeholders.
- Building and developing collaborative relationships with individuals and groups that do not always share the same philosophies.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Town Manager, Town of Billerica

(population 43,000)

January 2010- present

(budget \$143,000,000)

Serve as Chief Administrative Officer of a Town with a strong Town Manager form of government and an equalized valuation worth 8.4 billion dollars. Manage 380 town employees. Prepare, implement and manage town budgets. Negotiate all contracts on behalf of the Town. Advise the Select Board on matters of policy. Manage the day-to-day operation and staff of the town.

- Earned two Credit Rating increases – the Town has an S&P Rating of AA+ with a stable outlook and a Moody's Rating of AA2. Rating agencies consistently cite strong fiscal management as major contributing factor to positive ratings.
- Achieved \$25 million excess levy capacity through strong economic growth and conservative budgeting. The town has experienced unprecedented new growth of over \$16.8 million over the past five years
- Established high level of professionalism by creating an Assistant town Manager's Position, a Director of Planning and Community Development, a Director of Administrative Services and a Human Resources Director.
- Reestablished the Affordable Housing Trust and used CPA Funds to fund housing initiatives. Recently used ARPA funds to establish a Minimum Down Payment Program for first time home buyers

- Crafted a capital plan to build out \$260 million of sewer collection and wastewater treatment work over 20 years.
- Implemented a debt stabilization policy that has resulted in the \$22 million in debt stabilization fund.
- Managed the MSBA process and construction process associated with a \$30 million elementary school and a \$176 million high school.
- Entered into two separate Solar Energy Agreements to maximize the amount of solar credits the Town can receive from the state making Billerica a Green Community.

Town Administrator, Town of Maynard

(population 10,500)

April 2006- December 2009

(budget \$33,000,000)

Served as the Chief Administrative Officer of a Town with an equalized valuation worth over 1.4 billion dollars, an operating budget worth 33 million dollars, a population of 10,500 people. Managed 100 employees. Prepared, implemented and managed Town budgets. Managed the day-to-day operations and staff of the Town.

- Restructured financial departments in the town. Converted Town from Statutory Accounting System to a Municipal Accounting System (UMAS).
- Conducted internal audits to assess internal controls and state of the Town's books.
- Implemented the acquisition of a new assessor's system. Audited and converted all assessing data to new system resulting in significant gains in omitted assessments and or new growth.
- Managed the construction of new Maynard Police Station.
- Managed, in capacity as Chief Administrator and School Building Committee Member the MSBA feasibility process and schematic design associated with a \$40 million new high school project for the Town.
- Implemented and managed a major renovation of Town Hall.
- Advised Town Boards and facilitated the implementation of significant changes to the downtown district that encouraged mixed use and revitalization.
- Negotiated development agreements on behalf of the Town. Secured over \$2 million in mitigation impact funds on a \$70 million-dollar mixed use development
- Managed a \$10 million upgrade to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Mayor, City of Woburn

(population 38,000)

January 2002 - January 2006

(budget \$98,000,000)

Served as the Chief Executive Officer of a city, under a strong mayor form of government, with an equalized valuation worth over 5 billion dollars, an operating budget worth 98 million dollars, a nighttime population of 38,000 people and a daytime population of close to 100,000. Managed approximately 400 employees. Prepared, implemented and managed city budgets. No loss of service or personnel was realized during this administration.

- Restructured financial departments in the city.
- Improved City's Bond Rating.
- Negotiated labor contracts with five collective bargaining units within the city.
- Initiated and presided over the first master planning process in nearly four decades.
- Oversaw revitalization of the downtown redevelopment in conjunction with the Woburn Redevelopment Authority.
- Negotiated with private developers to ensure that new development in the city was consistent with the planning and future growth needs
- Initiated and managed the public approval process, the financing and construction of the new Woburn Memorial High School and White Elementary School, an 81-million-dollar project.
- Initiated the construction of nine parks and recreational facilities through public/private partnerships.

Grant Writer, Middlesex Sheriff's Office
Alderman at Large, Woburn, Massachusetts
Woburn Planning Board

1998-2001
1999-2001 1992-1995
1996-1999

PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCE

Senior Systems Analyst, Investors Bank and Trust
Senior Fund Analyst, Investors Bank and Trust

1996-1998
1988-1996

OTHER AFFILIATIONS

Massachusetts Municipal Association

Member

1992-present

Massachusetts Municipal Managers Association

Member 2006-present

Middlesex 3 Coalition

Member and past Treasurer Board of Directors

2010-present

EDUCATION

Education:

2015 **University of Massachusetts - Boston**
Masters in Public Administration
Inducted into Pi Alpha Alpha, the International Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration

1988 **Boston College**
B.A. Psychology Management Program

1984 **Woburn High School**

John Curran

Reference Comments

The following comments were provided by four individuals, including: a retired Billerica Chief of Police; the Billerica Superintendent of Schools; the Reverend of a Billerica church; and the Town Manager of a neighboring community.

- John Curran has succeeded for 12 years in a town known for its very tough political environment. Financially, he has put the town in a significantly better place and he is a strong communicator who listens well to residents, staff, and volunteers. He is very disciplined financially and made the town become disciplined; he got us on a long-term financial plan.
- John lets department heads do their jobs; he doesn't micromanage and he's there to support you in any way you need. You have to justify what you request, but once you do, he backs you.
- The town built a new high school and an elementary school while keeping the tax rate stable because he has a long-term financial plan. Those projects succeeded at Town Meeting because 240 elected representatives trust John; they trust his judgement, his knowledge, and his skills.
- His budgeting is innovative; he very much looks to the future.
- John is very approachable; he has a lot of compassion for employees and residents; he listens and he is able to work with everyone. He is very good about two-way communication and understanding where people are coming from in their opinions and concerns.
- He was able to gain support for a couple of large solar arrays here, including one on a superfund site. He got the town involved with municipal aggregation which people were skeptical of, but now love the program because it saves them money. He's used CPA funds to purchase property along the Concord River for open space.
- John is a leader. He's collaborative, but he guides people in the right direction. He's tough when it's called for; he definitely doesn't tolerate misconduct. He is highly ethical, highly principled.
- He practices participative management with department heads, but if something needs to be done immediately, he'll say this is what has to happen and you need to get on board.
- Billerica should have a AAA rating but for the demographics. John's financial skills are incredible. He's funded projects, created strong reserves, and the town is under its levy limit. He is a strong fiscal manager.
- John collaborates well with other managers and communities. We've coordinated on emergency shelters, work together on economic development on Middlesex 3, had a regional solid water contract with a total of four communities, and looked into doing a regional public safety communications center but the chiefs opposed it.
- John has been a great partner with the school department; he values schools and doesn't believe in pitting the municipal side against the school side. At budget time, we sit down and work the numbers out together.
- Six or seven years ago, at the height of the opioid epidemic, I mentioned how we'd love to have educators at the elementary school level to talk about the basics of prevention. I said it would cost about \$250,000 and John made it happen. We ended up hiring six health educators and a substance abuse coordinator for the town. John said it was too important to not happen and he found a way.



- He got a \$176M high school and a \$30M elementary school approved. Watching John explain and sell the long-term plan of how we would manage the debt, and watching how he has managed the finances over the years, has been amazing. Today, there's virtually no discussion on finances and debt because people know he knows what he's doing.
- We basically had a traveling road show for the high school project, going to PTOs, Council on Aging, the Rotary, etc. John was a huge part of that. He's visible; he's involved. He believes in transparency and consistent communication. He hired a social media liaison who has since become Assistant Town Manager.
- John is a strong leader who knows how to create a vision and how to get people to buy into that vision.
- He understands cities and knows how to manage a city; he's done it before. He understands the Council-Manager form of government; he'd hit the ground running.
- John takes financial management – immediate, short-range, and long-range – to a whole new level. His forecasting abilities are phenomenal.
- Town Meeting used to take many nights to get through and now it is sometimes over in a single session because the representatives trust John and they trust the information he gives them.
- John has helped implement a co-responder program with several communities that has a mental health professional responding to certain calls with the police officers. He has also talked about having mental health counseling accessibility for senior citizens. With COVID, we started having an officer visit homes with a Senior Center outreach person because of increasing isolation issues.
- I don't like to think of John possibly leaving Billerica. He is one of the best people I have ever worked with. There were town initiatives, such as substance abuse prevention, that I, as a Reverend, felt the church should be involved with and John agreed. I first got to know John when the food pantry needed a new home. The clergy association formed a 501(c)(3) and we now operate it from a town building. He recognized this as a town issue and was eager to assist. He works to bring people together to get things done.
- Even though politics in town can become very heated and sometimes nasty, John can maintain his professionalism. I am impressed by his ability to not take things personally. He is great at making connections with and for people; he's not afraid to reach out and to pull people together. He can separate himself from the politics.
- He attends events in the community and he's become part of the community even though he doesn't live here. John has always been good at making sure people feel safe and welcome. For example, on Monday he is going to come by the masjid for Iftar at the end of the daily Ramadan fast.
- John is a visionary thinker. He considers the long goal, how the community is developing, are we headed where the community wants to go. He looks for what the community, as a whole, wants. He's good at finding balances.
- During the 2008 economic downturn, Billerica lost a lot of business. He works hard to encourage businesses to come to Billerica and for them to give back to the community. We may approach a business and discover that John has already mentioned the community pantry to them and suggested it as a good way to assist the community.
- He hires strong, talented people who work hard and are dedicated. He is a good judge of character.
- He is concerned about climate change. In the design of the new DPW building, John looked to construct a more sustainable building. He has put in solar arrays and actually helped the church navigate the permits and approvals to put 77 solar panels on the church hall which is a historic building. The church is net zero now.
- John is well informed about current events and considers how they impact the community and how the community should respond.



Norman Khumalo

Finalist

Watertown City Manager



NORMAN KHUMALO

Uxbridge, MA 01569

(508)

March 10, 2022

Bernard Lynch, Principal
Community Paradigm Associates
One Saddleback, Plymouth MA 02360

Dear Bernard Lynch:

I am writing in response to the City of Watertown's search for its next talented City Manager. I believe my qualifications and experience match your requirements.

I take great pride in my ability to collaborate with a community in developing and managing organizations, departments and programs that are anchored in engagement, generate high value and a focused commitment to community development and quality results. The diversity of responsibilities from manager to strategic and operational planner has prepared me very well to take on new and exciting challenges in a larger community. I have successfully built effective departments, managed large scale capital projects, negotiated and established major relationships, established effective interaction with boards, among colleagues and other institutions and developed a high degree of mutual commitment and trust among those with whom I have worked.

My emphasis on quality programming, positive outcomes and attention to budgets has given me a strong appreciation for, and sensitivity to, the complexities in meeting the diverse needs of multiple constituencies. I know how to balance conflicting priorities and create a clear strategic and tactical direction to deliver outstanding results. I am particularly proud of my accomplishments in:

- Managing budgets and resources to optimize community needs yet meet budgeted parameters.
- Facilitating development of long range financial, infrastructure/capital and community development plans and effectively promoting those plans and ensuing projects to constituencies for funding and implementation.
- Developing and implementing plans in cooperation with diverse disciplines to tailor programs that are sustainable and deliver positive and ongoing results.
- Working with boards, civil society and others throughout the community to tailor enrichment and service enhancements to constituencies in ways that focus on real goals that deliver results.
- Implementing objectives with innovative and entrepreneurial programs that have generated trust and confidence in my teams' and my abilities.
- Applying my training in participant observation to better immerse myself in a community, understand the centrality of culture in motivating social action, how communities interact, and why communities do what they do.
- Applying my advocacy and coalition building experience to facilitate coordinated strategic activities that aim to bring about desired and lasting change in relation to social, economic and environmental issues – especially in the context of communities in transition and

y u y, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) m h a, sustainability
and human rights.

While my enclosed resume g c e ld very much
appreciate an opportunity to r e w y e of rc e to discuss my
qu n and where you can e son behind the
resume, and I can more substantiv em y n ire an excellent
match.

Sincerely,



Norman Khumalo

NORMAN KHUMALO

Uxbridge, MA 01569

Highly talented Town Manager with significant success in creating and implementing operational strategies seeks to apply his extensive skills to a municipal organization. An intentionally collaborative and highly entrepreneurial spirit that offers a rare combination of superior management skills coupled with a keen understanding of what it takes to succeed as a community. A creative, analytical thinker able to translate board directives and community aspirations into cost-effective solutions, create practical budget-driven plans and manage expectations in facilitating and delivering practical, measurable results. Acknowledged for the ability to collaborate, identify, plan, and coordinate while establishing rapport with diverse disciplines to solve problems. Qualified by:

- Program Development/Evaluation
- Board Development/Collaboration
- Staff Development and Leadership
- Creative, Resourceful Problem Solving
- Inter-agency Collaboration
- Strategic and Tactical Planning
- Revenue and Expense Management
- Community Engament Programs
- Needs Assessment
- Policy/Regulatory Compliance

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Town Manager - Hopkinton, Massachusetts

2009-Present

Town Manager for a rapidly growing town of approximately 19,000. Responsible for the day-to-day management of town departments, collective bargaining, budget development and management, and strategic and operational planning.

- Effectively collaborated with the Select Board, Appropriations Committee, Department Heads and town boards to upgrade the town's credit rating from AA to AAA.
- Collaborated with the Select Board, Visioning Steering Group and various stakeholders to develop the Town's vision statement.
- Collaborated with boards and staff to initiate and institutionalize a repeatable strategic planning process for goal setting, linking the budget process to the town's overall strategic goals.
- Successfully worked with local boards and staff to qualify and certify the town as a "green community"; create the Climate Action Workgroup; and facilitate Hopkinton's participation in the Department of Public Utilities' Stakeholders Process in investigating the role of gas local distribution companies as the Commonwealth achieves its target 2050 climate goals.
- Successfully re-organized the permitting departments into a consolidated, one-stop shop land use, planning and permitting office; created and implemented the Assistant Town Manager role; consolidated the treasury/accounting/assessors offices into a Finance Department headed by a Chief Financial Officer; and, in collaboration with area town managers, created the MetroWest Veterans Services District serving the towns of Medway, Hopkinton, Ashland and Holliston.
- Implemented the first Engineering and Facilities Department to support the town's capital/asset management and sustainability goals; the procurement department to manage

spend and ensure compliance; and professionalized an effective Youth and Services Department to address youth needs and mental health.

- Secured multi-million grants expanding the town's grant portfolio to fund town infrastructure and key strategic initiatives; including \$2.6M in grant funding to complete inter-municipal sewer agreement to support job creation and expansion of the town's sewer capacity.
- Successfully facilitated the institutionalization of the Town's Marathon Invitational Entry Program which now raises approximately \$300,000 annually for local civic organizations.
- Initiated and facilitated the Caring Community Initiative as the focal point for providing high quality customer service and care for town staff and residents, including working with local civic and faith organizations to create a functional network of care in Hopkinton.
- Successfully negotiated labor contracts, host community agreements, tax increment finance agreements, health insurance and strategic land-purchases for the Town.

Assistant Town Manager - Westford, Massachusetts

2002-2009

Assistant Town Manager for a rapidly growing town of 25,000. Responsible for managing permitting, engineering, animal control, building custodial services departments. Assisted the Town Manager in collective bargaining, budget development and management, and strategic and operational planning.

- Initiated and received Town funding for a consensus-based Comprehensive Master Plan process.
- Streamlined the Permitting Department's application review process which directly increased communication and collaboration between major land use boards. The result was a more efficient project review process and consensus planning on long-term public-private capital financing strategy.
- Instituted a goal setting process for Planning Board and facilitated an annual goal-setting session for Board of Selectmen as a foundation of the department's work program.
- Proposed, obtained funding and implemented a town wide permitting software program that improved customer service and strengthened information sharing across departments.
- Conceived and implemented an inter-municipal agreement with the Westford Housing Authority that reduced duplication and costs relative to the Town's affordable housing program.
- Restructured the engineering department into a town-wide service department.
- Negotiated infrastructure improvements and open space acquisitions as part of large scale project review to offset fiscal impacts on town services.

Interim Town Manager - Westford, Massachusetts

Feb –Aug 2008

Interim Town Manager for a municipality of 25,000 with responsibility for Town departments, collective bargaining, budget development and strategic planning.

- Led a consensus-based budget process and streamlined budget planning that successfully reconciled and received approval for an \$84M annual operating budget.
- Planned, coordinated and successfully supported the 2008 annual town meeting process.
- Finalized negotiations with two unions.
- Proposed and implemented a bid process for Town insurances resulting in significant cost savings in the Town's general insurance.

Town Planner – Walpole, Massachusetts

2002-2004

Town Planner for a community of 26,000 with responsibility for providing planning department oversight, budget development and management, implementing Planning Board goals and developing a strategic long range plan and targets for implementation.

- Negotiated with private sources to ensure adequacy of town services to support new large projects at no additional cost to the town while protecting private aesthetic concerns.
- Coordinated the preparation of the Town's Master Plan. This project significantly improved clarity and visibility to town's land use and strategic planning matters.

Planner - Wellesley, Massachusetts

1998-2002

Provided staff support to the Design Review Board and Historic District Commission, and when called upon the Planning Board. Developed and prepared reports including, but not limited to zoning research and analysis, site plan review, design review, community planning studies and comprehensive planning.

- Created and implemented a fee schedule for land use applications and projects.
- Proposed, secured private funding and designed the Public Parking and College Institutions directional signs.

Transportation Project Manager – Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Lawrence, MA

1997 - 1998

Directed the development, implementation and supervision of a regional multi-agency transportation database project, including planning scheduling, coordination and expediting contracts, service schedules and project reports.

- Worked with software vendor to continually update and improve database technology and project management software, including MS Access and Project Manager. Won follow up funding and contracts.
- Created a public/private partnership that delivered transportation for elders in the Merrimack Valley.

Africa Regional Manager - OXFAM AMERICA, Boston, MA

1995 – 1997

Directed and supervised all operations of this international development organization's Africa program, operating in 15 countries, and performing projects for indigenous organizations, government departments as well as private sector clients and international entities. Provided technical services in project management and grant approval. Represented Africa program in relations with Board, donor meetings, and in respect to advocacy, public outreach and agency policy formulation.

- Designed and coordinated Oxfam America's response to the Rwanda genocide and Great Lakes region crisis.

Southern Africa Program Coordinator - OXFAM AMERICA, Boston, MA

1993 – 1995

Provided programmatic and administrative backstopping to the Southern Africa program. Designed, coordinated and monitored multiple grants and project plans.

- Co-led the Southern Africa Educational Campaign, advocating on behalf of the region's countries in transition.

Senior Town Planner - CITY OF BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe 1990 – 1991
Under the direction of the Chief Planner, assisted in the development of the city’s comprehensive planning program. Acted as the city’s spokesperson on a daily basis with the general public, government officials and other city departments. Prepared presentations and met with the public to prepare and explain comprehensive plans. Reviewed and drafted zoning ordinances and other land use controls.

Town Planner CITY OF BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe 1988 - 1990
Participated in the development of local development plans and land use maps. Collected analyzed and managed data to support planning studies.

EDUCATION

M.A. Public Administration (Carleton University, Canada)	1993
M.Sc. Regional and Urban Planning (University of Zimbabwe)	1987
B.Sc. Honors Sociology (University of Zimbabwe)	1985

On the job training and specialized training in Google Suites, MS Word, Access, Excel, PowerPoint, Project, GIS, Munis

Norman Khumalo

Reference Comments

The following comments were provided by six individuals, including: a former Select Board Chair in Hopkinton; a former member of the Hopkinton Select Board; a former member of the Wellesley Select Board; a municipal Town Counsel; a former Town Manager to whom the candidate once reported; and a department head in Hopkinton.

- I worked with Norman Khumalo when I was on the Select Board in Hopkinton and found him to be a strong leader and a skilled communicator.
- Our local elections are partisan, so we debate national issues on the local level and he has done a great job navigating those waters. His strong listening skills help.
- Hopkinton is a fast-growing community and Norman is judicious with our tax dollars. He doesn't shy away from doing projects, but he is careful with how the money is spent. We have built a \$12M library expansion, new school, a police station, and athletic fields.
- To move our downtown corridor project forward, Norman had to work to take a piece of land from a business to straighten the intersection. He worked with business, Mass. DOT, federal transportation, and the legislative body on this. It's a \$15M project that is costing the town about \$4M with the rest coming from state and federal money.
- Norman is very aware of the challenges in society today related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. There has been an influx of residents from other areas, and we also have townies with families that have been here for generations and don't want change. He is able to facilitate those challenging conversations with people.
- We have done a couple of TIF agreements to help entice business to town. One firm was given a TIF and left in three years. Norman led the charge to get \$800,000 back from the firm as was owed to the town in accordance with the TIF agreement. He is a good negotiator and can hold the line.
- When we renovated and expanded the library, there were some neighbors opposed to it, but Norman worked with them, as well as with the trustees, Friends group, and other residents. The trustees raised \$3 million and the project was eventually brought to Town Meeting and passed. It was a 2-3 year process that someone less patient might have tried to force through or given up on. Norman is patient. I expect him to make everything work because he always does.
- Hopkinton has actually passed two or three Proposition 2½ overrides of about \$1 million each. Norman's attention to detail helped us achieve that. The Legacy Farms mixed-use development put a good amount of money into our coffers which helped.
- I hired Norman in Westford. He is engaging, charming, and doesn't get rattled. He has an ability to steer and guide people without beating them over the head. He understands how things do, and should, fit together. He knows how to move things forward.
- As planning and land use director, he was heavily involved with the permitting and land use issues of the Cornerstone Square development in Westford which has retail and office space along Route 495. He did a great job keeping things moving.
- Norman understands the levers available to him that he can push and pull to accomplish tasks and goals. He is very charismatic and can lead with the force of his personality even when the actual authority of decision-making in the Town Charter resides with the Select Board.
- He brought discipline to the budgeting process, Town Meeting process, and HR process, and singlehandedly turned town government into an actual functioning and organized institution. Norman needed to navigate the transition of Hopkinton from a sleepy little town to an important hub in MetroWest, where the population has doubled in about 10 years.



- The political climate in Hopkinton has changed since Norman first came here, from more conservative leaning to having more liberal-leaning residents moving in. It is important that a manager be able to deal with change in the political climate over time and Norman has been able to do that. He has built a government structure that functions, is able to accommodate changes in the community over time, and provides leadership that inspires people to pull together.
- We have had some high-tech and bio-tech businesses come into town, which has been financially helpful to our fiscal well-being.
- Norman has been instrumental in making municipal government more inclusive here. Over the past 10 years, the community has become much more diverse and he has been working to diversify municipal government in the areas he has control over, plus he does what he can to influence the decision-making process regarding hires in the areas over which he does not have direct control, such as police and fire.
- There is a gigantic LNG storage facility in town that is in the process of being upgraded. When the DPU holds proceedings regarding the future of gas, Norman has our community participating in the process. We are one of three or four communities, including Boston, that is participating. We continue to stress the need to prepare for significant facilities to be decommissioned.
- Norman got the Select Board to create a Sustainability Committee to work on a sustainability strategic plan for the town.
- He knows how to think strategically. He asks thoughtful questions, thinks things through before acting, and thinks several moves ahead.
- I have been a direct report for 11 years and Norman is by far the most understanding and supportive boss I've had. He strives for excellence in public service. He is masterful in working with boards, committees, and residents. We had Town Meeting at the height of the pandemic and taxes were going up and some people were outraged. Norman took the microphone and said he understands the challenges faced by community members but also understands the community as a whole has needs – schooling for children, roads fixed and plowed so families can get home, etc. He made people understand why taxes were increasing and ultimately they supported it.
- He knows how to handle difficult situations. There was a DPW worker who talked back in an aggressive manner to a resident on the Town Common. The resident came to me and then we went to Norman. We brought in the employee, who was extremely upset, saying he was looked down on by community members and Norman turned it into almost a counseling session. They talked at length about it. The employee was suspended, but he felt heard and understood.
- During the budgeting process, Norman listens to the rationale behind requests. He asks pointed questions and what other options have been considered. We'd never had a procurement manager until four years ago when Norman described the reasons and it has paid off. He will push for needs that benefit the community.
- Norman is a consensus builder. He trusts and empowers his department heads. There's very little turnover from his direct reports; he backs and supports us. DEIB is a big initiative for us; Norman has implemented a lot of training for department level managers. The Select Board signed a pledge regarding DEIB three years ago and Norman is good at taking directives and policies from the Board and making sure they are understood and followed by department heads. He points out that we need to cast a wide net in advertising and recruiting to include diverse populations.
- Norman has recognized that our water supply is not sustainable and we're looking at connecting to the MWRA supply line in a \$32M project.
- He is skilled in contract negotiations to best serve the town and the employees.
- Norman cares about employees; he pushed for earlier committee meetings because he knows work/life balance is important. He's accessible and approachable.



George Proakis

Finalist

Watertown City Manager



George J. Proakis, AICP
Melrose, Massachusetts 02176

email: [REDACTED] / phone: [REDACTED]

March 9, 2022

Mr. Bernard Lynch
Principal, Community Paradigm Associates

Dear Bernie:

As you know from our work together in Lowell and my recent work in Somerville, building high-capacity teams in local government, and working with that team to develop and implement a community vision have been my passion and work for the past two decades. While I have not held the title "City Manager", I have been involved in large and small decisions in many facets of local government every day. In Somerville, I have become the person who is often called upon to summarize a new proposed policy before the city council, participate in hiring department heads, mentor new senior staff, frame our new growth for bond agencies and advise the Mayor on complex policy issues. After two decades involved in many aspects of city government, I believe that the sixty-eight member staff that I lead in Somerville is one of the most effective and creative local government teams in the Commonwealth. Nonetheless, I welcome the opportunity to apply my skills to address new challenges. I believe that your recent posting for the City Manager position in Watertown is exactly that type of opportunity.

I believe that I have the qualifications that the City Council and screening committee are seeking:

- ♦ Master's degrees in Public Administration and City Planning
- ♦ Two decades of local government experience, including 18 years supervising diverse administrative and professional teams in two Massachusetts communities
- ♦ Experience with hiring, project management, community development and finance
- ♦ Experience working collaboratively with elected city councils and appointed community boards and commissions
- ♦ A commitment to transparency in government, use of technology for public engagement and service delivery, and data analysis as a basis for decision-making
- ♦ Commitment to embedding equity and sustainability in policy development and operations
- ♦ Experience building robust comprehensive plans in two communities with extensive community buy-in, followed by multi-year strategies to implement these plans with community consensus
- ♦ Extensive experience working with a diverse community on proposed regulations and design plans including many public presentations, workshops, charrettes and meetings
- ♦ Experience supervising consultants working on multiple simultaneous priorities
- ♦ Management of the review and implementation of billions of dollars of residential and commercial development in Lowell and Somerville
- ♦ Commitment to lifelong learning, including extensive efforts to share best practices in community settings and conferences as well as to learn best practices by participating in state, regional and national organizations focused on creating smart, equitable and resilient communities

I believe that I am well prepared to take on the role of City Manager and have the knowledge, skills and energy to make a significant contribution to the City of Watertown. I appreciate the consideration of my application, and hope to have the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications and interest in this position with the screening committee.

Sincerely,



George J. Proakis

George J. Proakis

Melrose, Massachusetts 02176

email: [REDACTED] / phone: [REDACTED]

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Municipal leader with eighteen years of experience supervising staff, programs, policies and budgets in vibrant small cities. Technical expertise in community outreach, economic development, comprehensive planning and zoning, with additional experience in public sector budgeting, capital planning and policy development.

WORK EXPERIENCE

CITY OF SOMERVILLE MA

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Somerville, Massachusetts

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November 2018 – Present

- ◆ Lead a team of sixty-eight professionals coordinating economic development, transportation, public space, planning, zoning, historic preservation and affordable housing programs, in one of America's most dynamic and diverse communities, reporting directly to the Mayor.
- ◆ Serve as a member of the Mayor's strategic oversight team, working to deliver government services develop data-driven policy analysis and establish new programs within fiscal constraints.
- ◆ Manage the department budget including \$10 million in annual local funds, in addition to federal and state grants, community preservation act funds, and various stabilization funds.
- ◆ Coordinate economic development and planning efforts in five transformational districts, establishing the groundwork and facilitating the review of 6000 new units of housing and five million square feet of office and life science labs, which has increased tax receipts by over \$30 million annually.
- ◆ Supervise varied programs, including: "100 Homes" (establishing 100 units of scattered site affordable housing); inclusionary zoning; creative industry "fabrication" zoning districts; transportation demand management; complete streets; small business assistance programs; and workforce development.
- ◆ Coordinate COVID-19 response efforts around small businesses, rental assistance, and safe mobility while maintaining operations including remote community meetings and public hearings.
- ◆ Supervise staff developing and implementing new local legislation addressing a variety of issues including biotechnology safety, demolition review, tree protection, and native plants.
- ◆ Participate in capital planning and budgeting, including delivery of street improvements, new parks, a new high school, new public safety complex, Assembly Square fire station and community arts center.
- ◆ Serve as the Mayor's representative on Somerville's Charter Review Committee
- ◆ Participate in regular bond rating calls, providing forecasts for new growth to support bonds, including District Improvement Financing (DIF) borrowing.
- ◆ Direct efforts to design high-quality open spaces, including a new park and playground at the Healey School, upgrades to Dilboy Stadium, and the EPA-supervised brownfield's cleanup at Conway Park.
- ◆ Guide the team designing and implementing multi-modal improvements on Somerville's streets, as part of Somerville's Vision Zero plan and the City's ongoing effort to be America's most walkable, bikable and transit-friendly city.
- ◆ Facilitate the City's participation in the \$2 billion Green Line Extension project that will bring five new transit stations to Somerville in 2022.
- ◆ Coordinate the City's efforts to redevelop the Clarendon/North Street public housing development, replacing an outdated Somerville Housing Authority facility with 500 new units of public housing, workforce housing and market-rate housing.
- ◆ Supervise workforce development effort, including the creation of the new Somerville Job Creation and Retention Trust that uses developer funds to train Somerville's workforce for new opportunities.

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ZONING

January 2010 – November 2018

- ◆ Supervised a staff of nine professionals developing and implementing planning and zoning strategies.
 - ◆ Coordinated implementation of the SomerVision Comprehensive plan.
 - ◆ Coordinated the overhaul of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance into an innovative, award winning form-based code, to implement local planning priorities while streamlining development permitting.
 - ◆ Served as primary point of contact for permitting major development projects in the City, including the transformation of Assembly Square into a new mixed use neighborhood on the Mystic River.
-

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN
ADJUNCT LECTURER

 Cambridge, Massachusetts
 Fall 2018 and Fall 2019

- ◆ Developed and taught GSD 5378: Economic Development Planning, Harvard University's only domestic urban economic development course.

CITY OF LOWELL MA, DIVISION OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING & PERMITTING DIRECTOR
CHIEF PLANNER

 Lowell, Massachusetts
 April 2008 – January 2010
 October 2004 – April 2008
 October 2002 – October 2004

ASSOCIATE PLANNER / PLANNING BOARD ADMINISTRATOR

- ◆ Supervised staff overseeing the Planning Board, transportation programs, public space, urban renewal projects, Community Development Block Grants, and departmental finance and budget functions.
- ◆ Participated in the development of the \$800 million 'Hamilton Canal Innovation District', a mixed-use, transit-oriented development adjacent to downtown Lowell.
- ◆ Served as primary point of contact for permitting large development projects in the City of Lowell.

FENMORE CONSULTING SERVICES

Boston, Massachusetts

OWNER / CONSULTANT / PROJECT MANAGER

September 1998 – October 2002

- ◆ Started a consulting services operation to provide technical assistance and policy recommendations to organizations promoting innovative environmental, energy and economic development programs.
- ◆ Participated in research reports projects sponsored by the US Department of Energy, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

EDUCATION
MASTER OF CITY PLANNING, MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

June 2002

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, MAXWELL SCHOOL AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

August 1996

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN CIVIL ENGINEERING, NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

June 1995

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE
STEERING COMMITTEE, FORM BASED CODES INSTITUTE AT SMART GROWTH AMERICA

2018 – Present

COUNCIL AND STEERING COMMITTEE, METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

2016 – Present

APPOINTED MEMBER, MELROSE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

2007 – Present

BOARD MEMBER, NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER - CONGRESS FOR THE NEW URBANISM

2002 – Present

PUBLIC DIRECTOR, BOSTON SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS

2018 - 2020

RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE, FENWAY NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING TASK FORCE

2001 – 2004

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- ◆ Building Inclusionary Zoning into a Form-Based Code, APA National Conference 2021
- ◆ Missing Middle Housing: A Perspective from Somerville, BSA Presentation 2021
- ◆ Somerville by Design, Congress for the New Urbanism 2019
- ◆ Zoning Reform in Urban Residential Neighborhoods, APA National Conference 2017
- ◆ Public Process in Somerville's Union Square, ABX 2015
- ◆ Linking Economic Development & Social Equity Through Zoning, Southern NE APA 2015
- ◆ Zoning by Design, TEDxSomerville 2014
- ◆ A Form Based Code For Old Urbanism, BuildBoston 2010
- ◆ Placemaking In Massachusetts, Massachusetts Planning Directors Conference 2006

George Proakis

Reference Comments

The following comments were provided by four individuals, including: a former Mayor of Somerville; a former Chief of Staff to the then-Mayor in Somerville; the former/retired Executive Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development in Somerville; and a Senior Transition Advisor to the Mayor of Somerville.

- George Proakis was a critical component of a great team when I was Mayor in Somerville. George is a leader, an executive, a visionary. He has the skillset and intelligence to lead and manage a major operation.
- Watertown would be a great fit for George, given his knowledge and skillset. He knows how to build an organization, how to inspire, and how to motivate. He brings everything he works on to the next level. Everything in Somerville has been based on collaborative democracy and George excels at working with people and communicating with people.
- George is a real leader in Somerville in regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion. He understood DEI needs to be, and ensured it was, embedded into everything we did. Somerville, like Watertown, leads with its values. Equity, inclusion, and belonging speaks to everything we want to be – it factors into who lives here, who opens a business here, who visits here... George leads with deliberate intentionality. He involves all stakeholders; he considers all opinions and concerns. He works to make the city an exceptional place for everyone.
- George would bring a unique lens to Watertown. He understands planning, sustainability, finance, communications, affordable and workforce housing, community engagement, you name it. He was a superstar in Lowell and is a superstar in Somerville. No one here wants George to leave and no one in Lowell wanted him to leave. When you're lucky enough to have George join your organization, you want to keep him.
- Among the many projects George has been deeply involved with bringing to fruition are: Assembly Square, Union Square, Winter Hill, Dilboy Stadium upgrades, the total overhaul of city zoning, and the Clarendon/North Street public housing development.
- George believes in the collaborative process; he is a team builder and a team champion. He believes in and understands the importance of data and analytics, infrastructure work, parks expansion. He understands all the necessary parts that make up a city.
- George developed our Incident Command System for our pandemic response. We got food to people in need. We were the first to allow bars and restaurants to sell groceries; we put several million dollars toward small business loans; we had testing sites and vaccination sites. He was active in the daily COVID response calls with the mayor and is well-versed in the raw logistics of crisis response.
- George is incredibly nimble and can pivot as needed. He is passionately curious and always learning. To say he thinks outside the box is an understatement. George thinks outside, inside, all around, and way beyond the box. His mind is always working, seeking solutions to things other have yet to realize is a problem or concern.
- He is a great listener with tremendous understanding and empathy. He doesn't just listen; he makes sure he understands what is being said.
- George works closely with the office of sustainability and is a thought leader in this subject. He is leading the way in the city's effort to be the most walkable, bikeable, and public transit-friendly city in the country.
- He has a full understanding of municipal finance. He can forecast, determine long-term growth, project revenues, model and use analytics, conduct strategic analyses. He works hand-in-hand with SomerStat, our analytics division. He builds high-capacity teams, he knows how to manage and surround himself with talent.



- He and his team did an exceptional job in bringing in grant monies, including \$13 million for Union Square, CPA grants, parks grants, money for housing, and a massive grant for the Green Line extension, which is a total \$2.3 billion project. The extension is providing public transit to areas that historically lacked access. This aids the City's Union Square redevelopment project, which is being transformed into the commercial downtown of Somerville. George knows how to utilize data to make the case for a project or service at every level of government.
- George is skilled at cross-agency collaboration. He likes to have people involved in projects and has an expertise in getting people to work together. People really enjoy working with, and for, George.
- George is a talented, bold, aspirational leader. He has high ethical standards; he's honest, hardworking, and transparent. He's earned the respect of those who work alongside him as well as leaders in municipal government across the state. George sets the standard that others try to reach. He is revered by those who've worked with him and, as former mayor, I'm honored to be able to speak about him.
- I worked closely with George in Somerville. He has an incredible intellect and an unusual ability to not only learn and understand highly complex issues but to also be able to explain them so those without the same type of technical background can understand.
- George has deep experience in planning and sustainability. He played a key role in the City's complete zoning overhaul. He has led transformative redevelopment efforts and has been in the trenches, working with neighbors, residents, boards and committees, on politically fraught and technically difficult issues.
- He knows how to talk to people and he is skilled at listening. George really engages with people. He is empathic, tactful, and respectful. George is the real deal.
- George is extremely impressive and an efficient and effective problem solver. He is supportive of staff, highly responsive to residents, boards and committees, and an innovative and strategic thinker. He meets with his department heads and holds all-staff meetings. He made it a point, over time, to hold one-on-one meetings with every staff member, some 70+ employees, to hear their thoughts, concerns, ideas. When it was clear that George could use another person on his team to assist with coordination, he wanted someone who could bring a racial and social justice lens to his divisions and the Equity and Strategic Planning Manager position was created. This position was embedded in Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development.
- He is extremely familiar with human resources practices and HR issues; he has worked with the law office a great deal. He is more than well prepared to be a city manager and he will bring a whole different level of visioning and understanding to the role.
- George played a pivotal role in getting the city's Comprehensive Plan, SomerVision, approved and he spearheaded the whole project. The new citywide zoning code was a massive undertaking and took years to complete. The old code was completely set aside – most lots were nonconforming – and a whole new map was created. People supported it because George listens to them and talks with them and they trust George.
- George revamped how we do community engagement to make it much more inclusive. When he was Planning Director, he and his team started every project process with community engagement, and as visioning progressed, he would repeatedly go back to the community or neighborhood for feedback. He would hold multi-day charettes, use online and paper surveys, and social media to gain increased input and to enhance accessibility. He always starts with listening, hearing people's perspectives. For a Davis Square project, George used a large parking lot to hold a neighborhood meeting and brought in a food truck for the session. The location made it more accessible and attracted more neighborhood people to the session. He also worked with the Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs to engage with non-English speaking neighbors and residents. He really revolutionized community engagement and it is now how all planning efforts are conducted here.

